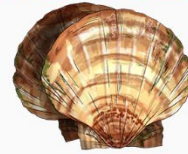




# MEL NEWS

Schallop  
This month's  
MEL certified  
marine products



April 30st, 2022

Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

## MEL NEWS VOL. 49 (ENGLISH EDITION)

Dear MEL Partners:

*The revival of the Okhotsk atka mackerel pillar in Hokkaido was broadcasted on NHK TV program "Darwin's Amazing Animals" from 19:30 on Sunday, April 3. As it was the same with herring swarms, the returning of the symbol of the rich sea has been described very positively.*

*I was impressed by how persistent voluntary management by fishermen, the government, and research institutions has begun to lead to the recovery of resources as a result. I was also intrigued by the mysterious phenomena created by the natural world. While environmental changes in the ocean are often taken up in a negative light, it is wonderful that voluntary management based on scientific considerations of fish ecology is an effective means for resource recovery.*

*I hope this kind of positive story will become a topic of media conversation throughout the country.*

*Here are the topics that we would like to share with you:*

### **1. Status of MEL Certification**

*The number of certified cases this month was three for fishery, one for aquaculture and one for CoC, five in total.*

*This month's special news is the Atlantic bluefin tuna longline fishery at Usufuku Honten in Kesenuma has been certified.*

*While they already have MSC Fishery certification, Sotaro Usui, the president of the company, has realized the plan to obtain certification from both MSC and MEL.*

*The resource management of Atlantic bluefin tuna is conducted by ICCAT, of which Japan is a member, but MEL has only the results of*

*certification within Japan's EEZ and the Pacific. So, this is the first case and it took a long time, but finally it was done with the effort and cooperation of the certification body, auditors and the applicant.*

*I would like to pay my respects to Mr. Sotaro Usui, the president, and all those involved in the challenge with persistence.*

*Taking this opportunity, I hope the people of Kesenuma, Japan's leading fishing port, have more interests in obtaining MEL certification.*

*MEL Certification Award Ceremony was held at the 19th Seafood Show Osaka on April 13. Though the certification ceremony is hosted by Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association, the certification body, we place great importance on this event as a scheme owner because it is the final step in the certification process and the first step to public unveiling. Representatives from eight companies and organizations participated in*

*this event, and we were encouraged by the positive expressions of determination and the report that MEL certification is beginning to help exports. I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to all of the entities which have obtained the MEL certification, and I hope that they will utilize it in their business.*



*The 9th MEL Certification Award Ceremony*

## **2. Board meeting**

*The Board meeting was held on March 31. The main topics of discussion were the business report and the accounting report in the past year, the business plan for the new fiscal year, and the explanation of the budget. We have reported what we have done so far, and we will be more ambitious in the new fiscal year.*

*Director Amino said that he would like to see more products with the MEL logo displayed at Toyosu Market. Currently, in the season, the Hokkaido Federation of Fishermen's Chum*

*Salmon, Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association and Yonkyu ship yellowtail with the MEL logo on the outer box. We are looking forward to the day when the MEL logo is displayed not only in Toyosu but also in fish markets all over the country.*

*Director Yoshihito Yamaguchi from Sojitz Corporation, submitted his resignation, which was accepted. I would like to thank Director Yamaguchi for his support during this difficult time for MEL to obtain GSSI recognition. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.*

## **3. Request for Public Comments on MEL Aquaculture Management Standard Revision started**

*In response to the application to GSSI's new Benchmark Tool (Ver. 2.0), the Standards*

*Setting Committee was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of last month to revise our standards as deemed*

necessary. Following the approval of the Board of Directors, the first explanation session was held on April 8 for the involving parties, including those who have already obtained certification. After correcting the items pointed out by participants, we have opened a 60 day public comment period from April 14. The contents of the revised certification standards are posted on the MEL website. The most significant revision is that to comply with the new GSSI component for aquaculture certification which require "unprocessed fish and shellfish not be used in the feed to be fed", the continuous use of

moist pellets during the growing period is restricted except for certain conditions.

After the public comment deadline, we will respond to the issues raised and explain to the stakeholders, and proceed with the necessary procedures for approval and effectuation. Our new Aquaculture Management Standard (Ver. 2.0) will go into effect in early July, after which the application for the new GSSI Benchmark Tool will begin. We would like to ask for your understanding and cooperation so that we can stand with pride as a certification scheme originating in Japan.

#### **4. Voice from Certified Entities:**

##### ***"As a scallop farmer and processor in Mutsu Bay, Aomori Prefecture"***

*Yamajin Co., Ltd., our processing division, obtained MEL CoC certification on November 19, 2020, and soon after, Yamajin Suisan Co., Ltd., our aquaculture division, obtained MEL aquaculture certification on April 14, 2021 and became the first company to obtain MEL certification as scallop aquaculture.*

*Scallops in Mutsu Bay, Aomori Prefecture are farmed mainly as semi-mature shellfish. The meat is small in size, but the rich and quality snowmelt from Mount Hakkoda provides plenty of nutrition and deliciousness to the small body. Our company also controls all processing steps from the standpoint of ensuring that customers feel safe eating freshly-made products.*

*Recently, the SDGs have become a hot topic. While we were trying to figure out what we*

##### ***Takenori Jin, President of Yamajin Co., Ltd.***

*could do to pass on the scallop farming to future generations as an important industry and culture of Aomori, we came upon about MEL certification, so we decided to challenge toward certification. Since Aomori Prefectural Federation of Fishery Cooperatives was already promoting "Complex Resource Management Fishery Promotion Measures Project" as a resource management system for the future, we were able to successfully obtain certification both the aquaculture and processing divisions. At present, as a first step, we use the MEL logo on "Fisherman's Deep-Fried Scallops", one of our company's main products that uses only the scallops that we farm ourselves, and sell them domestic market.*



