



MAY 31th 2024

Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

## MEL NEWS VOL. 74 (ENGLISH EDITION)

Dear MEL Partners:

*The hustle and bustle of the long holiday is over. I hope that the consumption that has been excited by domestic and foreign tourists will lead to the vitality of the industry, which has a lot of heavy news.*

*The rise in food prices has not stopped. In addition to major cereal crops, which have been affected by persistently high international prices and the yen's depreciation, crops such as coffee and cocoa, which are disproportionately produced in particular, are being swayed by unrelenting climate change.*

*Regarding seafood, in addition to fisheries which are not well fished, increasing feed prices and transportation costs are becoming serious management issues in expanding aquaculture. Looking at the Japanese market, there is a structural problem that it is difficult to form a selling price that is worth the cost. This raises a red flag for industrial sustainability. We hope that MEL will be able to work together to help respond to changes in the ocean through cooperation between fisheries and aquaculture, as well as community and industry.*

### **1. International standardization related**

*Seafood EXPO Global 2024 was held in Barcelona, where MEL Executive Director Kanno and Acting Executive Director Kato traveled to participate in meetings with GSSI Scheme Owners and Alaska RFM Scheme Owner CSC.*

*At the GSSI Scheme Owners' Meeting:*

*(1) It was reported that we have entered the final phase of the election of the new Director-General.*

*(2) MEL's request to display "GSSI-approval" in business-to-business has finally been accepted. We would like to develop guidelines for use as MEL and hold briefings to certifiers for active use. I think it will be useful for dealing with foreign markets and domestic foreign affiliates.*

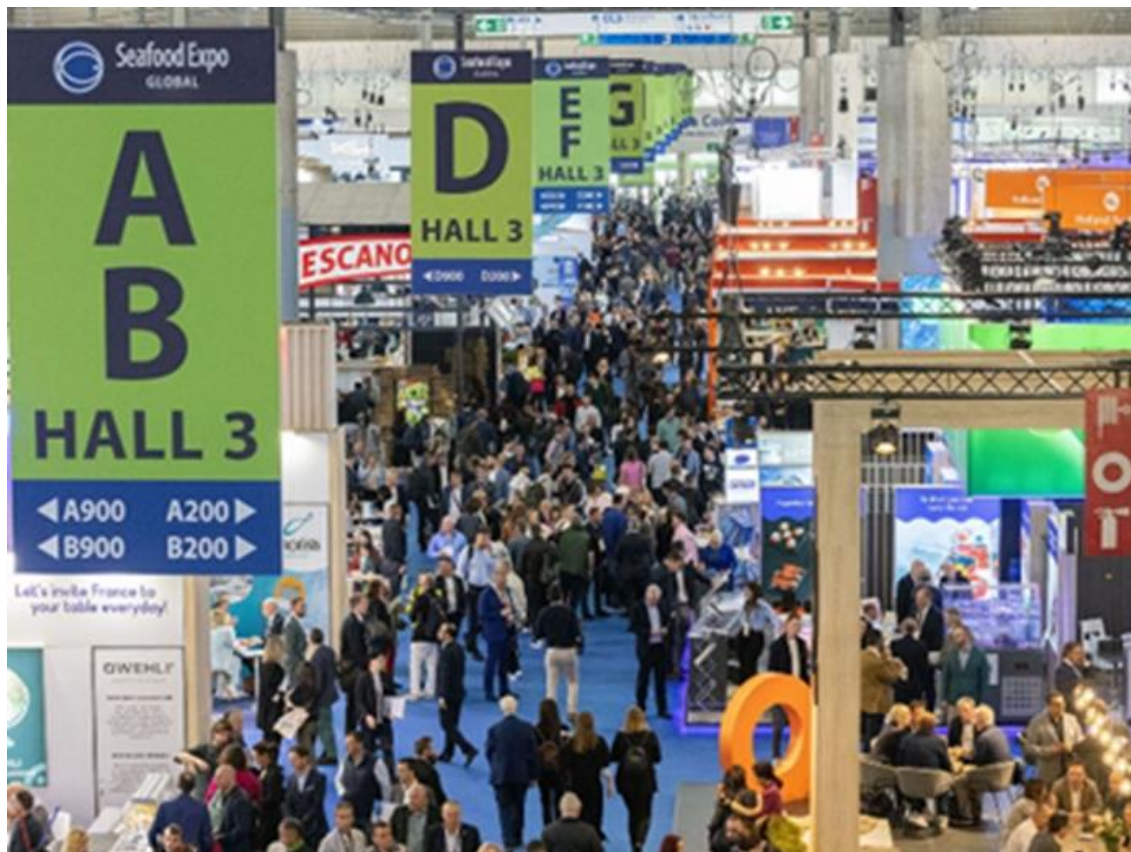
*(3) MOCA (Monitoring of Continued Alignment) was indicated to start in early 2025.*

