

Farmer with a difference

David Wynne Finch is a farmer with a difference. The difference is that he breeds Wagyu. David took over the farm management at Cefnamlwch, Tudweiliog on the Llyn Peninsula three years ago.

He has always had an interest in cattle and food generally and has a clear idea of what he believes to be good food.

As he says, "I've been a consumer all of my life!"

When he started David made a conscious decision to strive to achieve the highest quality produce. A large part of this process was the selection of a specific breed of cattle that would assist him to do this.

Top of his list was a breed of cattle originating from Japan, a breed that would deliver delicious, rich, marbled beef Wagyu.

Wagyu were originally draft animals, never used for their meat until Japanese soldiers returned home from overseas having developed a taste for red meat.

David located a source of pure bred Wagyu in the USA and decided to test the market in the UK by importing processed meat to sell to the hospitality sector in London.

The success of these initial sales convinced David to start the process of creating a pure Wagyu herd in Tudweiliog.

At the time Cefnamlwch was a 1,400-acre conventional beef and sheep unit. With 4,000 breeding ewes and a large suckler herd.

The change to Wagyu farming represented a complete rethink on the management and the size of the holding, with 750 acres now being farmed.

The production of the highest quality Wagyu meat is largely dependent upon selective breeding and a carefully controlled diet.

"Silage production has been phased out and we will now be producing hay," says David.

As it stands at present parts of the existing holding are not required and are now being rented



David Wynne Finch with a two-year-old Wagyu bull. "They resemble a fine boned, slender Welsh Black, however, we have yet to determine what sort of temperament this beast has."

out or leased as grass keep.

As the ewes have been sold the sheep unit is no longer required and the silage pit will be dismantled, to be replaced by specially designed cattle pads which will allow the Wagyu to over-winter outside. These pads are created by covering a network of drainage pipes

with graded stone and woodchip, to provide a comfortable surface that allows waste to filter away.

He began by importing 20 embryos that were implanted into his conventional herd which resulted in eight heifers and two bulls. The animals resemble a slender, fine boned Welsh Black, that produce

175-200 kilos of meat.

However, as anybody who has tried to create a new herd from scratch will know it could take many years for the stock to multiply and for the herd to reach the desired size.

David, this year, has therefore decided to embark on a major

breeding programme that has seen the implant of several hundred Wagyu embryos.

David looks forward to the time when he will be able to sell his own processed Wagyu meat directly to the UK's top hotels and restaurants.

"The eating quality of this beef

is second to none. It really is the caviar of beef. The marbled texture ensures the meat has a richness and flavour that is unique and reflects the natural way in which Wagyu are raised. The aim is to produce a quality product that will appeal to an entirely different market to that of traditional Welsh beef."