

14 March, 2016

## RNA comp to crown nation's best Wagyu

Australian Wagyu producers will have the chance to stake their claim on more than \$10,000 in prize money, with the RNA today (March 17) launching the new 2016/2017 Paddock to Palate Wagyu Challenge – the only competition of its kind in the country.

The inaugural 330 day competition is calling on Wagyu producers from across the country, with entries open to Wagyu and Wagyu-cross cattle (minimum 50% Wagyu blood).

This new breed specific competition will form part of next year's prestigious RNA Paddock to Palate Competition, presented by Mort & Co.

RNA Beef Cattle Committee Chairman Gary Noller said the introduction of this competition will allow some of the nation's top Wagyu producers to showcase their best stock, as well as promote Wagyu to the Australian consumer.

"The RNA is a very proud champion of the Australian beef industry and we are delighted to be able to add the Wagyu Challenge to the prestigious Paddock to Palate Competition next year," he said.

"Our Paddock to Palate competition is currently regarded as the most prestigious and comprehensive beef supply chain competition in the nation and we believe the addition of Wagyu will only benefit producers and the consumer.

"The new competition will bring together the top Wagyu producers in the country and set a benchmark within the Wagyu industry."

Ron Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Competitions Committee for the Australian Wagyu Association and Queensland Wagyu producer, said the introduction of the Wagyu Challenge was a coup for the industry.

"This is the first time the RNA has had a breed specific class but then again the Wagyu are quite unique," Mr Fitzgerald said.

"The new Wagyu Challenge will be very beneficial for both the Wagyu breeders and the RNA.

"It will allow the Wagyu breeders to showcase their animals and demonstrate their own skill in breeding and selecting animals that will grow, marble and taste at target levels for premium value carcasses.

It will also add another dimension to the already great quality of the RNA Paddock to Palate Competition."

Mort & Co Private Client Manager, Berry Reynolds, said they were very proud to once again partner with the RNA.

“We are committed to ensuring the Paddock to Palate Competition is the premier beef supply chain competition in Australia,” Mr Reynolds said.

“Adding the Wagyu Challenge to the competition helps ensure the competition remains well rounded whilst allowing industry leading producers to showcase and measure their genetics under grain-fed conditions against their peers.

“Obviously there has been significant interest and growth in this breed which presents a fantastic opportunity for established and new producers to quantify genetic gains under comparable feeding and slaughter conditions,” he said.

Similar to the current Paddock to Palate Competition, the Wagyu Challenge is four phased, comprising best aggregate weight gain (over 330 days); a carcass competition; carcass value and will finish in a beef taste off – a palate competition where a portion of striploin is cooked and judged. The winners will be announced in 2017.

Each exhibitor will be limited to entering two pens, with each pen comprising seven steers, with the best six judged.

Nominations, which open today, will be capped at 259 animals (37 pens) and exhibitors are encouraged to get their entries in long before the Friday 27 May, 2016 nomination closure date to avoid disappointment.

For more information go to [www.ekka.com.au](http://www.ekka.com.au)

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