

## Ox 'father' of superior beef cloned

GIFU (Kyodo) Researchers have successfully cloned what is believed to have been the progenitor ox of Gifu Prefecture's Hidagyu beef, prefectural officials said.

The successful cloning of the ox, which died in 1993 and was frozen to preserve it, could help to revive cattle with higher quality meat.

According to the officials, Gifu Prefecture's livestock research center and Kinki University in Osaka Prefecture have successfully developed cloning technology using testicular nuclei from oxen and unfertilized egg cells from cows.

They first succeeded in creating a cloned ox in November 2007. Of the four oxen cloned so far, three are still alive, the officials said.

The original ox, named Yasufuku-go, is referred to as "the father of Hidagyu" and is said to have been the progenitor of 30 percent or more of Japanese black cattle. About 150 cows with a direct blood connection to the ox have been born nationwide.

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