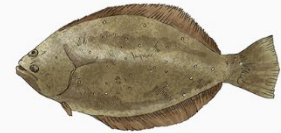




MEL NEWS

Flounder

This month's
MEL certified
marine products



Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Council

MEL NEWS VOL. 47 (ENGLISH EDITION)

Dear MEL Partners:

In the afterglow of the Beijing Olympics, we are getting closer to the sound of spring footfall as we prepare for the Omicron variant and hay fever season. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the international political situation has become even more tense, but this does not stop the activities of mankind and the earth for tomorrow. For MEL, the spring of the sixth year, which was aimed at a new stage, was filled with a lot of issues through the workshops or communications combined with the online and face-to-face, and we were able to make it obtaining various suggestions from many people.

Here are the topics that we would like to share with you as follows:

1. Status of MEL Certification

There were two certifications this month, one for fishery and one for aquaculture. As a special note, the "Ayu Tomo Fishery (Sweetfish, fishing with a live decoy)" of the Gujo Fishery Cooperative of Gifu Prefecture became the first inland fishery effective as a MEL fishery certification. The Nagara River's river system, which is the fishing ground, has been designated as World Agricultural

Heritage by FAO, and we would like to express our respect to the efforts of the local community, fishermen (members of the fisheries cooperative), and recreational fishermen who are engaged in a unique approach to Ayu fishing while protecting the ecosystem. We hope that the rich natural environment and unique Japanese fishing techniques will continue to be passed on.

2. Voice from Certified Entities:

"Do our best with land-based farmed flounder"

Yosaku Fujisaki, President of Marutoshi Suisan

On March 27, 2020, Marutoshi Suisan Co., Ltd., headquartered in Taiki-town, Watarai-

country, Mie Prefecture became the first entity to obtain MEL aquaculture certification

in the field of land-based aquaculture flounder. Our company annually introduces about 500,000 young flounders and farms them in about several hundred tanks on land. By establishing aquaculture bases in three locations in the prefecture (Taiki, Matsusaka and Meiwa), we have a production system that ensures stable supply throughout the year. In terms of distribution, our company's farm-raised flatfish was given the MEL logo mark with a store brand through distribution companies that cooperate in ensuring the traceability of products that obtained the CoC certification Ver. 2.0, and these are continuously sold at mass retailers in the Tokyo Metropolitan area from April 13, 2020.

In the future, we will install sterilization equipment based in our main farm, Oki-Town, to improve production efficiency and increase

annual production by 25% from the current level to more than 600,000 fish, aiming to become one of the largest flatfish farmers in Japan. By distributing our products with MEL logo mark and traceability, we can show consumers our products produced with consideration to the conservation of natural environment and sustainable fish stocks and help them make choices.



In-Land Aquaculture Pond



Marutoshi's Nishiki Business Site at Taiki Town, Mie Prefecture

3. MEL Workshops

1) MEL Workshop 2022

On February 16, our workshop was held on the theme of "Reflections on the Five Years of MEL's Establishment and for New

Challenges." In the five years since the MEL Japan Council was established, the concept of the MEL Workshop 2022 is to

discuss the significance of marine ecolabel from the perspective of consumers and ordinary people in response to the various challenges facing the Japanese fishing industry, including the poor catch of major fish and climate change, the construction of a recycling-oriented society, and the inheritance of fish-eating culture.

Mr. Hideaki Yamaguchi, former director-general of Fisheries Agency, was invited to give the keynote speech. Mr. Jeff Regnart of Alaska RFM Scheme gave a vide message for celebration on MEL's fifth anniversary and future collaboration. The discussion was facilitated by Professor Hiroyuki Matsuda of Yokohama National University, and the main panelists were Ms. Narumi Shimura, CEO of ABC Cooking Studio, Ms. Mari Ako, an author and food culture and life history researcher, and Ms. Yuriko Shiiba, TV program director. In addition, a total of 20 people from fishery, aquaculture, wholesale, retail and MEL Advisory Board and Ambassadors participated in the discussion.

Mr. Yamaguchi's remark is that in view of the current situation surrounding fisheries and the environment in our country, the realization of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture is an urgent issue. Professor

Matsuda's comment is that the appeal of fish food is transmitted to the future. We have to think about whether the next generations can keep eating, not whether our generation can keep eating.