Meeting with CSC on mutual recognition of CoC certification:

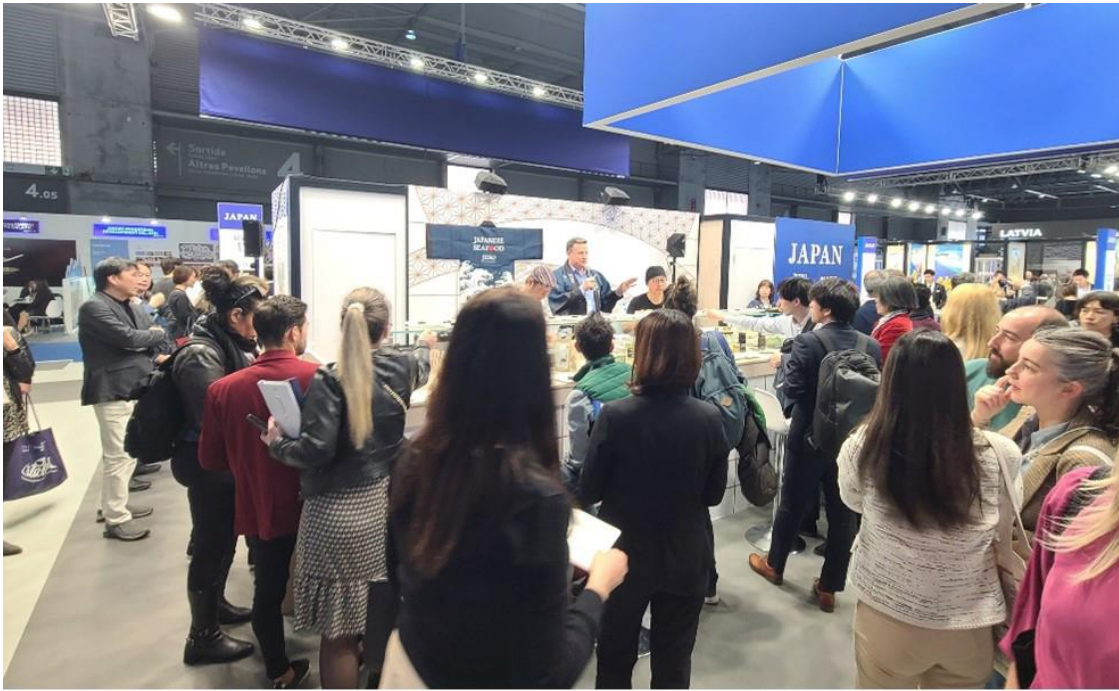
- (1) It will be necessary to coordinate with both accreditation bodies, so the meeting with JAB will be expedited.
- (2) We have been informed that major US retailers Walmart, COSTCO and Giant Eagle are reinforcing their seafood procurement policy from a previously identified scheme to a GSSI approved scheme certification. This is expected to have an impact on purchasing of foreign retailers and hotels in Japan.

2244 companies from 87 countries (Russia did not participate). From Japan, Hidecho Suisan, Iyosui, Kunihiro, Morimatsu Suisan Refrigeration, Nanyo Bejoy, Yamasa Kamaboko, Wizmettac Foods, and Yokohama Refrigeration participated in the JETRO booth. Other export promotion organizations, the Japan Aquaculture Fish Export Promotion Association and the Japan Scallop Export Promotion Association exhibited their booths, and Japanese companies, the Maruhanichiro Group, Nissui Group, Kyokuyo Group, and Cermaq (Mitsubishi Corporation) exhibited their impressive sales attitude.

