



Rinehart expands Wagyu operations with additional Dubbo land purchase

by Jon Condon, 06 February 2017

Beef Central



Gina Rinehart is expanding her Wagyu breeding interests, and launches a Wagyu beef brand into Asia this week.

GINA Rinehart's Hancock Pastoral Co has expanded its already-large Wagyu cattle breeding operations with the purchase of an additional property adjoining her existing Dubbo, NSW grazing holdings.

The announcement was made yesterday, as Ms Rinehart's expanding Wagyu business gears-up for its first export of Fullblood Wagyu beef under its own beef brand to Asia.

Hancock Pastoral completed the purchase of 2500ha Hiddendale late last year, adding to her Caigan and Glencoe properties north of Dubbo purchased in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

Following the acquisition of Hiddendale, Hancock Pastoral now claims to control a herd of 8000 head of Fullblood Wagyu, predominantly grazing on pasture in New South Wales.

Some Wagyu industry stakeholders expressed surprise at the size of the claimed herd, given that Ms Rinehart did not enter the Wagyu industry until late 2014. One contact suggested the figure might in fact include the company's Wagyu x Angus crossbreeding operations, taking place in southeast Queensland.

If the figure is accurate, it means Ms Rinehart now runs the largest Fullblood Wagyu operation in Australia.

The other contender, the Australian Agricultural Co, currently runs about 5000 Wagyu fullblood breeders.

That figure does not include perhaps another 2000 Wagyu bulls of various ages, used by AA Co for crossbreeding operations in the Barkly region. But those bulls are not 'directly destined' for the company's fullblood beef business, and should be treated separately, an industry source said.

Hancock Pastoral is this week consigning its first shipment of Wagyu beef to China under its new Australian Wagyu brand '2GR'. An industry briefing will be held on the project tomorrow at the John Dee export beef plant near Warwick in southern Queensland, which is providing a custom-kill for Hancock as part of the project. Beef Central will attend, and report back to readers with more details.

Expanding Wagyu interests

Here's a brief snapshot of Gina Rinehart's expansion into high quality Wagyu breeding operations over the past three years:

- Ms Rinehart made her investment foray into high quality Wagyu production in December 2014 when she bought showcase Dubbo district grazing properties Boogadah and Caigan, near Mendooran, from businessman Paul Saltieri. The deal also include Mr Saltieri's highly regarded Greenhills Fullblood Wagyu cattle herd, numbering about 3000 head, and including 1600 elite Fullblood females. The Greenhills herd at the time was regarded as possibly the second largest Fullblood Wagyu herd in the world, outside Japan, after the Australian Agricultural Co's operations at Surat. It was suggested at the time that the Greenhills land and cattle deal was worth about \$25 million.
- In November 2015 Ms Rinehart paid a reported \$30 million for another noted holding, 10,000ha Glencoe Station north of Dubbo, to add to her growing Wagyu supply chain interests. Glencoe is close to her existing Greenhills Wagyu operations, and is being run in conjunction.
- Last year she added to her Wagyu genetic base, purchasing 1500 Fullblood breeders from renowned breeder David Blackmore's herd and another herd based on Blackmore bloodlines.
- In August 2015, Beef Central published this article flagging Ms Rinehart's decision to shelve plans to establish a large-scale dairy supply chain in southeastern Queensland, designed to produce powdered milk formula for export to China. The dairy project, which included the purchase of about 5000ha of irrigated and dryland grazing country in the South Burnett and Gympie regions, was 're-purposed' into F1 Wagyu beef production. About 2000 Angus cows were subsequently assembled to provide the breeding base for a large Wagyu F1 breeding program on the properties.