



# MEL NEWS

sardine  
This month's  
MEL certified  
marine products



Jun 30st 2022

Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

## MEL NEWS VOL. 51 (ENGLISH EDITION)

Dear MEL Partners:

*I think it was a busy month for companies and organizations at the end of the general meeting season.*

*The MEL Council General Meeting was held on June 16 and was attended by directors, members and advisory board members. The meeting was attended by Mr. Sakai, Assistant Director of the Processing and Distribution Division of the Fisheries Administration Department, and Mr. Shikasho who has been appointed as a new department in charge of marine ecolabel.*

*As you know, this year the Japan Fisheries Association celebrates its 140th year anniversary. I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations and wish for further development as a leader in all fisheries. The ordinary general meeting on June 8 was held in person, and the response to the deterioration of fishery management was taken seriously. There are serious issues such as rising prices of various materials and uncertainty about relations with Russia amid poor catches of major fish species, and there are voices that this is no place for marine eco-label. But now is the crucial time, let's do our best together.*

### 1. Status of MEL Certification

*The number of certified entities this month was two for aquaculture and seven for CoC; nine in total, took effect, bringing the total number of certifications to 189, with 200 in sight.*

*As a special note, Wakayama City Kada Fishery Cooperative's red sea bream single-hook fishery was certified at the end of last month. It is a traditional coastal fishery operated in the Kitan Strait and the Tomogashima Channel, and the government, research institutes, and businesses work*

*together to protect the resources and brand "Kada no Madai". At the MEL briefing held at the Osaka International Seafood Show venue in February 2020, participants from Kada were wondering if they could "construct of a city based on fishing ". For this reason, I think back to my desire to obtain a MEL fisheries certification. We are very happy if this certification will be of help to "Kada no Madai" and the further development of the region.*

## **2. Ordinary general meeting**

MEL Council's 7th Ordinary General Meeting was held on June 16.

- ① Fiscal 2021 Business Report and Income and Expenditures
  - ② 11 reappointments and 2 new appointments to the Board of Directors upon the expiration of their terms of office
  - ③ Relocation of offices due to the reconstruction of the Sankaido building
- 3 proposals were approved.

As a matter of report

- ① 2022 Business Plan and Budget
- ② Revision of aquaculture certification standards

Mr. Hironobu Nozaki of CGC Japan Co., Ltd. and Mr. Hirofumi Yamazaki of Mitsubishi Corporation were appointed as new directors. Thank you Mr. Nozaki and Mr. Yamazaki, I look forward to working with you.

After the conclusion of the ordinary

general meeting, the 28 meeting of the Board of Directors was held.

- ① Appointment of Chairman and Managing Director
  - ② Establishment of rules concerning temporary suspension of certification
  - ③ admission of new members
  - ④ Extraordinary General Meeting of Documents on Revision of Aquaculture Certification Standards
- All approved.

As matters to be reported, I explained the management review and the partnership with Alaska RFM. Naoya Kakizoe was appointed as Chairman and Hidenori Nagaoka as Senior Managing Director. We ask for your continued guidance and support.

Mitsubishi Shokuhin Co., Ltd. was approved as a new member. This is our first membership from the food wholesaling industry, and we would like to thank you for your efforts to expand the Marine Eco-Label.

## **3. Development of MEL certification for fish feed, fish meal and fish oil**

The development of the certification standard has been entrusted to Professor Shuichi Sato of Fukui Prefectural University. For the meeting, Secretary General Kanno visited Obama on June 23 and worked out the details. As a next step, we are preparing to launch a standards committee as soon as possible and start discussions with the parties concerned to create a system that will be useful to the

aquaculture industry and related industries in Japan.

On June 20, the progress was reported to Masakazu Sakurai, Manager, Fish Ranching and Aquaculture Division, Resources Enhancement Promotion Department, Fisheries Agency, and others. This is the third report to the Fisheries Agency, and Division Manager Sakurai commented that this is an issue that is

linked to the Comprehensive Strategy for Growth and Industrialization of the Aquaculture Industry and the Green Food System Strategy, and that he hopes it will be realized as soon as possible. In addition, on June 28, we are scheduled

to have a meeting with Mr. Inai, President of the Fishmeal Association, Mr. Yamaoka, Vice President, and Mr. Aibe, Senior Managing Director on the way forward. We are still in this situation, but we will continue to build up step by step.

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

**"We want to let our members know what MEL is doing."**

**Miyagi Consumers' Co-operative Union  
General Manager, Fisheries Division, Store Products Division  
Takeshi Doi**

Established in 1982, our cooperative has been jointly organized with Co-op Fukushima and Fukushima-ken Minami Co-op since 2019, and operates stores and home delivery services throughout Miyagi Prefecture and Fukushima Prefecture (Naka-dori Street and Hama-dori Street).

With the intention of informing members of our commitment to the environment through the supply of environmentally friendly and sustainable marine products, on September 14, 2021, our

store business acquired CoC certification for the final processing of Skipjack and Albacore, as well as for retailing.

Many MEL products have been created and will continue to expand in the future, but I think consumer awareness is still low. In order to raise awareness and gain an understanding of these wonderful initiatives, the key is to take measures to ensure that retailers that are closest to consumers can spread the word.



