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Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

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Dear MEL Partners:

After a series of unseasonable summer days, there are only a few days left in November, when we were swayed by rough weather such as heavy snow, stormy seas, and a wintry wind. Fishing for autumn fish is likely to end this year with severe conditions. Chum salmon catch in Hokkaido also defied expectations, but according to reports, that in Honshu is at a record low. The sea temperature this year was probably not good for salmon. As the saying goes, "No one is stronger than nature," but the impact on your work is immense and heartbreaking. Please rack your brains and prepare for the December selling season.

1. Status of MEL Certification

The number of new certified entities this month will be two for Fisheries and three for CoC. In the fishery, the certification of the glass shrimp boat seine fishery by Shinminato Fishery Cooperative in Toyama Prefecture is scheduled to come into effect soon. As for CoC, "Shiroebi Mirai Planning Limited Liability Partnership" is preparing for application, and the supply chain

will be connected soon.

I would like to express my respect for the enthusiasm and efforts of the administration and everyone else involved. We hope that this will lead to the sustainable use of precious resources that are popular not only locally but also in Tokyo.

2.Voice from Certified Entities

This month, in Hiketa, Kagawa Prefecture, the birthplace of yellowtail aquaculture, Mr. Ikuhiro Hattori, the former chairperson of the All Fishery Federation, and three generations of parents and children, Mr. Hidetoshi Hattori, the president of Hattori Suisan Co., Ltd., discussed their efforts.

"From Hiketa, the birthplace of Amberjack farming"

***Hidetoshi Hattori,
President of Hattori Suisan Co., Ltd.***

Our company has cultivated greater amberjack mainly in Hiketa, the eastern edge of Kagawa Prefecture, which is considered the birthplace of greater amberjack farming. In 1969, we built a new live fish carrier, and started to transport and sell live greater amberjack raised in Hiketa. Because of this, we had many outlets, so we didn't have much trouble selling the fish we produced until around 1996 when I took over the management. Since then, as the aquaculture

industry has rapidly changed, many of the same companies have closed their businesses, and the number of local producers has dropped from 30 to 6.

Our company has been producing original brand fish to differentiate ourselves from other manufacturers since early on, and has been involved in the development of Olive Hamachi and other products from the beginning of the prefectural and prefectural fisheries associations.



服部家親子三代で取組む養殖。会長の郁弘様、社長の秀俊様、長男の健太郎様

Aquaculture plying by three generations in Hattori Family. CEO Ikuhiro, president Hidetoshi, eldest son Kentaro.

The reason why we worked on MEL certification early in Kagawa Prefecture was to increase the value of farmed fish produced by our company and expand our sales channels.

After obtaining the MEL certification, I tried my best to promote the acquisition of MEL certification in my own way, but I couldn't find the shipping destination as much as I wanted... So I asked a fish processing company with which I had been interacting for some time to obtain MEL CoC certification and to process and sell farmed fish in our company. I thought this was the

only way for a small aquaculture company like us to obtain, use and sell MEL certification on its own, without belonging to any group. With Aki Suisan Co., Ltd., who graciously accepted my request, I received an excellent prize in the food category of the Kagawa Prefecture Products Competition for producing the original our company brand greater amberjack "pickled Hyakunen Hamachi in oil". In the future, Aki Suisan plans to obtain certification for higher processing, so after that, we will print the MEL logo on the box of our product.

Is there a way to use MEL

certification for small-scale aquaculture companies such as us for product development between MEL certified companies?

3.Column

"History and Future Prospects of Aquaculture of Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association

The history of yellowtail culture began in Adoike Pond in Hiketa, Kagawa Prefecture, and in Kagoshima Prefecture, a test culture of yellowtail was carried out using a 2 hectares dike type pond in Ushine area of Tarumizu City, and 3000 yellowtail were shipped from the pond in 1960. From around 1961, it was replaced with cage aquaculture and expanded from Kagoshima Bay to other parts of the prefecture. In 1966, a fishing cooperative started farming fish under its own management within the jurisdiction of Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association. At that time, there were 26 lines of 2 layers of small purse seines in the area, and mainly anchovies, which are used as live food for skipjack, were caught abundantly. Yatsushiro Sea was said to be a fertile sea, octopus, swordfish, Japanese butter fish, and conger pike were mainly caught by fishing boats fishery which was popular at that time. Today, the natural resources of all areas,

Our company's motto: Do what no one else does.

I will continue to do my best in this spirit!

Nobuo Nagamoto,

Chairperson of Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association

Using this, yellowtail farming became popular. There were 200 companies at the peak, and there are 110 companies now. Most of them are family-run businesses, and that hasn't changed.



全海水 前会長 長元 信男様

Mr. Nobuo Nagamoto

including those in our union area, are in decline.

On the other hand, aquaculture increased dramatically after the opening of the Kurono-Seto Ohashi Bridge in 1974, and exports of

yellowtail to the United States began in 1982, followed by the start of a processing business in 1988. In 1991, the value of landing exceeded 10 billion yen. In 1994, a new processing plant was constructed, and in 1998, the plant was certified as HACCP, and in February 2003, it was certified as a facility for handling seafood for export to the EU. In August of the same year, we began exporting fresh yellowtail to the EU. In 2005, it was trademarked as "BURI-OH" and in February of the same year, it was registered as an export fishery product handling facility for "China" and in April 2007 for "Russia." In 2008, the annual number of processed yellowtail was 1 million, and it continued to develop smoothly. However, in 2009 and 2010, it was hit by red tide damage for 2 years in a row, and the total damage was 5.3 billion yen in 2 years. I also became president of the representative board in 2006, and after 3 years, the damage was so severe that I thought this was the end of the fishing cooperative. However, I was able to overcome the situation with the help of many people by making many petitions to the teachers of local Diet members in towns, prefectures, the national government, etc., with a strong feeling that "God cannot give a wall that cannot be overcome." We have always been positive about the slogan "There is no way to maintain the status quo," and our members and fishermen's

cooperatives are working together to maintain a joint sales and shipping system.

