

Marble scores in lamb



Mottainai Lamb uses carrot and olive oil waste in their feed to produce a more sustainable practice and achieves marble score 5, in the rib eye fillet.

Marble score is not something generally attributed to lamb, but a product from Western Australia is showing that the tenderness, flavour and juiciness that comes with highly marbled beef can be achieved in lamb. Mottainai Lamb is more than just a high marble score.

The term ‘mottainai’ is Japanese in origin, referring to a ‘regret for wasting a product without realising its true value’. The waste in this case is carrots and olive products from the Sumich Group, Western Australia.

In an effort to reduce waste and recycle produce that might otherwise be destroyed or go to landfill, carrot seconds and carrot juicing by-products along with sedimentary olive oil waste are mixed with lupins, barley, hay and wheat to produce a more sustainable feed regime.

Lambs are taken up to a higher than market size of around 64kg and processed at a slighter later age (8-10 months) to give time for the marbling to be laid down as well as muscle development for a larger carcass weight.

First released in November 2018, export and domestic orders are outstripping production. The company, Omega Lamb Pty Ltd, is on track to process about 7,500 animals this year with the aim of reaching

12,000 within a year and has access to “waste” carrot and olive product to produce over 1,000 lambs per week.

“Consistency has been a key feature of our product,” says Suzannah Moss-Wright, co-owner and founder of Mottainai Lamb. “By using the seconds carrots and sedimentary olive oil in a well-balanced feed regime, we are less susceptible to seasonal variations in fodder prices and can offer our customers fixed pricing on a 12-month basis.

“As a result, we can provide a product that has a reliable marble score around 5 across the entire carcass and up to marble score 9 for the rib-eye and lamb rack. The flavour is light and clean with a sweet taste.”

By value-adding the core product through investment and innovation, the eating quality of secondary cuts such as ribs, shoulder and leg is greatly improved. Mottainai Lamb carries high marble scores throughout the carcass, such that primal and secondary cuts are in high demand, particularly in overseas restaurants and hospitality.

Trim represents 5-8% and the fat has found a market for chefs as an alternative to duck fat.

For the domestic market, product is currently available in Perth from The Boat Shed, Scarfo’s Meating Place and Mondo Meats, who specialise in premium product with provenance. Inquiries from the east coast have inspired the company to work with butchers across Australia. Mottainai Lamb will be launched at Gary’s Quality Meats at Prahran Market Melbourne on 8 September 2019.

“We are keen to partner directly with chefs and butchers to demonstrate the product and to tell our story. The level of integrity that butchers bring means that Mottainai Lamb can be a real point of difference.”

Currently, Mottainai Lamb is sold by cut, not carcass, including rack, porterhouse (short loin), rump, rib & belly, eye fillet (neck fillet), semi-boned leg, lamb mini-roast and banjo shoulder.

www.mottainailamb.com ■