As we were in the midst of the sixth wave of covid-19, we avoided coming to the venue and decided to have people participate through live streaming on YouTube that we could share entire three precious hours with 200 people. The minutes will be posted on MEL's homepage, and the number of viewers to YouTube has continued, with more than 500 people already accessing the archive. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of those who participated. Every comment and suggestions will be reflected in MEL's contribution to the society.



Yamaguchi-san's Keynote Speech



Facilitator and Panelist on the stage. From the left to right, Matsuda-san, Kakizoe-san, Shimura-san, Shiiba-san and Ako-san

2) Study session for Hirado, Nagasaki and Miyagi

At the request of Hirado-City, Nagasaki Prefecture on January 27, Hisanori Kanno, Secretary General of MEL Japan Council, responded to the business trip and hold a seminar for obtaining MEL certification. The session was held as the one of series program called “Project of Improvement for Hirado’s Fishery Product Distribution” coordinated by Mr. Shinishi Eguchi, a distribution advisor who also being in charge of globalization of Toyosu Fish Market. Attendance at the venue was lower than originally planned due to the spread of pandemic, but the content of the lecture was taken on a VTR and distributed to

the people concerned.

On February 24, The Council held a remote MEL study session for the organization involved in coho salmon farming in Miyagi Prefecture, jointly organized by the Miyagi Prefecture Association for the Promotion of Miyagi Coho Salmon and Japan Fisheries Association. Reflecting the boom in salmon and trout farming, 43 people attended the session, we received many questions and opinions, which was showed their enthusiastic on building differentiated and sustainable farming operation.

3) Other Events

• CGC Top Conference

On February 19, Naoya Kakizoe, president of MEL Japan, was invited to give a talk at CGC National Top Conference. In the CGC Group, CGC Japan obtained CoC certification on November 26 last year, and Fresta Supermarket in Hiroshima is preparing to

apply for the certification. Kakizoe explained MEL to the tops of the CGC member companies. It was an impressive conference that, in addition to the Tokyo venue, 180 top executives from the member companies attended at six satellite locations nationwide. CGC Japan is Japan’s biggest cooperative

chain and has more than 4,000 stores all over the country. Mr. Atsuhiko Horiuchi, the representative of the group, has announced a policy of "sharing initiatives including environmental and social issues with consumers," and we would like to contribute to this policy as much as possible

• **Food Industry Management Forum**

On February 24, Kakizoe-san participated in "Food Industry Management Forum," as a guest speaker. Study session held once a month under the auspices of the Japan Food Journal, Kakizoe-san talked about the fisheries industry, including eco-labels, for one and half hours on the theme of "The Future and Challenges of the World and Japan's Fisheries Industry." While MEL is spreading from the industry of marine products to processed food, this event was linked with an article of the Japan Food Journal on January 24 as a special event for the five-year

anniversary of MEL. From the perspective of the number of attendees, it had a certain impact on. We hope this will lead to the participation of food companies in MEL membership.

• **MEL Auditor Training Program**

MEL auditor training program (CPD) was held from February 21 to 22. The program was originally scheduled to hold on face-to-face basis, but it was switched to a remote to prevent the infection. Thanks to the careful preparation by Technofa's team, a training provider, the instructors, trainees and organizers all got used to the remote style and were able to run smoothly. In addition to improving the quality of audit system, we plan to improve the content of the training next year in response to the new version of GSSI benchmark. We think that auditors must be burdened in many ways, but please understand this.

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

Thank you, Fujisaki-san for your report! We pay tribute to the business that has been hand-made one by one for the past 40 years, focusing on the environment, seeds and feeds. Please continue to develop sustainable aquaculture in harmony with the environment and aim to become the best in Japan.

The Sea of Japan side and the northern part of the country have record heavy snow, and the urban area is making a fuss with only five centimeters snow, so I felt sorry and shoveled the snow. I understand that snow removal costs are budgeted at the beginning of the year in snowy regions, but this year the initial budget will not be enough. I have no words to express my sympathy.

The fraudulent claim of product origin is getting a lot of media coverage almost every day. We believe that marine product ecolabeling is a system that promises the ultimate traceability, and we hope to work with certified companies to eliminate such practices.

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