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Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

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Dear MEL Partners:

As you know, the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Geneva, Switzerland last month adopted the Fisheries Subsidy Agreement. For more than 20 years since 2001, the issue of fisheries subsidies has been under negotiation at the WTO, and it has finally been agreed as a global rule. However, the agreement will not enter into force until 2/3 of WTO member countries ratify it, so I don't think we can be optimistic about the way forward considering the 20 years required for the discussions.

The agreement includes a ban on IUUs and subsidies that lead to overfishing, and we hope that we will be able to make a small contribution to resource management together with you, rather than waiting for the implementation of the new Fisheries Law roadmap.

1. Status of MEL Certification

The effectuation rate was low again this month. The number of certified entities was one for fishery and three for CoC; four in total.

The total number of certifications is 193, just ahead of 200.

I would like to mention that the fishery certification of the Tokyo Bay Funabashi Japanese seabass Medium-scale Purse Seine Fishery of Kaiko Bussan has come into effect. The application was accepted in April 2019, and it took a long time to be certified. The CoC certification, which took effect in June 2021, is the result of the efforts of not only President Kazuhiko Ono of KAIKO Bussan, but also the audit organization, the auditors, and

the peer reviewers who conducted the resource analysis.

This certification covers Japanese seabass in Tokyo Bay, and unintentionally traces the history of the rise and fall of resources in Tokyo Bay and the damage caused by industrialization in the bay. At the same time, we are fully aware of the significance of this kind of analysis of local resources, and we would like to focus on the practice of resource management in the future, including the use of small-scale bottom trawling and leisure fishing. The review report is available on the website of Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association, but we would like to add that this was the

first case in which there was no blackening by the company.

2. MEL Aquaculture Management Standard Committee.

After public comment on the revised MEL Aquaculture Management Standard (Ver. 2.0) has been solicited, we held the Aquaculture Management Standard Committee on July 6 as a prelude to explaining the final plan to the certified entities and consulting the general meeting,

The background of the revision of this time is the new GSSI standards (Benchmark Tool Ver. 2.0), disseminate the MEL philosophy both internally and externally, as well as sharing it with industry, and improve the standards themselves more accurate and easier.

- ① Use of raw feed, moist pellets
- ② Water quality control
- ③ Feeding control
- ④ Measures
- ⑤ Control of contamination of seedling production facilities
- ⑥ Control of feed history

After a briefing session (The second time on July 22), it will come into effect with the approval of an extraordinary general meeting held on July 25.

The transition period to the new standard for the current standard is set at three years, so use this period as a preparation to meet the new standard.

3. Voice from Certified Entities:

"We want to share MEL's work with the world."

Eiwa Marine Products Co., Ltd.

Tomohiro Nomura, Representative Director

Our company exports fresh seafood by air mainly to the overseas restaurant industry. We decided to acquire MEL certification as a concrete measure to contribute to the maintenance and supply of sustainable fishery resources in view of SDGS and eco momentum of consumers and stores.



Japanese food is very popular overseas, and the stable and high-quality SEAFOOD brought about by the consistent market distribution system in Japan is highly appreciated.

On the other hand, overseas, where MSC and ASC are widespread, hotels and restaurants are required to have a strict fishing environment and a tolerance for the production area, and this trend is expected to increase further in the future.

As you can see, there is a high level of awareness of SDGS initiatives overseas, but unfortunately, Japan is a latecomer.

The mission of our company is to deliver fresh fish and shellfish from Japan

to customers overseas and to pass on limited fishery resources to the next generation. We believe that the spread of MEL certification, which targets a wide variety of fish in the diverse ecosystems of mid- and high-latitude waters, as well as small-scale fisheries, is an initiative that is in line with the times.

Also, our business partners in Singapore and Los Angeles are strongly interested in MEL.

It is an honor to be able to contribute to efforts that transcend national boundaries.

On the other hand, there is a current situation that we have a lot of issues to be solved in order to spread MEL overseas. To deliver MEL-certified fish to end users, MEL certification is now required for local customers who pick up our company's exports.

However, under the present audit system, it is physically difficult to conduct on-site inspection and make a judgment.

I would like to make a concrete proposal to solve the problem above as a leader in MEL's further spread and penetration.

I hope to make a significant contribution to the SDGs 14 "life below water".

We will continue to run at the forefront as a company that continues to export the rich marine resources not only freshness and deliciousness, but also safety and security that Japan is proud of.

4.Column

"A quarter of a century ago."

When I was in charge of FAO at the Fisheries Agency, in the mid-1990s, a quarter of a century ago, at the FAO Fisheries Committee meeting in Rome, we were announced that a well-known environmental group and a global food company would jointly launch the MSC. At that time, discussions about the use of trade and distribution methods in the management of fishery resources had begun, and discussions on the regulation of bluefin tuna imports from countries recognized by ICCAT as IUU fishing countries for Atlantic bluefin tuna had become active.



