



## Authentic Wagyu bears the “Universal Wagyu Mark”

With such a profound taste, Wagyu is increasing in popularity all over the world. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the appearance of many non-authentic Wagyu beef impostors. Wagyu is Japan-produced beef that satisfies a stringent set of conditions. Only authentic Wagyu bears the “Universal Wagyu Mark”. When choosing Wagyu, use this mark as a reminder to verify unrivalled, top-grade quality.

### Wagyu is a variety of beef that satisfies a set of stringent conditions and incorporated into a traceability system

Only beef that satisfies the following two conditions can be accredited as Wagyu.

● **Requirement 1**

**Beef that corresponds to the following and can be authenticated via the beef traceability system.**

Wagyu refers to four specific varieties of beef from cattle including 1. Japanese Black, 2. Japanese Brown, 3. Japanese Shorthorn and 4. Japanese Polled as well as 5. cross breeds that result from interbreeding between the preceding four species, or cross breeds produced as a result of interbreeding between 5 and varieties 1-5. Additionally, proof of the above must be able to be evidenced by means of a registration system in accordance with the law for Improvement and Increased Production of Livestock (Law No.209, enacted 1950) and through the cattle traceability system.

● **Requirement 2**

**Must be cattle born and bred in Japan and can be confirmed by the beef traceability system.**

It is a requirement that the product is Wagyu beef which satisfies condition 1, and that the cattle is born and bred in Japan. In addition, it is necessary that such can be confirmed via the beef traceability system.

©The beef traceability system has been established in Japan to provide records from the time the cattle is born up until the time the cattle is slaughtered.  
URL: <https://www.id.nlbc.go.jp/english/>

### Local “beef brands” bred across the nation prove to be popular

Included under the category of Wagyu are beef brands that are extremely popular amongst consumers and have been bred and distributed in accordance with rearing management and quality standards individually developed by producer groups across Japan. A large majority of these beef brands are given the name of the production area such as Matsuzaka Beef, Kobe Beef and Omi Beef.

Japanese Black Cattle



This particular variety of Wagyu makes up for over 90% of fattened cattle in Japan today. With fine textured marble distributed throughout the muscle fibers, rich-flavored fats providing a succulent, melt-in-the-mouth quality, and of course its superior texture, taste and color, Japanese Black Cattle is the finest-grade “Wagyu” on the market.

Japanese Brown Cattle



This breed is also known as “Akaushi” (Japanese Red) because of its reddish-brown color. Together with its light-tasting fats, moderate marbling and leanness characteristic of the breed, Japanese Brown Cattle boasts a range of highly-welcomed health benefits.

Japanese Shorthorn Cattle



Japanese Shorthorn Cattle are a well built species noted for their dark red color. The breed is suited to the Japanese climate and bred as pastured cattle. The species possesses little fat, is lean, and provides for richly-flavored cuts. Constituent to their great taste, Japanese Shorthorn Cattle are high in inosinic and glutamate acids.

Japanese Polled Cattle



Considered quite ideal as a meat breed based on its body type, this variety possesses a black coat, has no horns, and is of a small-frame with thick subcutaneous fat. A very lean variety, Japanese Polled Cattle is rich in flavor-enhancing amino acids that bless the variety with inherent great taste.

photos courtesy of Japan Meat Information Service Center

### Establishment of a Wagyu beef grading system that implements meat quality (5-1) and yield grade (A, B, C): 5 is the highest grade for meat quality

To ensure fair trading, the Japan Meat Grading Association has established a beef grading system. Beef is graded based on the yield grade and meat quality. The yield grade refers to the ratio of meat to total weight of the carcass and is classified into three grades from A to C with A being a grade of higher yield. Meat quality is classified into four elements and graded from 5 to 1 based on “marbling”, “color” and “firmness of the meat”, and the “color and quality of the fat”. The lowest of the four individual elements is the final grade allocated to the meat. A thorough grading system of 15 grades through a combination of the above two grading elements ensures a clear indication of Wagyu meat quality. The majority of Wagyu exported from Japan is generally awarded the highest grade of 5 or 4 in meat quality and meat of such caliber is rare even in Japan. The yield grade indicates the amount of primal cut meat retrieved from the carcass and, based on the fact that exported beef is made up of primal cuts, there is no difference in the actual meat quality of A-5 and B-5 for instance.

■ Standard grades and how they are displayed

| Yield Grade | Meat Quality Grade |    |    |    |    |
|-------------|--------------------|----|----|----|----|
|             | 5                  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |
| A           | A5                 | A4 | A3 | A2 | A1 |
| B           | B5                 | B4 | B3 | B2 | B1 |
| C           | C5                 | C4 | C3 | C2 | C1 |

Quality (Highest) ←

↑ Meat Proportion (Greatest)