



Aug 30st 2022

Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

MEL NEWS VOL. 53 (ENGLISH EDITION)

Dear MEL Partners:

The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic has triggered "unprecedented change" to spread around the world, with various impacts increasing.

From the perspective of ecosystem conservation and resource conservation as the starting point, the trend toward social responsibility, including (Ministerial Declaration adopted at COP 15 in 2021: More nature to recover than to be lost by 2030) is becoming stronger.

Many events have been held that reflect this trend, and the MEL Council is actively participating in them to ensure that they respond to "change like never before."

1. Status of MEL Certification

The total number of certifications has almost reached 200, but we expect to reach it in the near future.

The number of certified entities this month was one for fishery, one for aquaculture, and

two for CoC; four in total. As a result, the total number was 201: 21 for fishery, 60 for aquaculture, and 120 for CoC (3 of which have revoked certification).

2. MEL aquaculture certification standard Ver. 2.0 has become effective.

As previously reported, the MEL aquaculture certification standard was revised following deliberations by the Standards Committee, public comments, explanations to business operators, and decisions by the Board of Directors and General Assembly prior to the application for approval to the new GSSI standard Ver.

2.0, and became effective as MEL aquaculture certification standard Ver. 2.0 on August 1, 2022. With the entry into force of Version 2.0, the current Version 1.0 will expire after 3 years, on July 31, 2025.

Please refer to the MEL website for details.

3. Fisheries Certification and Standards Committee

On August 8, the Standards Committee met to discuss revisions to the "Judgment Standards for Conformity (Examination Guidelines)" of the fishery certification standards. This revision was made in response to the comments from the reviewers in the MOCA (GSSI approval continuation review: passed in November 2021), requests from the field to conduct more accurate reviews, and comments from peer reviewers, as well as the abolition of the TAC Act in accordance with the new Fisheries Act. The point is

1. Management Standards: Target Management Standards and Marginal Management Standards based on MSY
Clarification of values

(2) Evaluation of "excessive fishing": The limit control standard value (Blimit) is a stock overexploitation

Clarify that it is the standard value for judging the condition

(3) Presentation of evidence for "bycatch of non-target species": Fishing for MEL certification

In assessing the impact of the industry on the ecosystem, it is essential that bycatch species are identified and quantities are estimated. Therefore, it is necessary to present evidence and describe in reports.

It will take effect upon the approval of the Board of Directors. At the same time, we will inform you to the MEL website for details.

4. Regular meeting with JAB

Ask for a MEL scheme accreditation body (to assess and accredit the ability of the accreditation body)

We held a regular meeting with JAB (Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment).

The subject was to be dealt with when applying for the new GSSI standard.

to the upper group IAF (International Accreditation Forum:

International Accreditation Forum) newly establishes a scheme as a requirement for accreditation bodies.

We were notified that a suitability

assessment for the owner has been added. this appropriateness

The assessment shall be made by the Accreditation Body (JAB) to ensure that the standards, regulations and activities of the scheme owner are adequate.

It is done to ensure that. The deadline is the end of 2023.

We still have plenty of time, but we will work with JAB.

that there will be more and more scrutiny of the certification system

I think it is a part of.

5.Voice from Certified Entities:

"MEL Ver. 2.0 Fishing certification award ceremony"

Kaiko Bussan Co., Ltd.

Kazuhiko Ono, Representative Director

Hello, everyone. This is Ono from Funabashi Kaiko Bussan. First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Marine Ecolabel Japan Council, the scheme owner, Mr. Kakizoe, President, and all related parties, as well as to Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association, the certification body, Mr. Takahashi, and all

related parties.

In addition, from the simultaneous application of CoC certification to the acquisition of this fishery certification, The entire our company Group is deeply moved by the fact that it took us a year to obtain the fisheries certification after many twists and turns.



Because of this one year, I realized that the new MEL version 2.0 is a scheme that can be understood around the world, and I felt tense.

