



Nov 30th 2022

Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

## **MEL NEWS VOL. 56 (ENGLISH EDITION)**

Dear MEL Partners:

*December has come, the year of Weter Tiger (39th term of the sexagenary cycle) is almost over. The Fisheries Agency started a project in November to promote public and private consumption of seafood on the third to seventh of every month as Fish Day. There has been a wide range of business participation throughout the supply chain, from producers to retail and dining out, and there has also been extensive media coverage, which has led to an upsurge in storefronts. The tagline is "Tasty x Sustainable = Good Future," so MEL will do our best to be helpful to all the certified companies.*

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

*The number of new certified entities this month will be two for fisheries, one for aquaculture and one for CoC.*

*There has been a cautious approach by applicants recently, and the number of certifications issued has been low.*

*As a special note, the MEL fishery certification of the Atka mackerel gillnet fishery, for which the Rirei Fisheries Eco-label Promotion Council of Hokkaido (which does not have a legal personality) applied with the support of the Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association (the Wakkanai Branch of the Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries serves as the*

*secretariat), is scheduled to become effective.*

*We believe that our local resources, which have been protected by self-regulation and support from research institutions, are groundbreaking in terms of making our business more sustainable by acquiring MEL certification. Furthermore, we look forward to the completion of a sustainable supply chain through CoC certification. Details will be available in the review report on the JFRCA (Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association) website at the same time the certification is issued.*

## **2. MEL Board meeting.**

*The 29 th Board meeting will be held on November 29. It's a regular board meeting, so the main topic is the business report for the first half of the year. We would like to receive guidance from*

*the directors how MEL will contribute to this difficult environment. The details of the board meeting will be reported in next month's issue.*

## **3. Events**

*① MEL exhibited at the Fisheries Agency's booth at the Japan Food Shift Festa under the theme of "Thinking Japan from Food" sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on October 29 and 30 at the Roppongi Hills Arena. It was held on the weekend and the weather was good, so it was crowded with many families.*

*(2) On November 25, MEL undertook a delivery class held at Yokohama Yoshida Junior High School as part of the fish diet*

*promotion project of Japan fisheries association, and gave a 90 minute class titled "Why don't we think about 'The Sea and the Fish' together?" to second-year students. Yokohama Yoshida Junior High School was close to Chinatown, and although about half of the students, including 30% of Chinese students, were non-Japanese and had language difficulties, they were excited about a wide range of topics, not limited to the seafood eco-label.*



*Second-year students of Yokohama Yoshida Junior High School*

(3) On November 27, the Fish -1 Grand Prix will be held face-to-face for the first time in three years. MEL will also be

exhibiting at the Fisheries Agency's booth, so we will report on the situation in next month's issue.

### 3.Voice from Certified Entities:

#### "Ippon-zuri Seared Bonito with MEL certification"

**Myojin Suisan Co., Ltd.**

**Masakazu Myojin, President and Chief Executive Officer**

① I was born in 1948 in Saga-machi (now Kuroshio-cho), Hata County, Kochi Prefecture. When I graduated from high school, I boarded a fishing boat (owned by my family) that I admired. At that time, the town of Saga in Kochi Prefecture had a thriving bonito fishing industry, and it was a time when it seemed like status for boys to become fishermen. And when I

was 28 years old, as a commander (chief fisherman), I had to go head-to-head with fierce competitors from all over Japan. I tried a little, but after I became chief fisherman, whenever I was in good shape, there was a nabra (a school of bonito) in every place I went, and I had a good memory of being able to fish in a large group of bonito.



② Environment surrounding single-hook fishing  
Since I started fishing for bonito as a chief fisherman, my catch has steadily increased and I have experienced the best single-hook fishing in Japan many times. When I was 37 (1985) in my prime, the bonito fishery began to

change. In the past, single-hook fishing was more popular, but now Purse seine fishery has increased noticeably. Now I know, it was the trend of the times (the aging of the population and the closure of fishing boats for single-hook fishing), I remember that the fishing, which had been going well

since around this time, began to change.

