

## Seafood

July 11, 2012

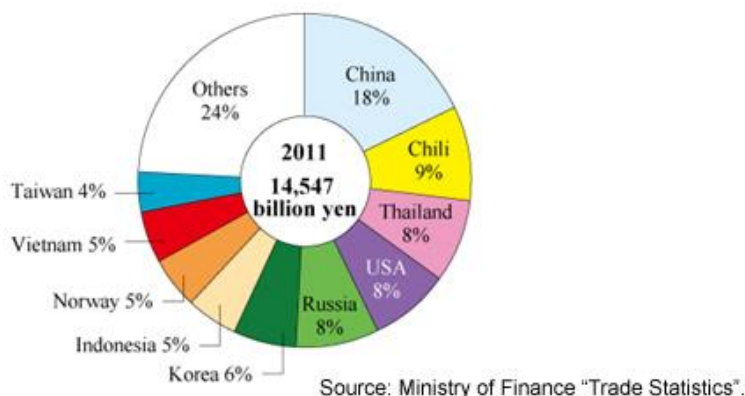
### TRENDS OF IMPORTED MARINE PRODUCTS

As for the trade of marine products in the world, Japan's import volume is a little above 10%, and the import value is nearly 20%, making Japan one of the biggest importers in the world. Limiting to edible seafood, self-sufficiency rate is 59% and Japan relies over 40% on imports.

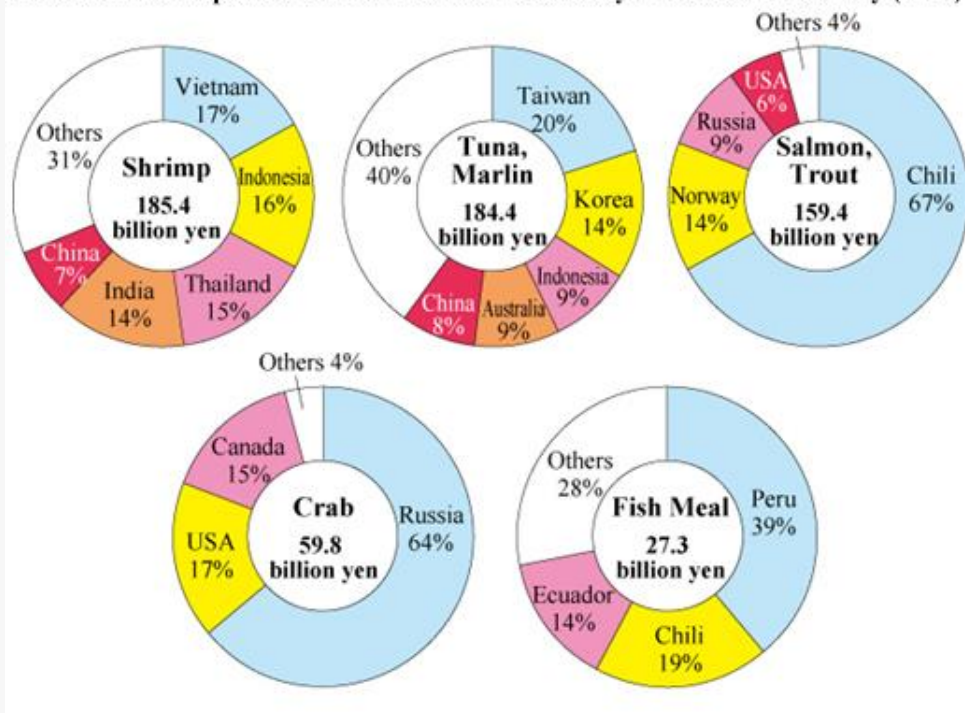
After the import volume of marine products in Japan reached a record high of 3.82 million tons in 2001, the number gradually dropped until 2009 due to the decrease of domestic consumption. The import volume in 2010 rose 5% year on year as a result of the strong yen. Also, in 2011, although the supply of some domestic marine products decreased as an effect of 3.11 and imports increased, the overall volume was the same as the previous year marking 2.69 million tons. As for the import value, despite the sharp rise in the value of yen in 2011, import value rose as a result of a great expansion in demands for marine products around the world. In 2011, the import value increased 6% year on year reaching 1.4547 trillion yen.

Marine products are imported from different countries and regions around the world depending on the items. Japan imported from 120 countries and 16 regions in 2011. The tariff on marine products range from 0~40% depending on the items, and the trade-weighted average is around 4%. Looking at the top 3 items in 2011 on the basis of imported value and country, shrimp was from Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, etc. Tuna and swordfish were from Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, etc. Salmon and trout were from Chile, Norway, Russia, etc.

**Breakdown of Imported Value of Marine Products by Country (2011)**



**Breakdown of Imported Value of Marine Products by Product and Country (2011)**



## Consumption trend

While the consumption volume of marine products is declining, there are changes in the types of marine products consumed in households. Comparing the quantity of fresh fish purchased by households in 2001 and 2011, the purchased quantities of squid and tuna dropped significantly, while salmon made a small drop. As for the purchased quantities of fresh fish, salmon rose from 3rd to 1st. The only type of fish that increased in purchasing quantities was yellowtail.

These two types of fish remained stable in its purchased quantities among households because these imported products from Chile and Norway are consumed in different types of dishes. As for yellowtails, different reasons can be raised for its increase including stable supply due to the aquaculture industry, dropping prices due to increasing number of yellowtails, and spreading of new ways to eat the fish. The amount of saury caught decreased, and the amount supplied to the market dropped. As a result, the quantity purchased in 2010 and 2011 decreased.

Japanese buy their marine products mainly from super markets or seafood specialty stores. Of that, the amount purchased at supermarkets account for 66%. According to the survey conducted by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery, the merits for purchasing marine products in supermarkets were: "able to purchase the amount

needed," "easy to see the price, expire date, and where it is from," "since the products are packaged, it is easy to purchase." As seen from these points, the convenience and clear product labels during the time of purchase at supermarkets are the main reasons. On the other hand, the merits of purchasing at a specialty store for seafood, the reasons were: "it is fresh since the fish or other seafood will be cut into the size of your choice right in front of you," "you can get knowledge about the ways or timing to eat when you purchase," "it is exciting to see the wide varieties of seafood." These specialty stores are evaluated by the consumers for its liveliness and services provided based on each customer's needs.



## Measures to expand the consumption of marine product that supports the healthy lifestyle of the Japanese is necessary

As we all know, marine products include fatty acid such as DHA (docosahexaenoci acid) or EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) that could be found in fish fat, and other types of functional components. Also, marine products are high in protein, while it is low in calories. Marine products are the main food that supports the healthy eating styles of Japanese people. Health consciousness among the consumers is quite high. It is important to continue delivering information that would lead to better the understandings of marine products that will make people healthy.

In fact, according to the same survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery, people who answered, "marine products are healthier than eating meat" was the highest at 64.7%, followed by "you can feel the season by eating marine products" (53.6%). Consumers are evaluating consumption of marine products for its healthy features and the sense of season. Keeping these points in mind, targeting the decreasing fish consumption, related parties of foreign manufacturers, exporting companies, processing companies, distributors, retailers, and restaurants must get together and expand fish consumption with a new approach.