

TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

Japan has an extensive road, rail and shipping system throughout the country. Freezing facilities are readily available in all modes of transportation.

NEW TRANSPORTATION TECHNIQUES FOR LIVE FISH

A new distribution system for the transportation of live fish is being developed jointly by Hyo-On Laboratories, Inc., based in Yonago City, Tottori Prefecture, and Isuzu Motors Ltd. They are working on vehicles which will be suitable for the mass transit of live fish at freezing temperatures. Hyo-On Laboratories will provide Isuzu with the know-how for freezing temperature transportation, while Isuzu will produce and market the live fish container trucks.

Efforts are being made to apply freezing temperature technology to the large-scale transportation of live fish without water. The current method of transporting live fish involves loading sea water onto trucks and oxygenating the water during the trip from the producing area to the market. This method is wasteful and expensive, with sea water accounting for 90% of the transportation costs. The objective is to establish a new distribution system by applying freezing temperature technology to large-scale transportation of live fish without water.

ADVANCED CARGO TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Ministry of Transport (MOT) and the Ministry of Construction (MOC) are undertaking a study to evaluate the potential for a new transportation system for the 21st century. The system would consist of dedicated cargo lines constructed along highways, which would be used by driverless trains carrying trucks. The new system is being considered in response to efforts to ease atmospheric pollution, reduce traffic congestion, and solve the labour shortage problem in the trucking industry. Underground construction of dedicated cargo lines in major urban centres, to separate cargo vehicles from other vehicles, is also being studied. Details of the timing and locations of the new system are undecided and problems still remain in terms of financing, construction and operating costs and effects on other transportation systems. Following discussions with MOC, The MOT compiled an interim report at the end of the fiscal 1991.

NEW KANSAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The new Kansai international airport, located in Osaka Bay is scheduled to be completed in September 1994. It will be located offshore on a man-made island and, unlike Tokyo's Narita, will operate around-the-clock. Passenger volume is expected to increase five-fold by 2010, while air cargo traffic is expected to increase 13-fold. The development of the Kansai airport will allow for easy access to a Kansai's marketplace of roughly 22 million people. The population is concentrated in Osaka, Kobe, Kyoto and Nara. The region is Japan's second largest industrial, financial, commercial and population centre after Tokyo and accounts for roughly 20% of the Japanese economy.

COLD STORAGE FACILITIES

Cold storage in Japan exceeds 70 million MT annually and about 60% of this is used for fishery products. Cold storage facilities serve two main purposes: 1) to maintain the original freshness of the fish, and 2) to control product supply. The Japanese have typically bought fishery products during periods of low prices and have stored them until prices have strengthened.