The trademark of 'WASE BURI-OH' was registered in 2011, a general processing plant was built in 2013, and JFA Co., Ltd. was established in 2015. In 2018, we acquired Marine Eco-Label (MEL) certification (for yellowtail aquaculture and processing distribution), in 2019 ASC certification, and in addition, our processing plants acquired ISO 22000 certification.

Exports have been growing steadily in 32 countries so far, but fell dramatically in fiscal 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but recovered to about 1.7 billion yen in fiscal 2022. In fiscal 2023, we expect results to exceed 2 billion yen. Looking back at the history of the union, I am always grateful to the officers and employees, including past union presidents, for their remarkable ability to see the future, including exports.

Looking ahead, the Japanese government has decided to increase production in order to increase exports of yellowtail, and is planning to increase production by 32000 tons to 54.2 billion yen by 2025, and by 100,000 tons to 160 billion yen in 2030. However, due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, unstable anchovy fishing in Peru, and the decrease in natural resources, raw feed, feed prices, and fuel materials have soared. In addition, due to China's suspension

of imports of fishery products from Japan, the yellowtail market is declining, and small family-run aquaculture companies are concerned about whether they can survive. Nagashima-cho, where Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association, is a town of primary industry, and while there is talk of regional revitalization, there may be some cooperation in order for aquaculture companies to survive, but it is also a difficult problem because there are successors to the third and fourth generation of aquaculture companies. The fact that aquaculture companies and fishermen's cooperatives are united is a great strength, and we would like to continue sharing our wisdom with fishermen's cooperatives and members to overcome this difficult situation. The new processing plant that we had been

planning for some time has just been approved by the Ministry of the Environment for completion in fiscal 2026. At the new processing plant, we expect the latest facilities to solve labor shortages and improve operation efficiency. In addition, exports are about 20% of the total amount handled at processing plants, but we would like to increase them to 30% and 40%.

To achieve this, we need a stable production system and year-round shipping system. We will work together with fisheries cooperatives to ensure that producers can safely produce by providing a stable supply of feed and feed, stably introducing artificial seeds and seedlings, and effectively utilizing ICT aquaculture systems, while taking all possible measures against natural disasters and red tides.

3. Board meeting

The 33 th meeting of the Executive Board of the MEL Council was held on November 16. As this was a regular meeting of the Board of Directors, the focus was on business reports, but we received approval for the establishment of a standards committee for the development of MEL Compound Feed Certification Standard Version 1.0 (tentative name) MEL Fish Meal Fish Oil Certification

Standard Version 1.0 (tentative name) as well as for commissioning the committee. In addition, we have received approval for Kewpie Corporation and Matsuda Sangyo Co., Ltd. to join the MEL Council. We have 47 regular members and 1 supporting member now. We look forward to receiving your support and guidance for the sustainable development of Japanese fisheries industry.

4.An award ceremony was held for fishery achievements.

On November 22, under the auspices of His Royal Highness Prince Akishino, 35

people received awards at the 2023 Fisheries Achievement Award Ceremony.

The award ceremony is a prestigious award that has been given 107 times this year, and I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to all the winners. I am very happy to see that the winners include Goro Kudo, the former president of the Jusan Fisheries

Cooperative Association, and others who contributed to MEL certification. On the day of the event, we met “the people who had dug the well” and gave them a report on the current situation. I wish you continued health and success.

5. Wittrock from Fukushima Prefecture was exported to Europe.



マルリフーズ様がオランダへ輸出されたアオサノリ。11月8日日経新聞電子版より

Frozen wittrock of Maruri Foods Ltd. exported to Netherland.
Photo from Nikkei on the web on Nov 8.

Under MEL certification, Soma Futaba Fishermen's Cooperative has informed us that the products with MEL logos which cultured be them and processed by Maruri Foods have been exported to the Netherlands with the support of JETRO

Fukushima. This is the first export since the removal of EU regulations in August this year, and I would like to express my respect for the efforts of Maruri Foods Ltd. and the support of JETRO.

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EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

As many of you may have seen, on November 14, NHK's "Close Up Today" featured fishery management and resource management at the fishery site. Various efforts to make

fisheries in the field sustainable were introduced. While the combination of official and voluntary management, which is the hallmark of resource management in Japan, was highlighted positively, the scene in which a bluefin tuna in a fixed net was abandoned in order to comply with TAC was, to all intents and purposes, seemed negative.

It may have been a labor struggle to revive the Japanese fishery industry and make it a growth industry, but it was a heart-stopping project for me to take care of MEL.

The people with mask is showing off again. In addition to the resurgence of the coronavirus and the influenza epidemic, the climate will continue to be unsettled, but please take care of yourself, we look forward to your continued success.

MEL Certified Products of the month: Chum salmon

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