

JAPANESE BLACK CATTLE (JAPAN)

Japanese Black cow



Japanese Black bull



Origin: Japanese Black cattle are one of the four breeds of Japanese cattle “Wagyu”. Wagyu was produced by cross breeding of the country’s original native cattle with the foreign breeds which were imported by the government in the beginning of the 19th century to increase body size and to shorten a period for maturity. As the consequence, four breeds of beef cattle had been established and were officially registered as Wagyu in 1944. Among the four breeds, Japanese Black cattle are the most famous and popular due to its high quality of meat with marbling. The breed was a cross breed of original Japanese native cattle, including Mishima Cattle, with Brown Swiss, Devon, Simmental, and Ayrshire. The other three breeds of Wagyu; Japanese Brown, Japanese Shorthorn, and Japanese Polled are cross breeds of the native cattle with Simmental, Shorthorn and Angus are less popular among producers because of poor meat quality.

Characteristics: Their color is entirely black. The mature cows weigh approximately 470 kg, and have 130 cm withers height. Male cattle are usually raised and fattened after castration for about 28 months before being sent to a market. Their dressed carcasses weigh 458 kg on the

average. Today 95% of Japanese Blacks are bred by artificial insemination using frozen semen from the proven sires. Genetic improvement for better quality of meat through the intensive sire selection has been conducted by various national and local government organizations, and private sectors. It takes five years for the selected bulls to be in service. The bull in a picture, top right, is one of the top ranked Japanese Black sires whose name is Yasuhira. The sire was produced in Miyazaki Prefecture, southern Japan.

Products: The meat from Japanese Black cattle is characterized by its marbling with fat, smell and flavor. It is extremely tasty and juicy, and suited for typical Japanese dishes such as Sukiyaki and Shabushabu. Quality of carcass meat is graded into 15 classes. Price of the first grade meat (A-5) is as high as US\$ 25 per kg. The best marbling meat is exported to Macau, Hong Kong, the USA, and many other countries.

Population number: There are approximately 1.6 million Japanese Black cattle in Japan, accounting for more than 90 % of the beef cattle (2010). About a half million Japanese black calves are produced every year.

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