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Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

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Dear MEL Partners:

Entering the new fiscal year, new workers are seen here and there in the business district. Ijuin Shizuka, who passed away last November, was urging new members of society to "empty glass gentlemen, the important thing is to touch the heart of the work and feel the heat" in a Suntory message ad. I wish you all the best.

As reported in last month's issue, the MEL Council entered the new fiscal year with a new structure that includes a change in the executive director. Masaya Katoh has joined the members of the Secretariat as Deputy Secretary General. Thank you in advance.

There was also a personnel change in the Processing and Distribution Division of the Fisheries Agency, and Nobuyuki Shikasho, the head of the certification promotion group, was replaced by Chikage Yoshikawa. Dear Shikasho san, I would like to express my deep gratitude for your support for two years. I hear that the new position is the International Division of the Resource Management Department (in charge of the East Asia Group), and I hope that we can work together further.

1. International standardization related

MEL did not attend the Boston Seafood Expo and held a separate web meeting with the GSSI benchmark operators at the end of March. We confirmed the following schedule of MOCA (Continuing Approval Review) in the benchmark tool version 2.0, which is a new standard for GSSI. Preparations for the review will begin in September 2024, one year after the date of approval for renewal (September 2023). The Self-Assessment and submission of documentary evidence (English translation

review report, English translation document, etc.) are scheduled to begin in January 2025.

Also, preparations for the revision of the benchmark tool Ver. 3.0, which is a new standard, will be made from the beginning of the new year.

The GSSI Scheme Owners' Meeting was held on April 24 to coincide with the Seafood EXPO in Barcelona. MEL also dispatched the Executive Director (Kanno) and the Acting Executive Director (Katoh) to meet with GSSI

directors, the secretariat and other scheme owners.

In addition, the guidelines proposed by MEL for business-to-business "Notification (tagline) of GSSI-approved scheme (logo

mark)" will be officially published.

Details of the scheme owners' meeting will be reported in next month's issue.

2. Status of MEL Certification

The number of new certified entities this month will be three for CoC although the

certification did not take effect in February or March.

3. Voice from Certified Entities

"Challenges for EP feeding of Greater amberjack and Yellowtail amberjack"

Sakashita Suisan Co., Ltd.

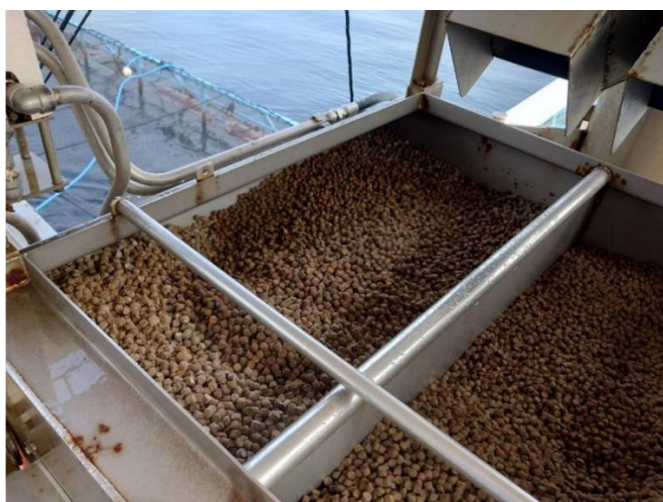
Katsunori Sakashita, Chairperson

Sakashita Suisan started feeding Yellowtail amberjack from juveniles introduced in October 2021 using a single EP (compound feed) without raw feed. When we started, we were

honestly worried about whether the feeding would work, but with the cooperation of feed manufacturers, we were able to successfully feed the fish, and they have grown steadily since then.



Chairperson Sakashita



EP feed

In the midst of this situation, we heard about the MEL certification scheme and

were told that there is a system to certify producers who are engaged in

the fishery industry while taking into consideration the sustainability of fishery resources and the environment. In February 1999, our company launched a company-operated store that sells products from production and has been working on the 6th stage of the industry. We decided to obtain MEL CoC certification, and in August 2022 we obtained it, aquaculture certification in September.

Our company produces Greater amberjack and Yellowtail amberjack. At the time when we switched to EP alone, we used to feed mixed feed for yellowtail, but after obtaining MEL certification, we asked for the cooperation of feed manufacturers to produce feed suitable for Yellowtail amberjack and Greater amberjack. We have been using the feed for about a year. Yellowtail amberjack grows well and a month earlier than usual, and it is not susceptible to fish diseases. (This term, the medication is administered once in the fry stage, and the number of times of medication is 0 until shipment.) At present, we are trying to verify the growth and quality of EP using only low fish meal. So far, it's growing steadily.

For Greater amberjack, we are currently testing whether it is possible to make Greater amberjack into a single EP while comparing it with raw feed. At

present, I have some doubts about the growth, but it has been growing steadily since last year without suffering from fish disease. After Yellowtail amberjack, we also aim to obtain MEL certification for Greater amberjack. I think it will take a little more time, but I will not give up and try my best.

In addition, the introduction of EP has led to a significant reduction in feeding time, and employees feel much better. Working on a ship that is cold in the winter and hot in the summer can be demanding, but with the EP system, there is more time to spare. Especially in the summer, we take longer breaks and leave early to minimize the burden on our employees. We will strive to create an environment where employees can enjoy their work and find it rewarding.