③ *Market assessment*

*We feel that the bonito we handle is not a very highly rated fish species, unlike tuna. No matter how carefully the fish was caught, whether it was sold with added value, or whether a small portion of the fish received a certain amount of evaluation, the market evaluation was generally that "a bonito is a bonito," and sometimes we were caught in the middle of a price war. In this situation, I was able to encounter an initiative (MEL) that allowed us to evaluate (recognize) our activities and those of fishermen.*

④ *About MEL*

*Fishery and aquaculture producers who are actively engaged in the sustainable use of fishery resources and the conservation of the environment and ecosystems. I think the bonito single-hook fishing industry lives up to the name. I have no intention of saying anything about other methods of fishing, but I can only hope that from here we will have more*

*people involved in revitalizing and fishing by carefully managing and increasing the resources. After getting the MEL certification, we have received more requests from our business partners, such as co-op, to have the MEL mark printed in their PB package made by our company. It is a real blessing. The members of the co-op are very sensitive to initiatives like MEL, and I am very grateful to them for their high appreciation.*

⑤ *To conclude*

*We are aware that we will continue to be a certified MEL operator, and we will cooperate in the further development of the industry, not only by conserving and managing the environment and ecosystem, but also by actively doing various things that accompany it. In addition, we promise to continue our daily efforts to meet the expectations and requests of our customers with a focus on our company's Ippon-Zuri Seared Bonito, which is highly regarded by customers.*

**4.Column**

**"Drawing a Japanese Fisheries' Blue Ocean 'Strategy with TSSS"**

**Seafood Legacy Co., Ltd.**

**Kazuo Hanaoka, President**

*Seafood Legacy Corporation co-hosted the Tokyo Sustainable Seafood Summit (Below: TSSS) 2022 with Nikkei ESG from October 19, 2022 to 21st in a*

*hybrid format. Since 2015, TSSS has been one of Asia's largest flagship events, symbolizing the rapid growth of the sustainable seafood movement,*

*especially in Japan. This year, about 30 sessions were organized under the theme of "Depicting the 'Blue Ocean' Strategy for Fisheries: Sustainable Seafood Based on Human Rights, Biodiversity and Climate Change" in order to realize a sustainable fishery industry. About 70 speakers, including Mr. Kakizoe, President of the MEL*

*Council, and experts from domestic and international fisheries, distribution, finance, policy, and technology fields, as well as companies and NGOs, participated in a constructive discussion on the challenges of existing fisheries systems and the moves toward collaborative solutions.*



***Kazuo Hanaoka during the opening address of TSSS 2022***

*After increasing to 10 billion in 2058, the world population is expected to peak at 10.4 billion in the 2080s and remain at that level until 2100. As demand for food increases, creating sustainable food systems in the oceans, which cover 70% of the Earth's surface area, is an urgent issue for the international community. However, about 30% of the world's fishery resources are overfished, about 60%*

*are fully exploited, and less than 10% of the total fishery resources still have surplus, and the percentage is decreasing every year.*

*Aquaculture shares this challenge, with many of them relying on wild fish for large amounts of food. In addition, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through the net of adequate resource management is adding to the worsening situation. In*

*addition, piracy in the fishing industry, disputes over access to fishing grounds, and illegal activities such as child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking are still widespread. These global issues remain unresolved, and the global seafood industry faces many barriers, including ocean acidification, deoxygenation, rising sea temperatures, rising sea levels, and plastic pollution caused by climate change, as well as the vulnerability of global supply chains exposed by the pandemic.*

*With a view to fully entering the international growth market, which is contingent on ensuring environmental sustainability and social responsibility, TSSS every year, together with the participants, outlines a scenario in which Japan's potential in terms of the size of one of the world's largest imported seafood markets and rich marine ecosystems is strategically maximized while contribution to solving international issues is used as a stepping stone to the growth industrialization of the Japanese fisheries industry. At a time when Japan has risen to become the world's largest fishing power and is now forced to restructure its production structure, I see the proud future of Japanese fisheries business as aspiring to be a frontrunner in the Asian region in the pursuit of environmental sustainability and social responsibility. By achieving the transformation into a seafood*

