

The Current Traceability Situation for Aquatic Products

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Summary

When issues such as false labeling and occurrence of BSE became public, the food industry lost consumer trust in commercial food products. More and more consumers were demanding a food supply at which every stage of production, processing, and distribution of each food item are documented, to allow accurate tracking. Thus, with this background, demands included stricter food safety compliance for the entire food chain. As a result, the food industry is addressing the management of food hygiene, safety, and quality through the introduction of HACCP and traceability systems. The latter are of considerable practical concern. In this atmosphere of voluntary compliance, ensuring traceability within individual food businesses has steadily advanced with involvement of major food retailers and associated operators. For aquatic products, development / introduction of traceability systems have also advance in part, for example regarding oysters and farmed fish. However, there are fewer participants than desired. For aquatic products in Japan, a system corresponding to the actual complex situation is necessary for realization of accurate traceability, taking into account the characteristics of distribution and consumed forms of aquatic products. Since comprehensive traceability of practical use has been lacking in the Japanese fisheries industry, we developed a system which has now been adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries supporting "Ubiquitous Food Safety and Security Systems Project" for three years from 2005. We here introduce the present situation regarding fisheries traceability based on the results of experimental development over three years.