The next step for our company is to further raise awareness of Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) in Japan as one of the certified entities. And to bridge all of Japan's coastal fisheries to the next generation as sustainable. I also believe

that we need to promote and advance overseas the wonderful Japanese fishing and marine product distribution technologies that our predecessors passed down to us, namely the Japanese fish-eating culture. I think the proof of that is this MEL certified seafood.

On the other hand, fishery resources and the global environment are borrowed from the children of the next generation.

As we live in the present, we have an obligation to return this earth to our children as a sustainable thing. One way to do this is to get more involved in elementary and junior high school education with children who will be the leaders of the next generation, and have them feel a sense of affinity with the MEL mark. Shokuiku (food education) through the provision of certified marine products for school lunches, the practice of "classes on the sea," and the idea that we can contribute to society by consuming them. In addition, I believe that this is not just a matter of saying that Japan's fishery industry, which is already well known and boasts the world's best cold chain, is "fresh and delicious," but also to proudly show the "story that fisheries are sustainable for 100 years."

And that's not something we can do by ourselves alone. It's all about how to get people involved. For that, we are determined to do everything we can. As I mentioned earlier, I learned this from the long time it took to obtain certification.

Fortunately, through these activities, I have made many friends and acquaintances in the industry. It is also true that there are some "anti-MEL" commentators who do not know the actual situation of the fishing grounds along the coast of Japan and who advocate idealism similar to that of the West. However, I think it is important not only to repeat such negative remarks, but also to think together about "what exactly does MEL want to do for the Japanese

fishery industry?" and "what MEL should do for that purpose in the future." In Japan, which has no natural resources, fishery resources are a valuable common asset of Japan from the viewpoint of food security. As a fellow Japanese, I think it is quite natural for us to make good use of this to aim for a sustainable society.

In the first place, there are many contradictions in forcefully applying Western values to Japanese coastal fisheries. MEL, which originated in Japan, has a lot of ingenuity to solve these contradictions. We hope MEL will continue to demonstrate its uniqueness as a globally accepted marine product certification that is closely related to Japan's coastal fisheries.

As a certified business operator, we believe it is important to clarify issues at fishing sites, including "unfalsified inconvenient truths," and to disseminate initiatives and ideas to solve them. Fishermen and distributors across the country quickly realized that what was normally allowed from the Showa era to the Heisei era will not work in the future. As a first step, it is important for fishers themselves to change their awareness. We need to use the MEL certification as a tool to prove that fishing is correct, and eventually, we need to change consumer awareness. We need the cooperation of our distributors to change our catchphrase from "cheap and fresh" to "contributing to society through safe and secure shopping." It is essential for the Japanese fishing industry today to reform its consciousness from production to consumption. I can barely make it now. We hope that certification providers will share

this awareness and work together to promote MEL!!

5.Column

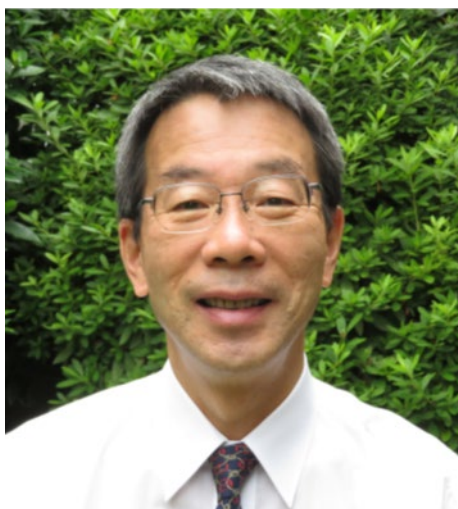
“ From the perspective of the MEL Certification Support Consultant”

Sanyo Techno Marine Co., Ltd.

