

## Aso Grassland

Covering a total area of 380 km<sup>2</sup>, the landscape of the Aso Caldera features mountains, grasslands, and marshes. Grasslands account for approximately 220 km<sup>2</sup> of the total caldera area. These grasslands are a unique feature of the caldera, being made up of both native, semi-natural areas including meadows, pasture land, thatch fields, and marshes, as well as areas in which grasses and plants have been introduced and cultivated.

Thanks to their geographical location and the local climate, the Aso grasslands support a rich natural ecosystem in which a variety of plants and animals thrive. The area is home to a large livestock population. Agriculture flourishes, having been successfully adapted to the local conditions and the specific needs of the people here. These grasslands are commonly regarded as the reservoir of Kyushu, with natural underground water reservoirs storing rainwater in porous volcanic strata. The pure, mineral-rich water is supplied to around five million people in northern Kyushu.

These grassland areas have been managed so that invasions by fast-growing shrubs and trees, and subsequent forestation, have been avoided. Management of the land includes spring burnings, cutting, and maintaining cattle pastures.