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AEON CO., LTD.

Launching MSC-certified Scallops at 348 stores The First Scallops to Bear the Seafood Ecolabel in Japan

Starting Thursday, March 6, 2014, scallops certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)* will be launched at 348 AEON general merchandise stores in Hokkaido, Honshu, and Shikoku.



In view of environmental sustainability, Aeon has been offering MSC-certified seafood products since November 2006 in an effort to stably provide its customers with seafood that can be enjoyed with peace of mind. Currently, Aeon offers a total of 15 items of 13 types of MSC-certified seafood, the most extensive assortment of MSC-certified offerings in Japan, including Topvalu Pacific cod and soy-sauce-marinated salmon roe. The products are highly received by customers.

Hokkaido scallops had been overharvested in the 1950s, resulting in their catch to slump to 6,000 tons, equivalent to 10% of the peak harvest level. Amid this predicament, producers including the Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations, worked hard to adopt new equipment for harvesting young shells and establish new methods of nurturing young shells. Thanks to their efforts, scallop harvest recovered to around 400,000 tons by 2008. Abundant supply was achieved without undermining resource conservation. Such initiative was highly praised, and the Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association received the MSC certification in May 2013.

AEON general merchandise stores nationwide have acquired the MSC-CoC (Chain of Custody) certification, a license issued to businesses capable of processing and distributing MSC-certified products without having them commingled with non-MSC-certified products. Based on this license, Aeon is entitled to process and package MSC-certified products into sashimi or other products and offer them as MSC-labeled products, which enables it to supply fresher seafood to customers.

Aeon is determined to continue taking various measures to stably deliver fresh and delicious seafood to its customers while giving consideration to sustainability.

[Outline of MSC-certified Hokkaido Scallops]

1. Launch date: Thursday, March 6, 2014
2. Product name: MSC-certified boiled Hokkaido scallops 100 g 198 yen (including tax)
Product assortment will be expanded in phases.
3. Stores: 348 AEON general merchandise stores in Hokkaido, Honshu, and Shikoku
4. Product features:
The Hokkaido scallops have been harvested in Funka Bay and the Okhotsk Sea, two major scallop production areas. The scallops from Funka Bay are tender and sweet, perfect for frying with butter.
The scallops from the Okhotsk Sea are firm and chewy, best eaten as sashimi.

*MSC (Marine Stewardship Council)

MSC is an international certification organization that certifies fisheries that do not resort to fishing methods leading to destruction of nature and give consideration to sustainability of marine resources and environmental conservation. Seafood products made exclusively from marine ingredients harvested by MSC-certified fisheries are permitted to bear the MSC Ecolabel. MSC designates certifiers in different countries around the world to implement the actual process of certifying sustainable and environmentally friendly fisheries in their respective countries. While issues of overharvesting and depletion of fish are becoming the target of criticism, products bearing MSC Ecolabels are becoming more common around the world, drawing much attention.

[Aeon's Procurement Policy for Fisheries Products]

In view of preventing resource depletion and preserving biodiversity, risks will be regularly assessed. In order to reduce risks, feasible measures will be examined and efforts will be made to procure sustainable fisheries products.

Specific measures associated with fisheries products

Sale of certified products

- Proactive sale of products harvested by fisheries certified as sustainable. (MSC-certified natural fish, ASC-certified aquacultured fish)
- Sale of ASC-certified aquacultured fish will be launched in 2014.

Establishment of traceability

- Aeon's own Traceability Manual will be created for rigorous traceability management.

Elimination of illegal trade

- Aeon has terminated the trade of European eels, an endangered species whose trade is restricted by the Washington Convention, due to the fact that no certain measures that ensure compliance with the specifications set out in the Appendix of the Washington Convention can be identified.

Regular assessment of risks

- In the event that a revision is made to the Washington Convention or the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species that affects the Convention, risks will be reassessed and necessary measures will be examined.