At that time, I was in charge of not only FAO but also ICCAT, and I participated in discussions at the WTO

Natural Resources Conservation Society
Akihiro Mae, Executive Director

because it was related to trade regulations. My impression of the WTO at the time was that "be conservative about arguments that undermine free trade and negative about new trade regulations". Fortunately, the so-called Quadrilateral (Japan, the United States, Europe, Canada) was active in regulating IUU fishing, and there was no significant resistance at the WTO. On the other hand, one of the arguments that came to my attention while attending a WTO meeting was that "voluntary ecolabeling may act as a trade inhibitor.". In Germany and other EU countries, there is a high level of awareness of environmental protection within the country, and many developing countries have expressed concern that the introduction of an optional ecolabel could adversely affect the export of products from countries that do not have the technology to meet the standards.

I believe that the MSC concept itself was based on the forestry FSC established in the early 1990s, but I remember that at the FAO Fisheries Committee, as in the WTO discussions, concerns were raised mainly in developing countries. In particular, I think the fact that major food

companies are behind it was also a factor. As you all know, the development of the marine products ecolabel has been progressing since then. As the world has become increasingly concerned about environmental issues, the WTO, which is so conservative, seems to be basically moving toward accepting trade control measures necessary for environmental protection. It's amazing how things have changed. What I have always felt in the recent rise in awareness of environmental issues is the high level of strategic thinking that is riding on the wave of the times in Europe and the United States, especially in Europe. Japan's hybrid technology has taken the world by storm in the area of energy conservation in automobiles. In the United States and Europe, however, growing awareness of environmental issues has prompted us to adopt a strategy of leading the world in electric vehicles, rather than chasing Japan with hybrid vehicles. Japan's focus on hybrid technology has forced it to take a back seat to electric vehicles. MEL

5.MEL Auditor training course

This auditor training course (CPD) was held online from July 19 to 20, with the participation of 7 auditors and 2 observers from the candidates for certification bodies.

As announced in last month's MEL

has been going after the MSC, and I think the lessons of hybrid and electric vehicles have a lot of potential.

Whenever environmental issues are discussed internationally, the importance of the involvement of local people and the necessity of consideration for developing countries are pointed out. MEL has the unique advantage of being able to respond carefully to the actual situation of Japanese fisheries. I think these advantages can be applied to fisheries in Southeast Asia and other areas that have similar characteristics to Japan. I was talking to a vendor who has acquired both MSC and MEL the other day, and he pointed out, "MSC acquisition actually increased export to foreign countries. MEL, on the other hand, has no economic advantage. For example, it would be important to promote the benefits of using it for school lunches.". In order to make the benefits of MEL acquisition visible, it is expected that MEL will spread to fisheries that are out of sight of the MSC.

News, the MEL aquaculture standards have been revised in conjunction with the new GSSI standards, and the aim is to share the latest information to help judges in their field activities. I was pleased to see that the online training

was finally ready and that the group case study provided a lively exchange between instructors and students. The

We will aim to reduce the burden on future participants of CPD training as much as possible.

6.Events

The Co-op Deli Consumers' Co-operative Union (a joint organization of 6 co-ops in 7 prefectures in Kanto and Koshinetsu area) is celebrating its 30 year anniversary. Please accept my sincere congratulations.

An environmental symposium commemorating the 30 year anniversary of the foundation was held on July 12. Following the keynote speech by Yukari Takamura (Professor, University of Tokyo) entitled "Future Climate Change Countermeasures: Towards Sustainable Community

Building", MEL Council President Kakizoe was invited to the panel discussion with Kenichi Akao (Professor, Waseda University), Yoshifumi Kuwata (Executive Director, National Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives), Yoko Komagata (Executive Director, Co-op deli) and Ryugo Watanabe (Mayor, Sado City, Niigata Prefecture). The symposium was held in Yomiuri Otemachi Hall, the venue of the symposium, in a hybrid form t, both face-to-face and online.



Presenters reported challenges on their environmental efforts and their expectations for Co-op. MEL is making progress in "CO-OP

sustainable" products, and we believe this is a great opportunity for MEL products to permeate the co-op members.

An overview of the symposium is

available on Copedelli's website.

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

Thank you, Nomura san. More than ten years have passed since the world began to consume marine products. From the time marine products from all over the world gathered in Japan.

I listened your story closely, who led this movement as a frontrunner.

I would like to exchange more information so that MEL can meet expectations and help you.

Thank you very much, Mae san. Around the same time at the Ground Fish Forum (GFF), a gathering of European fishers and processors, reported this problem in your column, and I remember that it caused a great backlash from fishers. I took the latter part of the talk about electric cars with the sharpness and sharpness of the former.

This month's MEL certified fish is Yamato shijimi. It is called Doyo shijimi, and it is crowded in the store of the consumption area at this time of the season, but it was broadcasted on TV the other day that Jusan fisheries cooperative association, which have acquired the MEL fishery certification, limited their operations to only a part of the fishing grounds in order to protect spawning. My heart echoes with the various efforts to conserve resources.

Recently, the media has been spotlighting "unused fish" or "underutilized fish.". As some of you may have seen, "unused fish" was featured in NHK's close-up broadcast on July 4. Mr. Katsuhiko Ueda of the former Fisheries Agency, who are also known as Uekatsu, and Mr. Tsuyoshi Iguchi of Benners appeared on the stage and talked in an easy-to-understand manner about how to eat and the forefront of business with the keywords of "direct production" and "Web.". I was also interested in the favorable way it was picked up and the growing support from families for "Shokuiku created by Corona". I hope it will help protect Japan's fisheries and food.

Please take care of yourself in this unstable summer.

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