**The Sunflowers of Manno**

The town of Manno is located in southwestern Kagawa, near the prefectural border with Tokushima. Sunflowers have been cultivated here since 1989, when they were first planted in fallow rice fields. Though the town has a population of less than 20,000, its 1.2 million sunflowers draw in far more visitors than that every summer. The seas of yellow flowers come into full bloom in July, which is also when the town holds the Himawari (Sunflower) Festival to celebrate them. Aside from being pleasant to look at, the sunflowers are a valuable resource for the town. Sunflower seeds are now being pressed for oil at a local factory, which opened in 2018 in a building previously used as an elementary school. The factory, which handles the entire production process from pressing to bottling, uses only sunflower seeds grown in Manno. The oil is extracted using a low-temperature pressing process that retains the nutrients in the seeds, resulting in an additive- and preservative-free product noted for its high oleic acid content. Manno sunflower oil is also used as the main ingredient in salad dressing, whereas some of the oil-cake (what remains of the seeds after oil has been extracted) is used as feed for a local strain of cattle called “sunflower beef.”