



### Matsusaka Cattle Certificate/Matsusaka Cattle Seal

Using a cow's unique 10-digit ID number, one can search online and find information about its lineage and the farm it came from. This system, unique to Matsusaka Cattle, is distinguished by its use of the internet and tight control of individual information.

In the "quality column," the quality of the beef is ranked and displayed. The label "Special Grade" (*tokusan*) indicates that the beef comes from Special Grade Matsusaka Cattle.



# 松阪牛

Matsusaka Ushi

Matsusaka Beef, one of the "Three Big" types of Japanese beef.

Matsusaka Cattle are not born, they are made.

Cows are raised according to traditional methods and managed by an Innovative Management System and, over time, produce delicious *wagyu* beef.



Matsusaka Cattle Council



An artisanal product that is our pride worldwide.

"Matsusaka Cattle" are heifers of the "Japanese Black" breed raised inside a designated region of Mie Prefecture consisting of 22 former municipalities. The Kumoza, Kushida, and Miya rivers run through this production area, and their pristine waters combine with the care and hard work that goes into raising every cow, resulting in delicious beef.

Matsusaka Beef has a high reputation among several *wagyu* brands. In a survey on domestic name-brand beef conducted by the Nikkei Marketing Journal and released on July 29, 2013, Matsusaka Beef earned top scores in nine out of seventeen categories, including "brand strength," "quality," "taste," "safety," "brand strength," "popularity," and distinguished itself from its peers by winning "best overall." Matsusaka Beef has also been featured in foreign media, including an enthusiastic review in the New York Times, and its reputation continues to grow.

All cattle are registered in the Matsusaka Cattle Identification System, which records information such as their place of birth, the feed they were given, and who raised them. Each is given a unique 10-digit ID number, which can be used to view their information online.



## Special Grade Matsusaka Cattle

Even among high-grade Matsusaka Cattle, only those born into the Tajima (Hyogo Prefecture) line of Japanese Blacks, brought to Matsusaka, and fattened for at least 900 days within the production area receive the designation of "Special Grade Matsusaka Cattle."



### 900 Days of Love

Special Grade Matsusaka Cattle are raised for ten months longer than their regular counterparts, which necessitates the use of special techniques and means that they comprise a small percentage of all Matsusaka Cattle. Matsusaka Cattle are raised from Hyogo Prefecture calves via the strength and efforts of artisanal farmers, thus keeping the brand and traditions of Matsusaka Cattle secure.

As heifers singled out among Matsusaka Cattle who are then fattened under personal care for at least 900 days within the designated production region, Special Grade Matsusaka Cattle produce beef of fantastic quality.

Masato Takegami President, Matsusaka Cattle Council



► Marbling is one characteristic of Matsusaka Beef. Special Grade Matsusaka Beef is especially soft and pleasant on the tongue, and gives off a deep, sweet, and elegant fragrance.

## History

This photo was taken in front of Matsusaka Station in 1954. When shipping cattle from the station, it was customary to take a photo to prove that they were true Matsusaka cows.

Beef started attracting attention in the early Meiji Era, before the railroads were built. Even then, Matsusaka Cattle had an excellent reputation and a strong brand. Every other month, farmers would take over to one hundred cattle to market by walking them all the way to Tokyo. To protect the cows from injury, they were shod in handmade straw sandals for the laborious three-week journey. Farmers saw the cattle they had raised off on their journey as if they were members of their own family.



## A Visit to a Fattening Farm



### An Original Mixture

Rice cultivation has long flourished in Mie, and many farmers make cattle feed out of rice straw grown in their own backyard. Drawing on years of experience to ascertain the cows' condition, they prepare a combination of soybean meal, wheat bran, and barley to feed the cows.



### Brushing the Cows

The farmers who raise Matsusaka Cattle care for each one individually like one of their own children.



### Shochu Massage

In this image, *shochu* is being sprayed onto the cow. The alcohol is absorbed into their hide, and then disperses fat, resulting in sweet and soft meat. It also gives their coat a glossy luster, making them healthier.



### Matsusaka Cattle Competition

This is a cattle show in which farmers compete over the quality of the cows they have raised. Judges select the "Queen of Matsusaka Cattle" from the 50 steers who win the qualifying rounds. Having started in 1949, this festival has a rich history.



### Using Beer to Stimulate Appetite

Feeding the cattle beer is a traditional method that has long been a part of raising Matsusaka Cattle. It is a delight to behold the unique image of the beer bottle held fast in a cow's gaping mouth. Cattle have their preferences, and it is said that some don't care for beer and occasionally refuse it.



### Not Fingerprints—Noseprints

Every cow's nose has a different pattern of wrinkles, and soon after they are born farmers use a special ink to take a nose print, which then becomes the basis for calf registration and a lifelong means to identify individuals.

Matsusaka Cattle Council  
Matsusaka City Hall  
1340-1 Tonomachi, Matsusaka-shi, Mie Prefecture  
515-8515  
Tel: 0598 (53) 4119  
<http://www.matsusakaushi.jp/>

The Matsusaka Cattle Council is composed of producers (fattening farms) entered into the Matsusaka Cattle Individual Identification Management System, and of the municipalities located within the Matsusaka Cattle production area. Founded November 11, 2004. Number of cattle: 11,117 (as of October 31, 2014)