The Seafood Expo was the largest ever with



**Venue scene: Seafood Expo Global 2024**



**Japan Pavilion**

## **2. Status of MEL Certification**

*The number of new certified entities this month will be one for fisheries, two for aquaculture, four for CoC, seven total. In the fisheries certification, the whitebait fishing net fishery of Fukushima Sangyo in Ehime Prefecture was certified. If you think about it, it has been 4 years since I gave a presentation*

*on MEL to President Fukushima and others at Asahi Kyohan Tokyo Office, the parent company, in February 2020. The MEL certified supply chain under the "Seatas" brand will be completed soon, from fishing to processing and sales, and we expect that it will be greatly utilized.*

## **3.Voice from Certified Entities**

### **"Toward a Sustainable Fisheries Industry in Underpopulated Areas"**

**Kazushi Hamada,  
Principal Manager, Business Promotion Office, Tsuji Suisan Co., Ltd.**

*In the Uwa Sea in Ehime Prefecture, many aquaculture companies are competing because the topography and currents are suitable for aquaculture. Everyone is confident that the fish they*

*make is the most delicious, but on the other hand, there are differences depending on the producer. We believe that it is essential to bring together the wisdom of each producer in order to*

*deliver delicious, reasonable and stable fish at any time, and to cultivate fish under uniform rules. At that time, we heard about the international standardization of MEL and decided to obtain MEL aquaculture certification and CoC certification in order to achieve world-class aquaculture standards.*

*A new processing plant was put into operation in June 2023 to make better use of CoC certification. As a result, we have improved our manufacturing capacity and improved our production management and hygiene environment. This fusion between the world standards we wanted to adopt and the Japanese culture we wanted to protect was a big problem. As an island nation, Japan has a long history of building civilization with fish since ancient times. Those who have lived in the sea will not sacrifice the sea. It is necessary to have a system to regulate people who wish they were good, but I think MEL certification that understands Japanese fish culture is more appropriate for Japanese producers than any other international certification.*

*Uwajima City, despite being a core city in the countryside, has not stopped losing its population, and neighboring areas, including Uwajima City, have been evaluated as disappearing cities. As a living business in a sparsely populated area, we want a sustainable fishery industry. We believe MEL is an effective way to connect beautiful oceans and industries from parents to children and from children to grandchildren, so that each producer can leave his or her children to live with their grandchildren while watching the ocean. We believe that becoming an attractive aquaculture industry will solve the succession problem.*

*In Ehime Prefecture, research on the aquaculture industry is flourishing, and IoT technology is improving remarkably. We believe that the adoption of MEL methods will improve the marine environment, the working environment, and the legal environment, revitalize the fisheries industry, transform it into a growth industry, and lead to the SDGs of the future.*



***New Processing Plant of Tsuji Suisan***

**4.Column**

***"Considering ocean warming"***

***Yuji Matsuyama***

***Emeritus Professor, Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology***



***Professor Yuji Matsuyama***

*Since the Industrial Revolution, humans have consumed a lot of fossil fuels and emitted carbon dioxide (greenhouse gas)*

*into the atmosphere. As a result, the concentration of carbon dioxide increased from 280ppm before the industrial revolution to 420ppm in 2022. The concentration of carbon dioxide from 10,000 years ago to before the Industrial Revolution was found to be 220~280ppm in the Antarctic ice core, and the rapid increase in carbon dioxide concentration in recent years can be attributed to human activities. Greenhouse gases trap infrared radiation heat from the Earth's surface into space, or cause it to reflect back toward the Earth's surface. The role of greenhouse gases is to warm the atmosphere without allowing infrared radiation heat to escape into space.*

*Greenhouse gases in the atmosphere maintain a pleasant global environment in the right amount, but they are increasing a little too much and destroying the pleasant environment. This is the mechanism of global warming caused by greenhouse gases.*

*Next, consider ocean warming. The atmosphere and ocean exchange heat and carbon dioxide through the surface of the ocean, moving from higher to lower values. Heat and carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere are transported to the ocean. The oceans absorb about 90% of the heat and 23% of the carbon dioxide released by human activities, resulting in warming and acidification.*

