

Breed-specific genetic marker test will authenticate Aberdeen-Angus beef

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A new proprietary test to confirm the authenticity of Aberdeen-Angus beef at retail level is being introduced by the Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society in conjunction with leading international company for bio-analytical testing services, Eurofins Scientific.

Tests on samples of beef from pure-bred Aberdeen-Angus and 50% Aberdeen-Angus (A-A sired), and from other breeds, based on a technology developed by Eurofins | Medigenomix, have proved 100% accurate and the testing procedure is now ready to be rolled out commercially in the UK.

The Society believes the availability of the new test will enhance consumer confidence in the Aberdeen-Angus brand and help stamp out the abuse of the Aberdeen-Angus name.

"Initial market research would indicate a significant commercial opportunity for such a test," the Society's chief executive, Ron McHattie, told a pre-Highland Show press conference today (Wednesday) in Edinburgh.

"The main use will allow retailers to routinely check product authenticity to ensure consumer rights are protected. It is the Society's long-held belief that the integrity of the Aberdeen-Angus brand should not be compromised and the realisation of this test is a powerful tool in the armoury to combat abuse."

It is the intention of the Society and Eurofins Scientific to make the test commercially available to the retail sector as well as consumer protection bodies such as the Trading Standards Agency.

The name Aberdeen-Angus is the world's leading brand in the red meat sector. Its dominant position has been achieved as a consequence of its differentiated nature and its delivery of a unique eating experience for the ever discerning consumer.

"The prominence of the Aberdeen-Angus brand in the market place has led others to seek to emulate its coveted position which has led to abuse of the name either knowingly or surreptitiously," said Mr McHattie. "The potential effect of such actions may lead to the integrity of the brand being called into question and consequently has on occasion resulted in the potential infringement of consumers' rights."

The Society has been aware of this problem for some considerable time and has been actively exploring a means of addressing what they consider to be a matter of precedent.

DNA technology is now accepted practice in both the forensic and population genetics field and seemed a logical route to pursue. The Society sought to engage a partner with cutting edge experience in the advancement of such technology.

In 2002, Mr McHattie met with representatives of Eurofins | Medigenomix who have long-term experience in DNA analysis and especially in using genetic markers (genotyping) for individual identification and paternity testing of humans, pets and livestock, for animal species differentiation and population genetics.

"We assumed that if the Aberdeen-Angus breed was separated from other breeds for many generations, we should be able to find specific patterns of alleles (variants of genetic markers), which could be used for typing meat as being pure Aberdeen-Angus, Aberdeen-Angus sired (half breed), or definitely not Aberdeen-Angus (A-A excluded)," said Eurofins Scientific UK Operations Director, Dr Jeremy Davies.

The Society provided Eurofins | Medigenomix with authentic samples of Aberdeen-Angus semen, which were tested with a number of selected polymorphic genetic markers. The genetic patterns of these samples were compared to patterns produced from authentic DNA samples of other breeds.

“Thus we identified common and rare alleles of the Aberdeen-Angus breed, which can be combined to typical allelic patterns for the three meat qualities of interest,” said Dr Davies. “The test was validated by a series blind tests and is now ready for commercial use.”

For further information please visit www.medigenomix.com or contact:

- **Technical & commercial inquiries**

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Notes for the editor:

Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society

The Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society is now the second largest beef breed society in the UK registering in excess of 11,000 pedigree calves per year. Through its promotional subsidiary, The Aberdeen-Angus Beef Club, it has extensive involvement in the promotion of branded Aberdeen-Angus beef.

Eurofins | Medigenomix

As part of the Eurofins Group, Eurofins | Medigenomix, based in Germany near Munich, provides renowned laboratory testing service for DNA-analysis with long-standing experience in genotyping for a broad range of applications from breeding to forensics and personalised medicine.

Eurofins – a global leader in bio-analysis

Eurofins Scientific is a life sciences company operating internationally to provide a comprehensive range of analytical testing services to clients from a wide range of industries including the pharmaceutical, food and environmental sectors.

With over 2,300 staff in more than 50 laboratories across 15 countries, Eurofins offers a portfolio of over 10,000 reliable analytical methods for evaluating the authenticity, origin, safety, identity, composition and purity of biological substances and products. The Group is committed to provide its customers with high quality services, accurate results in time and, if requested, expert advice by our experts.

The Eurofins Group is one of the global market leaders in this field of applied life sciences. It intends to pursue its dynamic expansion strategy to expand both its technology portfolio and its geographic reach. Through R&D, in-licensing and acquisitions, the Group draws on the latest developments in the field of biotechnology to offer its clients unique analytical solutions and the most comprehensive range of testing methods.

As one of the most innovative and quality oriented international player in its industry, Eurofins is ideally positioned to support its clients' increasingly stringent quality and safety standards and the demands of regulatory authorities around the world.

The shares of Eurofins Scientific are listed on Euronext in Paris (ISIN FR0000038259) and on the Frankfurt (WKN 910251) Stock Exchange (Reuters EUFI.LN, Bloomberg ERSC FP, ESF, EUFI.DE).

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