Kazushi Takayanagi, Managing Executive Officer

According to a survey conducted by the Consumer Affairs Agency in Japan, where the concept of the SDGs, namely the creation of a sustainable economy and society, is beginning to spread, an increasing number of consumers are willing to purchase goods and services that lead to ethical consumption. This action is related to the SDGs 12, "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns" and we hope it will provide a boost to the purchase of MEL-certified products. Speaking of the SDGs, MEL certification is related to SDGs 14, "Life below water". MEL is an international

standard developed in accordance with the FAO "Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries", "the International Guidelines for Marine Ecolabel Certification Schemes for Sea-level Fisheries", "the International Guidelines for Aquaculture and Inland Waters Fisheries", ISO/IEC GUIDE 59 for ISO standardization, ISO/IEC 17065 for conformity assessment and audit, and ISO/IEC 19011 for conformity assessment and audit. In December 2019, it was approved by the Netherlands-based GSSI (Global Fisheries Sustainability Initiative).



Since 2018, our company has been using a project subsidized by the Fisheries Agency. We offer consulting services to assist you.

At first, there were no cases of obtaining certification, and it seemed that the consultation was conducted in a strict manner, as we were trying to figure out how to establish a system that strictly complies with the requirements and how to prepare procedures. As a consultant, we explained the meaning of each requirement on the basis of scientific evidence in order to convince business operators themselves to work on certification, but we were not able to do so, and there were some situations where we had difficulties with our customers. At present, about 200 businesses in the fishery, aquaculture, and distribution and processing stages (CoC) have acquired certification, and their audit reports are open to the public, making it easier to understand how difficult it is to obtain certification and facilitating consulting. In order to obtain certification, it is essential to keep records that can be shown to third parties that the certification is based on standards.

Fishery certification requires the involvement of the national government or local governments in the management system, the existence of scientifically based information on the target resources, and the fishery being eco-friendly. In short, it is necessary to eradicate IUU in

consideration of the ecosystem, and the efforts of the applicant companies are not enough. It is necessary to involve public authorities, cooperate with other fisheries that catch the target fish and shellfish, and evaluate the habitat of bycatch. The hurdle for obtaining certification is very high for fish species that are not listed in the SH “U ” N project of the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency because the national government has not carried out resource assessment. Under these circumstances, in July of this year, Kaiko Bussan Co., Ltd. obtained certification for round haul net fishing for sea bass in Tokyo Bay, where no public organizations have established clear numerical targets for resource assessment and resource management. This is the first certification for fish for which the national government has not carried out a resource assessment, and I believe that the voluntary resource assessment and approach to resource management were highly evaluated. It took 3 years and 3 months from the submission of the examination application in April 2019 to the certification acquisition. I appreciate your patience. It is expected that this will be a breakthrough and that certification will be obtained for small bottom trawl nets, gill nets, boat trawl nets and fixed net fisheries in coastal areas. In aquaculture certification, there is a requirement to consider the

health and welfare of target marine organisms. These are the top items in the FAO guidelines and are not well known in Japan. However, we need to recognize that the viewpoint of animal welfare is becoming a global trend and respond accordingly. Nori has been farmed in Japan since the Edo period, and yellowtail farming began in the Seto Inland Sea ponds and Ado ponds in 1928. Although it may be difficult to change such an old business form to meet modern standards, it is required to document the procedures learned as tacit knowledge, record the correct implementation, and prepare for disclosure at any time. In order to keep up with the rest of the world, we must conform to what is called international standards.

In addition, preparations are currently underway to revise the aquaculture certification, but when we look at the results of the public request for opinions, we have received a response that could be misunderstood as a blind attempt to obtain approval from GSSI, and we are concerned. In order to revise the standards, it is essential to present a scientific basis, and in cases where the scientific basis cannot be clearly stated, it is necessary to fully engage in scientific discussions with GSSI in order to gain recognition as a Japan-originated marine eco-label.

