



Plant-based Waygu™ Beef Alternative Company Secures International Consortium and Funding to Expand Waygu™ Globally

VANCOUVER BC, November 8, 2021, Wamame Foods Inc. (subsidiary to Top Tier Foods Inc.), a plant-based food producer known for creating the world's first plant-based alternative to Wagyu beef, called *Waygu™* (pronounced “way-gu”), has found itself in the midst of a substantial international collaboration to expand the *Waygu™* product line.

This collaboration is co-funded by Protein Industries Canada and has attracted an impressive consortium of leading funders, research institutions, academia, suppliers and a major global Japanese food distribution partner.

The consortium and industry partners include:

- Wamame Foods Inc. – Lead company and owner of *Waygu™* brand
- Protein Industries Canada – Co-investment partner in *Waygu™* expansion project
- Wismettac Asian Foods Inc.– One of the largest Japanese food distributors in North America
- Merit Functional Foods – Canada’s leading supplier of plant protein ingredients (pea and canola)
- University of British Columbia (UBC)’s Faculty of Land and Food Systems – Leading academic institution for sensory analysis
- Winecrush Technology Inc. – Leading supplier of natural food additives

The \$7.6 million project is set to undergo ground-breaking research in the plant-based field with the ultimate goal of creating a suite of high-quality meat alternatives with beef textures to be sold under the *Waygu™* brand.

Through honoring the long history of Wagyu beef’s commitment to excellence in flavour, texture and dining experience as well as incorporating traditional Japanese cooking and fermentation techniques, Wamame Foods seeks to create a new standard for meat alternatives globally. Wamame’s focus for research and development will be towards taste and texture, in areas such as fat and how it is incorporated into whole muscle plant fibres. These areas have not been the focus of current plant-based products which mainly focus on ground meat alternatives. Wamame will lead this consortium of companies to develop and launch a new line of *Waygu™* beef alternatives in 2022 and beyond.

The introduction of Wamame and its consortium of world leading plant-based institutions

Quote from Wamame's President, Blair Bullus: “As COP 26 climate conference continues, the world can see clearly that there is a massive need to re-think the environmental impact of our food systems. At

Wamame we believe the answer lies in investing in alternatives that will exceed the quality of one of the most unsustainable options, industrialized beef.

This project aims to build on the success of our widely acclaimed *Waygu™* line by developing a suite of alternatives to Wagyu beef, widely considered the world's best tasting beef. We picked Wagyu beef as it is the gold standard of the beef industry and if we are to create an alternative that truly excites the skeptics, it must first wow chefs and critics alike.

Thanks to the co-investment and support from Protein Industries Canada we have been able to hand pick the quintessential leaders in plant-based research and development, supply and the broader Japanese food industry to ensure success in the development and launch of the new *Waygu™* products. We are excited to work with such esteemed companies and research institutions to bring a new generation of alternative meats to the market."

What others have said about Waygu™:

Tan Hsueh Yun [Singapore's The Straits Times Food Editor on Waygu™](#):

"The 'beef' which comes in thin strips. . . curls and sears like the real thing. Plant-based oils lend the product the mouthfeel of marbled Japanese beef."

[Chef Hidekazu Tojo \(Executive Chef and Owner of Tojo's Restaurant, Vancouver\) on Waygu™](#):

"When I tried it, I could not believe it was made from plants. My first impression was that it was real Wagyu beef. I was immediately very impressed."

***Chef Micheal Gulotta (Executive Chef and Owner Maypop Restaurant – New Orleans) on Waygu™*:**

"The texture of *Waygu™* is astonishingly similar to that of thinly shaved beef. It was delicious."

Media:

[CNBC interview on Waygu™](#): *Waygu™* will be competing against other plant-based alternatives and not Wagyu itself: Top Tier

[VegNews article on Waygu™](#): Vegan Wagyu beef launches at U.S. sushi giant

Quotes from the Consortium:

"Consumer demand for high-quality, delicious and nutritious plant-based meat alternatives is growing, and meeting it in a sustainable manner will require new ingredient and product innovation," Protein Industries Canada CEO Bill Greuel said. "Wamame Foods, Merit Functional Foods, Wismettac Asian Foods and Winecrush Technology are proof that Canadian companies have the knowledge, skills and innovative mindset to develop these new ingredients and products. Their diversification of the plant-based meat alternative market is an important step toward Canada's goal of becoming a global leader in the supply of plant-based foods and ingredients."

"As first to market with food-grade non-GMO canola protein, we are committed to providing the industry with highly functional plant proteins that improve taste and texture in plant-based food products, including meat alternatives that satisfy the specific texture and flavour preferences of regional cuisine," said Jeff Casper, Director of Research and Applications at Merit Functional Foods. "We are looking forward to collaborating with these key players, and applying our knowledge to new food innovations that deliver flavour and nutrition in high moisture extrudes."

“As a leading distributor of Asian products, we are thrilled to partner with Wamame Foods, Merit Functional Foods and Winecrush Technology to bring the first plant-based, Wagyu-inspired products to the market,” said Jeff Stutsman, Director of Research & Development of Wismettac Asian Foods. “We’ve seen our customers rapidly expand their plant-based menu offerings. We are excited to bring them and their guests the absolutely indulgent experience of Wagyu, with all the benefits of sustainable, plant-based meat.”

“We are pleased to partner with Protein Industries Canada, Wamame Foods, Wismettac Asian Foods and Merit Functional Foods as world-class partners to create the next generation of food,” Winecrush Technology Chief Executive Officer Kirk Moir said. “Our mission is to valorize agricultural side streams with the power of fermentation. Working with the University of British Columbia, we are advancing the performance of our patent-pending upcycling process focused on the power of polyphenols from wine-making derivatives to produce transformational food ingredients that enable plant-based food producers to close critical gaps in taste, texture, price and clean label nutrition.”

“Demand for plant-based meat alternatives is rising among consumers who are more health and environmentally conscious,” says Dr. Anubhav Pratap-Singh. “In response, the B.C. food industry is leading the world in plant-based food innovations. At UBC, we are listening to these needs for innovation and working with B.C.-based companies to create new product innovations sustainably, and to improve the competitiveness of B.C. products on the world stage.”

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Wamame Foods Press Package: [Link to Drive File](#)

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