

Flavour of Japan is the caviar of beef

By OSWYN HUGHES

A FARM on Llyn has become the first in Europe to breed a type of cattle, known as the Wagyu, which is more commonly seen in the Kobe region of Japan as well as Australia and America.

The meat from this Asian breed is said to be the among the finest in the world, and now Dafydd Wynne Finch and his Dutch partner are breeding them on Cefn Amwlch farm in Tudweiliog in order to sell the meat to gourmet restaurants in Europe.

The cows, which are all given Latin names such as Segundus Premus, bear a familiar resemblance to the Spanish fighting bull and can weigh up to 1,800lb.

"I read books which mentioned the cattle when I was younger. When I had the chance to travel to America, I realised that there was a potential market for the meat over here," explained Dafydd.

The Finch family have farmed land at Cefn Amwlch for more than 500 years. However, because of the problems facing farmers in Wales, Dafydd thought this would be a more fruitful venture.

To test the market for the product, Dafydd, who formerly worked as a banker in South America, has been importing the meat to Europe from Oklahoma for more than three and a half years. As a result of demand for the product, he decided to rear the breed himself, and embryos were imported from Kobe.

The farm's Holstein cows were used as surrogate mothers and now there are more than 50 of the Wagyu's on the 800-acre farm.

"We are still importing the meat, but our very own breed will be ready to buy on the market this autumn," he said.

He already supplies six restaurants in London, Amsterdam and Brussels and a Japanese restaurant in Cardiff Bay with the prime meat.

David hopes to crack the British and European market before moving on to larger pastures.

"I'm aiming for the top end of the

market. This meat is the caviar of beef and we want to fill the demand for the market we already have, and expand from there."

The monster 20oz Kobe burger is known to be sold with a price tag of \$41 (£26) in New York.

The cattle are given beer to drink

from the Lion Hotel, Tudweiliog, in the summer. This stimulates their appetite. They are fed the finest maize grain and hay originally devised for racehorses.

They are even given special massages, using car wash brushes, to keep them happy and to spread the fat evenly around their bodies.

Tasty and very expensive: Farmer Dafydd Wynne Finch with his special breed of Japanese cows – just buying one steak could make a \$100 hole in your pocket.

