

Food industry structure & its players' behavior

Considering present distribution/transaction problems from the SMs' merchandising behavior and changes in wholesale market channel in Japan.

Agri-Food Business

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Research summary

Background

- The production and consumption of marine products strongly depend on the capture of wild resources (farmed ones are not exception), and the excessive resource use beyond their reproductive capacity will trigger their deterioration and depletion.
- The domestic consumption market for marine products has been shrinking due to the "shift away from fish" and the "loss of aging effect," combined with a declining population characterized by low birthrates and an aging demographic.
- Supermarkets (SMs), our main source for purchasing seafood, are facing declining sales and intensified vertical competition. They make efforts to improve their merchandising strategies, including reducing losses in sales and missed opportunities.
- The above movements by SMs also affect their relationships with suppliers, their modes of distribution and transactions, and price formation.

Purpose

- We will study SMs' merchandising behavior, focusing on measures to control the aforementioned losses.
- We will study the relationship between the aforementioned actions and distribution restructuring, particularly reconsidering the current significance of the wholesale market system.
- We will explore what the ideal distribution system should look like.

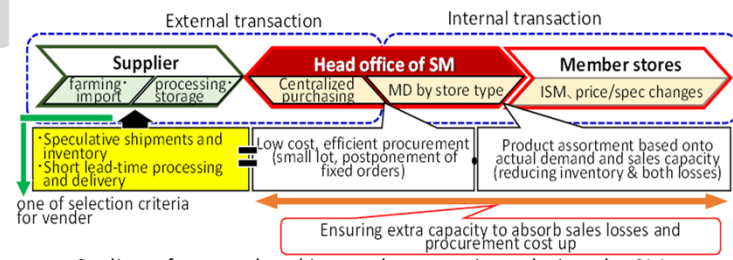
Main achievements

- We clarified features of the SMs' merchandising on bluefin tuna.
- We examined transaction channel perceptions and evaluations by fishery cooperatives and supermarkets.
- We explored impacts and implications of the wholesale market system reform.

Prospects for collaboration

[Collaboration with fishers and food industry companies]

We would like to share various information with stakeholders like producers, wholesalers, and retailers, and also to think of improving measures for these stakeholders' economic problems and challenges. Thereby we would like to contribute to their sustainable business.



Outline of external and internal transaction relations by SM



Above: Seafood sales corner at a SM operated by a railroad company (Kawasaki city, Kanagawa pref.)
Below: Tuna auction area at the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Wholesale Market, Toyosu market (Koto ward, Tokyo pref.)



Appeal point

I would like to understand the behavioral logic of the various players that constitute the food system in order to grasp the distribution restructuring mechanisms and solve the problems inherent in that system.