In terms of CoC certification, we were

initially certified, but I heard that there were cases where the volume handled was very small. However, with the increase in fishery and aquaculture certification, I feel that certification is being acquired in a wide range of industries, including wholesale, processing, distribution, and retail. Difficulties in obtaining certification are checking the volume of incoming and outgoing cargo and traceability. With regard to fish and shellfish, there are business practices such as the distribution of "advanced-price sushi", pricing in terms of raw material weight even after processing, and procurement of raw materials from multiple production areas, and it is sometimes difficult to ensure the check of weight and trace to the production area. In addition, there are business practices such as pricing by the pack at retail sites, pricing by the number of fish for whole seafood, and pricing by the number of fish for sashimi, which also face difficulties in weight management. In addition, in the case of wholesalers, the distribution and commercial distribution are often different, and the transfer of ownership may be carried out simply by changing the name of the warehouse, and it may be difficult to decide whether to position the site as a site or not when examining it. We are pleased to see that the number of CoC certifications has risen to nearly 120. In order to get MEL certified products

into the hands of consumers, retailers and restaurants are basically required to obtain CoC certification. The number of certified retail stores is increasing, and we visit stores of York Co., Ltd., which obtained CoC certification last June.

and not just having a logo on the product, but using the pop , and a description of MEL. (Photo ① and ②). In October of last year, we became the first restaurant business to obtain certification.

Yokohama Food Service Co., Ltd.

Yokohamaya Honpo Syokudo

Restaurant has an impressive large

information board at the entrance (photo ③). Again, the MEL instructions are thorough. In December of last year, the use and management regulations of the logo mark clearly stated that "combination and assortment" were not subject to mixing, and this may have been a boost to the sales of assorted sashimi and seafood rice bowls as MEL products (Photo ④). I hope that even if there is no description, one glance at the logo will help you understand what it is and the day will come when you can buy MEL products at any store you visit.



6.Events

Here are some of the events that MEL participated in this month.

① MEL introduction exhibition was held under the auspices of SHUFUREN.

First floor from July 11 to August 31 at Shufuren Kaikan in Yotsuya

We had a panel about MEL displayed in the lobby. The report was also published in the newsletter, "Shufuren Tayori," and a questionnaire survey on recognition was conducted.

SHUFUREN is a member of MEL, and vice chairman Yuko Hirano is an Advisory board member, we have received valuable opinions from the perspective of daily life.

Thank you very much for the support.

② MEL Family Class was held.

On August 5, for parents and children of elementary school students, we held online classes on sustainable use of marine resources to make a special contribution to their summer vacation research. MEL secretariats Kobayashi and Endo did everything from planning to lecturing by themselves in the morning and in the afternoon.

It was a handmade class, but I was impressed by the serious efforts of the children who participated.

I felt MEL's status "From Children to Consumers" hit the nail on the head again. Participant's satisfaction was

also highly reflected in the questionnaire results.

The materials used in the family classes are available on the MEL website.

▼Documentation Download Page

<https://www.mel.jp/3798>

③Tokyo International Seafood Show.

The 24th Japan International seafood show held at Tokyo Big Sight from August 24 to 26.

Although the seventh wave of corona has remained high, compared to the shows in the past two years, the number of exhibitors from overseas increased and many side events were held to restore the success of the event.

Marine eco label corner is set up, and MEL exhibited together with certified entities.

Many visitors came to the booth to receive the ideas for use of marine eco-label, the topics have been widely expanded.

On the 26th, a MEL certificate presentation ceremony is planned by Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association

Six companies are scheduled to attend, and the details will be reported in the September issue.

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

Thank you, President Ono. I will firmly accept the pride you have kept since your grandfather's generation. Also, thank you for saying too many words. I will do my best to meet your expectations. Coincidentally, Takayanagi san of Sanyo Techno Marine took up the certification of Tokyo Bay sea bass of Kaiko Bussan in the column of related parties. Please continue to use MEL.

Thank you, Takayanagi san. We sincerely accepted many comments from the audit site. We will reflect it in our activities.

Thank you for your continued support.

Summer which was very noisy is coming to the end. Expectations of a return to normal life and business activities are dwindling, and the burden of self-defense is increasing.

This is an era in which we are forced to coexist not only with corona but also with new infectious diseases. We must respond to "unprecedented change" and meet the expectations of Japan and the world, to which the fishing industry is drawn. Joseph Schumpeter, the father of innovation, is now in the spotlight. We would like to share Schumpeter's words, "Innovation is the creation of creative destruction," with you as we move toward the future of the fishing industry.

Please take care not to get tired from summer.

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