"Ipbon-zuri Aburi Bincho" with MEL Logo

*In addition to supplying MEL products to our members through our store business, we would like to directly inform our members about MEL's activities as an environmentally friendly scheme.*

*Miyagi Co-op has an organization called Co-op Committee. This is an organization in which union members discuss not only about products, but also about life in general and the environment, and engage in recommended activities and educational activities for a better life in cooperation with*

*stores and other offices. You may also learn about your life and the environment. In the future, as part of the activities of this committee, we hope to deepen our members' understanding of MEL's philosophy, activities, and other MEL products by informing them about where and how these products are caught and produced, what manufacturers process them in the processing and distribution processes, and how they are finally sold in stores.*

## **5. Cultivate the "Globally Recognized Eco Label for Marine Products Originating in Japan"**

**Japan Fisheries Association  
President Toshirō Shirasu**

*It has already been five years since MEL Council became independent from Japan Fisheries Association and is now in its sixth year of operation. During this time, despite many difficulties,*



President Toshirō Shirasu

*President Kakizoe has performed more than he initially expected, and I would like to express my respect and gratitude for his steady achievement of the intended goals.*

*Japan Fisheries Association is celebrating its 140th year anniversary this time, and we have made a commemorative magazine to summarize the footprints of the past 20 years since the 120th year anniversary by interview and contributing articles on each theme. I am proud of the fact that the activities and events that took place during this period have been recorded, making it a worthwhile read. Of course, the significance and activities of MEL are introduced in a*

conversation with Mr. Kakizoe, and the history of the establishment of MEL within Japan Fisheries Association and the current status of the new MEL activities are described.

Now in its 6th year, the number of certifications has already exceeded 180, and I hear that it is aiming for 500. Large-scale retail chains such as Ito-Yokado and the Japan Consumers' Co-operative Union have acquired the certification, and certified products are now on the shelves in a wide range of regions.

This is a sign that consumers' awareness of the SDGs has changed and the need for marine eco-labels has increased, and MEL has entered a new phase. In fact, I don't usually go shopping at supermarkets, but sometimes I visit my 94 year-old mother at her parents' home in Nishiogikubo to help with housework and do some shopping. I was able to see a pack of "Shirasu" with a MEL logo at the co-op I stopped by. I'm so happy.

## **6.MEL Advisory Board held**

MEL Advisory Board was held on May 31 for the first time in a year.

Unfortunately, Mr. Matsuda, the leader of the group, was absent due to a business trip to Vietnam, but we asked Mr. Makino to be the temporary leader of the group, and it was a fruitful meeting.



MEL products in Co-op Mirai store

When I heard that Mr. Kakizoe, the head of the MEL Association, took over the MEL Council and immediately started certification for aquaculture, I was surprised by his foresight and thought it was quite natural, but now he is working on certification for feed or fish meal and fish oil which are the raw materials. I would like to express my respect and hope again for MEL's continuous efforts for evolution, and wish for the continued health of President Kakizoe.

The participants exchanged views on various issues surrounding Japan's fisheries industry. Prior to the meeting, Dr. Matsuda, who was on a business trip to Vietnam, raised a question about the credibility of the IUU Index, and decided that it was necessary for MEL to raise Japan's reputation by



*actively expressing its perspective not only to Japan but also to the world. As a major flow of opinions from the members, we were asked to create a recognition that " Marine Eco-Label is a proof of business credibility and a source of pride for consumers.". In order for Japanese people to become more aware of the importance of marine resources, education at schools, including elementary schools, will create connections between children, mothers, families, and society. The school is expecting a lot of delivery classes on MEL and fish that have been suspended due to coronavirus. I feel that SNS is useful as a*

#### **8.MEL Auditors Training Course**

*The first auditor training for this fiscal year will be an online training (CPD training) for qualified auditors from July 19 to 20th. As the organizer of the training, the MEL Secretariat will inform you of the information already received from JFRCA.*

*MEL's certification standards and regulations are required as a scheme of international standards in relation to the items pointed out in the GSSI's continuous approval review (MOCA*

*communication tool with society. It is also very meaningful to expand the educational element of "experience of eating delicious food" using media. In the context of the times, MEL is gaining momentum now, and by taking this opportunity to create a variety of devices, MEL will increase its visibility and delight its members and business consumers.*

*As a general rule, MEL Advisory Board is held twice a year, it is a very meaningful meeting for the MEL Council, and we would like to express our deepest gratitude for the valuable opinions of the members based on their respective expertise.*

*passed in November 2021) and the new GSSI standards (Benchmark Tool Ver. 2.0 Effective November 2021). This training is also a place to share the latest information, and the curriculum is designed in that way. We aim to shorten the time and reduce the burden on our customers, but the content is more substantial.*

*If you have any questions, please contact the MEL office or JFRCA.*

#### **EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT**

*Thank you, Mr. Doi. I remember the positive response I received when I visited the office in December 2019 to explain the MEL certification. According to the latest questionnaire survey conducted by JCCU, 42% of co-op members are aware of the Marine Eco-Label (autumn 2021 survey), reflecting their proactive efforts to produce products and*

*communicate with co-op members.*

*We wish you continued success and hope that you can work with us to help spread MEL.*

*Thank you, President Shirasu. Thank you for your kind words.*

*In fact, the chairman found a pack of “Shirasu” at the co-op in Nishi-Ogikubo, and since Shirasu accounts for about 10% of the MEL fishery certification, we feel a deep connection.*

*It is said to be the first time in 17 years that Kanto-Koshin area entered the rainy season earlier than southern Kyushu. I'm worried about the influence of La Nina.*

*A good catch of bonito has been favorably reported in newspapers, and fortunately consumption has been growing steadily this year without any problems with Anisakis. At the Advisory Board meeting mentioned above, many people expressed their desire to enrich our lives by selling delicious seasonal fish at reasonable prices. Everyone wants to eat delicious seasonal fish. I will do my best to help MEL make even a small contribution to this.*

*Hot summer is forecast. I wish you all the best of luck and good preparation.*

*Marine Eco-Label Japan Council Secretariats*

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