

Yumugi Ranch

The municipal calf ranch in Yumugi, on the east side of Kuchinoerabujima, first served as a sheep pasture from 1883 to 1889. Islanders had established the farm with government support, inspired by the success of sheep farming on nearby Mageshima Island at a time when sheep raising was rare in Japan.

Shimazu Matashichi (1827–1911), who governed the island, believed that the uncultivated fields of Yumugi provided ideal terrain for sheep grazing, which would be profitable due to military demand for wool. A group led by Ijuin Kanemori established the Kuchinoerabu Sheep Farm in January 1883, and in June that year received an ¥8,000 loan and 175 sheep from the Meiji government. The number of sheep increased to 570 by 1885 and to 750 by 1886. However, the company soon went out of business due to the rising costs of feed, shipping, and other expenses. They also faced such challenges as the impact of typhoons and the remote location of Kuchinoerabujima. In 1889 the pasture closed and was put up for public auction. The national government then created an agricultural colony to develop the land, and people moved to Yumugi from the southern islands of Amami Oshima and Kikaijima.

Not long afterwards the land was turned into a calf ranch, which prospered until the present era. However, the volcanic eruption in 2015 necessitated the evacuation of the calves and other livestock at the ranch, which led to a decline in the ranch's activities.