Yellowtail amberjack sells in our company has a good reputation with customers and has many repeaters. As the SDGs are being addressed globally in recent years, we felt that we had to do what we could, so we registered the SDGs in Kagoshima Prefecture in March 2023. We will continue to do our utmost to protect marine resources and preserve the ocean.



MEL certified Yellowtail amberjack

4. Column

Small-Scale Fisheries of MEL and Southeast Asia

Suhendar I. Sachoemar
Professor, ITI, BRIN, Indonesia



Suhendar I. Sachoemar 教授

small-scale fishermen who fish along the coast.

MEL's certification system is expected to contribute to the protection of fishery resources. The introduction of MEL will reduce and even eliminate IUU fishing, overuse of resources, and the use of fishing gear that damages the environment and resources. The aquaculture sector also requires that production systems be environmentally friendly and safe for consumers. The introduction of the MEL concept requires its dissemination to countries that use the system. Although MEL's concept should be accepted by global seafood producers and traders, it cannot be said that there will be no problems after its introduction by producers. While it is relatively easy for large companies to adopt eco-labels, it is extremely difficult for small and medium-sized businesses to do so without

We are pleased to hear that MEL has been approved as a new member (Global Benchmark Tool Version 2.0) of the GSSI. MEL's certification model is a perfect fit for tropical countries such as Indonesia, which have rich fishery resources and many small-scale fishers. In fact, more than 90% of fishermen in Indonesia are

administrative incentives such as the guarantee of higher prices than uncertified products in domestic and international markets.

It can also be linked to MEL certification and halal certification for Muslim countries.

Best wishes for further development of MEL.

BRI:National Research and Innovation Agency

PPI:Indonesian Research Association

5. Management Review Meeting

The management review is required by the GSSI (Global Benchmarking Tool) to be carried out by scheme owners. In line with this requirement, the management review reports and cross-checks the work of the MEL Council, which is the scheme owner, and the activities of the accreditation and certification bodies. This year, Marine Ecology Research Institute was newly invited to attend the meeting as a certification body, and from the Fisheries Agency, Assistant Director Yoshikawa and Chief Takachi of the Certification Group attended as observers. During the discussion, the need was raised

6. Events

Following last year, we had the pleasure of exhibiting at the Fisheries Agency booth of "Carbon Neutral 2024" held at

ITI:Institute Technology of Indonesia

Thank you, Dr. Sachoemar. The point of view linking halal authentication has never been in my consciousness. Let me study.

In addition, Masaya Katoh, a new member of the Secretariat, has experience working in SEAFDEC/MFRDMD (Marine and Fishery Resources Development and Management Department, Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center) Malaysia, so I expect that exchanges with Asia will progress.

for a mechanism to prevent inaction or unauthorized use of the MEL logo by non-certified operators. The use of Logo Marks is governed by the Regulations on the Use and Management of Logo Marks, but the MEL Council of Scheme Owners has no mechanism to check for unauthorized use. Rather, I'm trying to deal with it through the theory of good nature. The Advisory Board has also pointed out that this could seriously undermine the value of MEL, an essential intangible asset of trust. In addition to promoting the international trademark registration of the MEL logo, we will study the mechanism.

Makuhari Messe from March 30 to 31. The event was a large-scale event sponsored by the Ministry of Internal

Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the Fisheries Agency, Chiba Prefecture, etc., and was very exciting as popular idol groups stood on the center stage and at each booth to distribute promotional materials and give explanations.

The Fisheries Agency Booth is a project to promote "Sakana Day" and promote the spread of seafood, and to make many visitors aware of the Marine Eco-Label, which promotes the sustainable use of fishery products. MEL has gained about

2000 direct followers on Instagram, twice as many as last year (about 270,000 followers through ambassadors).

The idol in charge of the MEL booth is Morning Musume. and Angerme. Surrounded by a large number of fans, they demonstrated its unique influence from the Secretariat through enthusiastic explanations on sustainable marine products. For those who follow MEL's Instagram account as support, we gave MEL's eco bag, which was very popular because of the power of idols.



左：ブースで応援して下さったアイドルの皆さん（抜粋）
右：ブース前にてアイドルを待つファンの皆さん

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EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

The FAO previously announced that global fisheries and aquaculture production in 2022 was 223.21 million tons, an increase of 4.16 million tons or 1.9% from the previous year. The breakdown was 92.29 million tons of fishery production, down 0.6% from the previous year, and 130.92 million tons of aquaculture production, up 3.7%.

Globally, I feel that the growth of fishery product production is turning a corner. Fishery production has already reached a plateau, and even in aquaculture, the future of carp and crucian carp, particularly in China, which is driving growth, is not bright

considering environmental conservation. Without promoting a sustainable fisheries industry, the food problem of tomorrow for mankind is difficult to clear.

In the midst of the mounting problems of year-2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has announced that Japan's working-age population (15 to 64 years old) stands at 73.95 million (population estimate on October 1, 2023), indicating that the severity of the labor shortage is inevitable. According to Tomoya Mori, a professor at Kyoto University, the population of Japan in 2120, 100 years later, will drop to 30 million, the same as the early Edo period. The government's target is to maintain 80 million population, so we need to seriously address the sustainability of the industry and how to maintain the industry for the next 100 years.

We hope to work together with you in a positive way in the new fiscal year, when we face many challenges.

MEL Certified Products of the month: Masaki Wakame of Taro-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association

Marine Eco-Label Japan Council Secretariats

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