**Landing of scallops on Keiryomaru**

*On the business side, MEL was a relatively new GSSI certification at the beginning, and even though we aggressively promoted MEL, it was difficult to be understood from our customers. However, as the SDGs have spread throughout the nation, I have gradually come to feel a change in the perception of business*

*partners, and I believe that we have finally come to the starting line.*

*In the future, while using MEL as a sales tool, we will continue to strive for a sustainable aquaculture industry in order to develop not only the scallop industry in Aomori Prefecture but also the entire seafood industry.*

#### **5. Column:**

***Both individuals and companies change their behavior to protect the global environment.***

***Atsuhiko Horiuchi, President of CGC JAPAN CO. LTD.,***

*CGC Japan is the headquarter of the CGC Group, which consists of small and medium-sized food supermarkets from Hokkaido to Okinawa. Currently, 204 companies and 4,213 stores are affiliated, with total annual sales of 4,948.1 billion yen. In 2023, the Group will celebrate its 50th anniversary.*

*The CGC Group member supermarkets are companies that were born and raised by the local community. As part of our mission*

*as supermarkets attached to local communities, we have set "Cooking, Eating and Health" as our mission.*

*"Meals" are a series of actions such as thinking of the person who eats, shopping, cooking the purchased ingredients, enjoying the meal, cleaning up after the meal, and taking out the garbage. Supermarkets are the business type that supports these daily meals.*

About 6.6 million customers visit the CGC Group supermarkets every day. Even if the number of customers has decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic and customers come to the CGC Group's stores twice a week, this means that about 1 in 10 Japanese people use the CGC Group's stores. Japan will enter a super-aging society in which 1/3 of the population will be over 65 years old by 2030. In this context, a major issue for supermarkets is how to increase the number of people who are "Cooking, eating and health" meaning ill-preventive.

The bigger challenge is to leave our planet in good condition for the next generation. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of large-scale natural disasters around the world, which can be said "climate collapse", and the current pandemic is attributable to the lack of respect for nature by human-kind and economic growth.

Under these circumstances, the CGC Group began to act on the belief that both individuals and companies need to change their behavior. This is the "Anti-Sukasuka (unfilled/void/porous) Campaign" that we started five years ago.

Eradication of "sukasuka products" is directly linked to improvement of space ratio of products and elimination of plastic, elimination of "sukasuka delivery" is directly linked to improvement of loading efficiency, reduction of delivery frequency, improvement of inventory space, and elimination of "sukasuka sales floor" is

directly linked to improvement of efficiency of sales floor and work. By integrating production, distribution, and sales into a three-pronged approach, we can improve the productivity of wholesalers and retailers, which account for only 1/3 of the U.S. market, and in turn, improve the environment.

This campaign cannot be carried out by supermarkets alone. Every time I have the opportunity, I have been talking about this concept to every one of our business partners. Kameda Seika Co., Ltd., the number one company in the rice confectionery industry, supported the purpose of this campaign and decided to remove the platelets from its own products and improve the space ratio in "ECO Packaging". In addition, we are encouraging other manufacturers in the same industry to take the lead in promoting "pallet distribution" in order to eradicate the spread of delivery. Next, in February of this year, Nippon Ham Co., Ltd., the largest manufacturer in the meat industry, began efforts to reduce the packaging materials used in its best-selling product, "Schau-essen". Based on the results of these efforts, the SDGs Promotion Committee was formed to promote environmental initiatives throughout the industry.

Both companies have stepped up their efforts to move toward overall optimization by changing the industry, rather than individual optimization. I have high hopes for the future expansion.

We are surrounded on all sides by the sea, and we receive its blessings in our diet. However, it is said that global warming, marine pollution, and overfishing will reduce fish catches in almost all areas of the world by 2050. The plastic that we are trying to eliminate through the elimination of sukasuka has a negative impact on the oceans, marine life, and ultimately humans.

This time, CGC was introduced by Mr. Kakizoe, a long-time acquaintance of CGC, and agreed with the idea and moved to acquire MEL certification. We will convey the value of precious marine resources and the importance of their sustainability to our member supermarkets and customers.



## 6. Events:

### 1) FOOD EX JAPAN 2022

This month we exhibited at the 19th Seafood Show Osaka on 13-14. The number of exhibitors decreased compared to last year, but the number of visitors increased. The MEL Council took up a spacious space and introduced 35 products from 16 companies and organizations, which

received favorable notices. In these types of events, the number of visitors who visit the MEL booth for various consultations is increasing, and we feel that the Marine Eco-Label has become widespread in society.



MEL Booth

### **EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT**

*Thank you very much Jin san. As you pointed out, public awareness of the marine eco-label is changing rapidly. Be sure to actively use MEL certification in your business. We will do our best to support you.*

*Thank you Horiuchi san. I attended a group business meeting on the 21st, and I fully understood the group's philosophy, thought and attitude. We will do our best with your wishes, so please take care of it.*

*It's all in the past now, but the food crisis of 1973 started with poor wheat harvests in Ukraine and Russia. Food is the foundation of a stable life, and I am keenly aware of the importance of our responsibility to supply not only grain but also marine products. The words of Tsunejiro Hiratsuka, a pioneer in the North Sea fishery, "Food production is a peace industry," have been well established through the ages. At the beginning of the Showa period, tensions between Japan and Russia intensified due to salmon fishing on the Kamchatka Peninsula, and I take this as an indication of Proverbs from a broad perspective. Sustainable management of fishery resources has become a real priority not only for economic reasons but also for overcoming Japan's weak point in times of emergency, namely its low food self-sufficiency rate.*

*Everyone, let's take the trust from society and do our best together this year.*

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