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## Major Wagyu operation seeks Angus producers for F1 breeding program

Leading Australian livestock and genetics company, AUSTREX, is seeking Angus producers to collaborate on an innovative and largescale F1 Wagyu breeding program to custom-produce stock for lucrative Japanese and domestic cattle and beef markets.

The program, which commenced in March this year, will use sexed-semen to tailor production of F1 steers to feed into AUSTREX's broad-reaching supply chain networks, including its Japanese Wagyu live export enterprise and branded meat trading business.

To meet growing market demand, AUSTREX requires access to around 2500 Angus females from vendors on a contract-breeding basis for artificial insemination of maiden heifers or breeders for the 2022 calving season. In addition to steers for live and boxed beef export, standout bull and heifer progeny bred through the program will be retained for sale to both domestic and international customers.

Already, 400 Clerkness Pastoral Company females have been used to kickstart the program, a major initiative of AUSTREX's Wagyu operation, SHIMA Wagyu (formerly Stocklink).

AUSTREX Operations Coordinator - Japan Feeder, Rob Cameron, said this broadscale use of semen-sexing to increase production of steers was a new concept for the Australian beef industry.

"Most often, this technology has been implemented to increase female numbers for breeding so using it in this way, we believe, is a very new approach," Mr Cameron said.

"We are hoping to achieve a 75 per cent male calving rate, which will mean a greater rate of return for the vendors at time of selling given the superior price achieved for steers suited to our high-value markets.

"We're particularly targeting producers in NSW and Southern Queensland as they are renowned for their high-quality Angus cattle, and are geographically close to our operations at Toowoomba.

"We have well-established buy-back programs available to the producers who partner with us as part of this new initiative."

The sexed-semen used for the program will be from DSWFN7171, one of SHIMA Wagyu's foremost sires, and a son of the esteemed ADBFA0139, largely considered one of the most popular Wagyu bulls in the world, whose semen has sold for up to \$60,000 per dose.

Founded in 2013 as StockLink, SHIMA Wagyu is AUSTREX's base herd of elite Wagyu which are held in Tasmania to take advantage of some of the most reliable pastures in the country, and superior biosecurity and disease control. While strategic investments are in place to extend this herd to 500

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purebred females for seedstock purposes, growing demand for Wagyu-infused beef has led AUSTREX to identify new pathways to increase stock numbers across Australia, to funnel into both Japanese and domestic markets.

“This unique initiative will help us to grow the size of our herd and its elite genetic footprint, which we will continue to promote throughout Australia and the world,” Mr Cameron said.

“We’re looking forward to collaborating with a number of Australian producers throughout this process to capture the value of our growing market opportunities, and are excited to integrate this new technology and unique model into our operations to meet rising demand for premium genetics and beef.”

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