*How high have ocean temperatures become due to ocean warming? Global mean sea surface temperature increased by 0.60°C per 100 years between 1891 and 2022. On the other hand, the average sea surface temperature in waters near Japan has risen by 1.28°C per 100 years, more than 2 times the global average. The highest temperature is 1.96°C in the central part of the Sea of Japan, followed by 1.51°C in the southern part of the Sea of Japan, and 1.0~1.3°C per 100 years on the Pacific side, higher in the closed Sea of Japan. Is the water temperature in the middle and deep ocean rising? Between 1955 and 2023, when there is a relatively large number of observations, the average water temperature from sea level*

*to 2000 m deep rose by about 0.16°C, and the recent increase has been rapid. Warmer temperatures have been observed not only near the sea surface but also in the middle and deep layers.*

*Small island nations in the Pacific are in danger of being submerged due to coastal erosion caused by rising water levels. Thermal expansion of seawater contributed 34%, ice sheets and glaciers such as those in Greenland and Antarctica decreased 51%, and terrestrial water storage change 15%. Although the average sea level rose by 1.6 cm per 10 years between 1902 and 2010, the rise in recent years has been steep, with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reporting in 2023 that the average sea level rose by 4.5 cm per 10 years between 2011 and 20.*

*Both the Earth and the oceans are in a serious situation due to global warming.*

*(Supplementary note) Greenhouse gases include methane gas and nitrous oxide, but carbon dioxide, which has the largest greenhouse effect, was taken as a representative. Although deforestation and land use also contribute to the increase in carbon dioxide, I explained about greenhouse gases which is the large contribution, in this paper. Data published by IPCC and Japan Meteorological Agency HP were used.*

## **5.Events**

*I will report on three events.*

1. I was invited to a roundtable discussion on the 10 year anniversary of Seafood Legacy's Tokyo Sustainable Seafood Summit held on May 14. The participants were diverse, including Sailors for the Sea Minako Iue, Usufuku Honten Sotaro Usui, Fisherman Japan Takuya Hasegawa, Nikkei ESG Kaoru Fujita and MEL Council Kakizoe. Through Seafood Legacy President Hanaoka, we looked back on the past 10 years of sustainable seafood activities and talked passionately about future challenges well beyond the scheduled time.

2. MEL Ambassador Kickoff Meeting held.

12 MEL Ambassadors have been selected to participate in the fourth phase of building a network using MEL's SNS, and a kick-off meeting was held on May 21. There were some people who participated with children, so it was a very friendly atmosphere. The ambassadors have been selected through an open call, but due to the word-of-mouth effect, there are many applications, and everyone is very positive. We ask you to work together as a partner to expand the circle of seafood eco-labels from Japan this year.



**MEL Ambassador Kick-off meeting**

3. On May 24, a new whaling mother ship, Kangei Maru, was unveiled at Tokyo Port. 99 years after the advent of the whaling mother ship with

slipway (Norway's Lansing started operations in the Southern Ocean in 1925), and 73 years after the launch of the Nisshin Maru, the only mother

*ship built in postwar Japan, I was amazed by the new idea of whaling mother ships. I would like to express*

*my respect for the ability of the president and all the people involved.*



**Official trial trip of Kangei Maru**

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**EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT**

*The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications announced that the working-age population of Japan (15-64 years old) as of October 1 last year was 73.95 million, a decrease of 8.35 million in the last 15 years. In addition, due to the 2024 year problem, the labor shortage is becoming more serious.*

*Recently, the keyword "Generation Z" has become conspicuous. There is no precise definition of Gen Z, but it is generally used to refer to the generation born in the mid-1990s and early 2010s, people who are now between 19 and 29 years old. In the United States, the rapid expansion of sustainable seafood consumption during the four years of the COVID-19 pandemic was driven by Generation Z and the millennial generation (Generation Y), a generation earlier. Others say it will determine the fate of the U.S. presidential election in the fall.*

*It is said that there are 2 billion members of Generation Z in the world, and the impact of this generation born and raised in the Internet age on society in the future is immense. Even in Japan, where the proportion of this age group is lower than in emerging economies and the West, the focus of marketing is now not only on the golden egg in the labor market but also on this generation.*



*This is why MEL is focusing on social media approaches.*

*Midsummer sun is beginning to be observed in various places. I wish you all the best.*

*MEL Certified Products of the month: Seven Premium Fresh of Ito Yokado*

*Marine Eco-Label Japan Council Secretariats*

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