*market that pursues environmental sustainability and social responsibility, the nation's fisheries economy and local communities will regain their prosperity, and the international community, which is suffering from food shortages due to population growth, will be provided with a sustainable source of high-quality protein, thus shining a light of hope for the development of the international community. This is our view of the fundamental survival and growth strategy of the Japanese seafood industry, and the biggest reason why we have chosen the theme of this year's TSSS as "Blue Ocean," meaning the creation of new markets and the development of new business areas. In 2015, when TSSS was launched under the banner of "Japan's challenge to think from fish," the concept of sustainability had yet to catch on in the Japanese seafood industry, and we struggled to find speakers in Japan and started by inviting foreign frontrunners to introduce international trends. Seven years later, diverse initiatives by domestic stakeholders are now making significant progress. On the policy front, a historic major revision of the Fisheries Act was made to ensure the sustainable use of fishery resources, and a new Act on the Rationalization of Fisheries Distribution was enacted to block the entry of IUU-derived fishery products into the Japanese market in order to protect legitimate businesses*

*from unfair competition. On the distribution side, retailers and marine products processing and distribution companies have adopted the pursuit of environmental sustainability and social responsibility as their corporate policies, prepared and implemented specific action plans, and strengthened cooperation with domestic and overseas competitors and supply chain companies to build traceability systems, directly support efforts at production sites, and stimulate consumer awareness. The proportion of certified seafood distributed in the domestic market is increasing, and blue finance by the financial sector is also attracting a great deal of attention. With the activation of initiatives by diverse stakeholders, the TSSS has also increased in size each year, and discussions have become more substantive and developmental. The Sustainable Seafood Movement is a movement to ensure the sustainability of the linkages between the fishing economy, local communities, and marine environment, and it has been pointed out that the fishing industry, which fails to ensure sustainability, is failing its business model. This concept has now become widespread in the Japanese seafood industry, and an increasing number of*

*stakeholders are turning to ensuring sustainability in their core business to pass the baton to future generations. The future, in which the pursuit of environmental sustainability and social responsibility will become the mainstream of the seafood business, is surely approaching.*

*TSSS, which continues to grow as the flagship event of the sustainable seafood movement, attracted approximately 870 participants over 3 days this year for its eighth year. With the start of archival distribution soon, we expect annual viewership to exceed 10 times that, based on past TSSS events. This TSSS will be held for the 10th time 2 years later in 2024. It will be a major milestone for the industry as a whole as we look back on the movement's trajectory over the past 10 years with our stakeholders, celebrate developments, and together design a new roadmap for 2030, the target year for achieving the SDGs. Together with the MEL Council, which works to catch up with international standards for domestic seafood, and everyone who is MEL certified, as well as many others involved in the industry, we look forward to moving forward to a brighter future from a long-term and international perspective.*

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

*Thank you, Myojin san.*

*I heard that "Warayaki Seared Bonito" is a hot seller of co-op.*

*I'm pleased that the thoughts of President Myojin and all the employees are accepted in the co-op group.*

*We hope that you will continue to observe the "skipjack tuna single-hook fishing" that represents Japanese fishing culture.*

*Thank you, Mr. Hanaoka. I would like to express my great respect to Mr. Hanaoka and the team for keeping up with the West and demonstrating Japan's presence. I wish you every success in the future.*

*As you know, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties, Cop 27, was held in Egypt on November 6-20. In the so-called North-South confrontation, the establishment of a support fund for the "losses and damages" caused by drought and floods, which was barely agreed after the session was extended, also had a difficult issue of how to put this on track.*

*With global warming, it has been reported that Japan is prone to developing cyclones even in winter, which is a vexing problem for the fishing industry. We can only hope that calm weather conditions continue as we head into December, the most important month for the industry.*

*While the soccer World Cup is heating up, the eighth wave of corona is making its footsteps louder. I wish you all the best of luck and good health.*

*Marine Eco-Label Japan Council Secretariats*

*Sankaido Bldg. 7F, 1-9-13 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052 Japan*

*URL: <https://melj.jp/eng/> Email: [info@melj.jp](mailto:info@melj.jp)*