Seafood Traceability in Japan

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Self Introduction

Jun Sakai

- Chief researcher of the Food Marketing Research and Information Center (FMRIC)
- Working on the following tasks related to food traceability
  - Establishment guidelines
  - Planning of traceability systems
  - Surveys of actual situation
  - Education

- Member of the Rice Distribution Deliberation Committee held by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (Oct-Nov, 2008) to design rice traceability system in Japan

- Keeping contact with Norwegian researcher on food traceability
  - visiting Norway in 2006 and 2010
  - taking part in the project “MainSafeTraceJapan” (2009-) as a researcher of Japan side
agenda

1. Needs for seafood traceability in Japan
2. Japanese regulations, standards, and guidelines related to seafood traceability
3. Current situation and challenge of seafood traceability in Japan
4. Summary
Definition of “Food Traceability”

The ability to follow the movement of food through specified stage(s) of production, processing and distribution

Notes:
1. This is the definition agreed at Codex Alimentarius held in June-July of 2004.
2. “Ability to follow the movement” in this definition refers to tracing both directions; trace forward and trace back.
3. “Movement” can relate to the origin of the materials, processing history, or distribution.
The Reason Traceability Is in Demand

When you tackle traceability...

My anxiety disappears when I can understand where the food came from.

When some problems occur...

They handle things appropriately.

Oo, right? We will do so.

I want to recall the product with the lot number oo.

Let's check on the cause.

Lot A

Lot B

Whom can I trust? I feel uneasy.

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Stated Objectives for Introduction of Food Traceability Systems

Contributions to secure food safety:
- Cause investigation of the accident
- Development of risk management
- Clearing operator’s responsibility
- For which objective shall we address traceability?

Reliable information:
- Quick withdrawal and recall
- Verifying correctness
- Transparent distribution
- Let’s think about it among the persons involved.

Contributions to business efficiency:
- Efficient inventory and quality management
- Cost saving and quality improvement
Needs for seafood traceability in Japan

In addition to the stated objectives for food general,

1. Confirming that seafood was caught and produced within the resource management program
   - Certification systems are introduced. Not only certification on catching, traceability in processing is necessary to assure product.
   - Certification systems increase cost for good resource management, if it is voluntary.

2. Corresponding to care on radioactivity
   - We can’t check all seafoods and products.
   - Check samples of each species, catch area and period.
   - Detailed labeling of catch area is recommended
     - “Northwest Pacific” → “Northern Sanriku Coast”
   - Ability to specify the catching area and period is required
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Japanese regulation related to seafood traceability

Food general

● 1996-: Requirement to labeling the place of origin of fresh food and certain processed foods, based on the JAS Law

● 2003-: Requirement to make efforts (=Recommendation) towards the provision of information and records in accordance with Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 3, the Food Sanitation Law

● 2008-: Requirement to make efforts (=Recommendation) towards the preparation and retention of records to form the basis of labels

Laws for individual items

● 2002-: Beef Traceability Law

● 2009-: Rice Traceability Law

● No mandatory requirement to keep record for seafood traceability
Guidelines and standard related to seafood traceability

- Established guidelines
  - 2005 “The guidelines of traceability system for shell fish”
  - 2006 “The guidelines of traceability system for famed fish”

- Standard for exposure of production information
  - “JAS standard with production information for farmed fish”
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Policies related to food traceability of the Democratic Party of Japan in 2009

From the “DPJ Policy Collection INDEX 2009”

- Introduction of a food traceability system
  - …based on the example of the EU, where all foods are required to have basic traceability, in Japan too, after a set period of time has passed, it will be required for all foods to be traceable through the recording and retention of records of suppliers, reception dates, customers, and sales date…

- Introduction of seafood traceability system
  - In order to ensure the appropriate implementation of resources management and their safe and stable maintenance, a traceability system will be introduced for marine products….
Current situation of seafood traceability in Japan

- Recordkeeping of food business operators
  - Most of food business operators are already keeping record to trace to their supplier and customer (one-step-back and on-step-forward)
  - Internal traceability has been diffusing if cost-benefit is acceptable for the company.

- Challenge: Identification of traceable unit
  - Marking and recording of product ID (e.g. lot number) may not be enough to trace.
    - No regulation to mark lot ID on fresh or frozen (raw material) seafood.
Electric chain traceability

Strong points
- rapid tracing through supply chain in case of trouble
- helping to rich information to consumer

Challenge
- Lessons from past government funded projects
  - little cases to continue
  - Players stop to use system when they feel not cost-effective.
  - Updating of ICT system needs investment.
- ICT system should be designed so that additional work and investment can be minimum.
Project “MainSafeTraceJapan” (2009–)

Food safety and food chain traceability within the mackerel food chain between Norway and Japan

- This project aims to develop, test and measure the effect of a tailor made traceability system with functionality for recording and sharing food safety related information in the mackerel supply chain between Norway and Japan

Activities by FMRIC

- Research on flow of mackerel and traceability in Japan part of the chain
- Simulated Recall of mackerel products from Japanese store back to Norwegian fishing vessel
- Test to use traceability software "eSporing" on behalf of Japanese importer of Norwegian mackerel
Summary

1. Improvement of chain traceability of seafood is important and challenge in Japan, too.

2. Cost-effective design is a key for success of electric system for chain traceability.

3. Research and business cooperation between Japan and Norway in chain traceability is very helpful
   - legal system design
   - Solution development and application