



Eco Mark News

The Eco Mark is a voluntary program ran by Japan Environment Association. Contract fees from licensing companies and application fees from applicants cover whole budget for our activities. In this "Eco Mark News", the information related to Eco Mark Program such as newly selected Eco Mark product category and proposals for certification criteria is provided on the basis of the "Guidelines for Eco Mark Program Implementation".

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* Annexes are separate from our newsletter and please contact our office if you wish to obtain them. They are also available on our website.

Special Report Eco Mark Dialogue Meeting 2004 (1)

Think about Promotion of Green Products from Consumer Perspective - What We Can Do at Distribution Stage - Keynote Speech in Osaka Session “Smart Consumers Foster Good Companies - Green Purchasing and Eco Mark” by Prof. Takashi Gunjima, Doshisha University

Many consumers may have experienced that they could not find the eco-friendly products easily at nearby stores even if they looked for them or it was hard to find the eco-friendly products inside stores. From such point of view Eco Mark Dialogue Meetings were held with the title mentioned above in Osaka (Creo Osaka Nishi) on March 19, 2004 and in Tokyo (Seiryō Kaikan) on March 26, 2004. Keynote speech, activity presentations by the panelists and related discussion, and active discussion including the opinion exchange with the audience took place at each venue.

In this issue we introduce the summary of keynote speech by Prof. Takashi Gunjima of Doshisha University at Osaka venue and the report on keynote speech by Dr. Katsumi Yorimoto of Waseda University at Tokyo venue will be introduced in next issue.

The contents of the discussion including panel discussion will be summarized in a brochure and will be uploaded to the official homepage as well.



“Everyday is Environment Day”

BUND, one of the largest environment NGOs in Germany, created a poster on which it says, “Everyday is Environment Day”. Although there are Energy-Saving Month (February), Environment Month (June), Protective Measure Month against Ozone Layer (September), Recycle Promotion Month (October) and Global Warming Prevention Month (December) in Japan as an effort to focus on various environmental issues in various forms, it is not just that month we should make an effort to solve these problems.

During the course of dealing with various environmental issues, it requires changing the social system and promoting the effort at the company level through the improvement of regulations and other measures. However it is also critical to approach from changing the society by reviewing the daily purchase of consumers at the same time. When consumers buy the eco-friendly products, the activity means to support the companies, which produce and sell such products. As a result it also becomes a manifestation of nonsupport for the companies, which don't produce and sell the eco-friendly products, by not purchasing their products.

This is rather similar to the electoral voting in terms of supporting the companies, which make an effort in dealing with the environmental issues through the daily purchase. In this regard the notion of “Everyday is Environment Day” becomes very important.

From Exit to Entrance

The awareness of environmental issue has been increased in Japan since around the time of Earth Summit in 1992 and the activity mainly focused on recycling has been spreading ever since. However recently the activity has been shifted from the recycle of used products to the upper stream activity. In other words people thinks it is more effective to act at the entrance rather than act at the exit.

Recycle completes the cycle when the waste is reproduced as resource and consumers purchase the products made with the recycled materials. The issue of entrance that is to buy the recycled products becomes critical as much as the issue of exit that is to promote recycling activity. It is also important not to buy the products that are not needed or can soon become the waste.

Recently the notion of “Recycle-Based Society” and “3R”, that is; “Reduce”, “Reuse” and “Recycle”, have been widespread among the society. Activities that can be tried by consumers at the purchase level are “Reduce”, “Refuse” in terms of refusing the unnecessary products, “Remove” in terms of removing the harmful products. At the product usage level, there are activities such as “Reuse”, “Refill” and “Repair” as well as “Rental”, which is to rent instead of purchase products that are not used frequently. And then there are “Recycle” and “Resale” after using the products.

It is most important to find the solution at the source to reduce waste to lighten the environmental burden and in this regard we need to find the solution for the purchase activity, which is the entrance of the recycle activity.

The Role of Distributors as the Node

As we carry out promoting the eco-friendly products, the positioning of distributors who are in contact with consumers and at the same time link to the manufacturers becomes important. The role of distributors is to understand the consumer awareness and needs and feedback such information to the manufacturers so that their products reflect the consumer awareness and needs. It is also important for the distributors to merchandize the eco-friendly products actively along with providing the information related to the eco-friendly products in order to expand the green product market. Consumers are not able to select and purchase the eco-friendly products if they are not displayed inside stores.

For an example, TESCO, a supermarket chain in England, has changed all their products to the eco-friendly products. The number of customers increased because they feel assured and safe that what they buy at TESCO is all eco-friendly. As a result the sales of TESCO, which had been the second before they changed their merchandizing policy, became the top among the supermarket chains in England.

On the other hand, Wal-Mart, a supermarket chain in America, started to display the eco-friendly products at the most eye-catching place at their stores. In doing so Wal-Mart has been encouraging the development of eco-friendly products by manufacturers and appealing those products to their customers. It led to increase of their sales.

Promotion of “Enviropreneur Marketing”

Green consumers with high environmental awareness and who have potential to become the core of green purchase activity are about 10% of the total consumers in Germany while it is only around 2-3 % in Japan. It is also regarded that the overseas green consumers buy the eco-friendly products even if they are little more expensive or the quality of products are lower than the regular products. On the other hand, the consumer survey in Japan revealed although they are aware of the environmental issues, most of them wouldn't buy the products if the prices are higher or the quality of products are lower than the regular products. Trend of Japanese consumers' purchase activity is to buy the products with lower prices and higher quality as well as with the eco-friendly feature. This trend makes it difficult to spread the eco-friendly products because the manufacturers have to consider all those consumer demands in order to promote the purchase.

Therefore we need to carry out the marketing activity in the form of “Enviropreneur (Environment + Entrepreneur)”, which fosters the green consumers and promotes development and sales of the eco-friendly products in order to popularize such products while the green consumer group who consider the environmental issues first is not widespread. What is required most is to “co-promote” distributors and consumers so that both groups are well informed in order to promote the development and popularization of the eco-friendly products.

The Expected Role of Eco Mark

One of the methods to popularize the eco-friendly products in the market is to setup the minimum criteria in regard to the environmental burden or similar issues so that the companies can compete under the same condition. By implementing such measure, it will enable them to distribute the eco-friendly products with the certain standard.

In the meantime there is an approach of the ecolabelling, which focus on the idea of “top runner”. It is a method to promote the products that are superior in the environmental aspect to consumers. We have many ecolabelling in various forms in the market, however, Eco Mark is the only program in Japan that evaluates the environmental aspect throughout the lifecycle of products and certify the products with less environmental burden.

Eco Mark has a very important role in the process of establishing the system with which each consumer becomes aware of the responsibility and can select the eco-friendly products proactively. It is expected that the eco-friendly product purchase by an individual consumer will develop into the larger movement and, consequently, it will change the activity of companies as well as the whole society. We need to consider what distributors and consumers can do at the sales and purchase stage and what they should do in order to carry forward the change of society in such way.

Profile of Prof. Takashi Gunjima

Mr. Takashi Gunjima is a professor of Faculty of Economics, Doshisha University. He is appointed as a committee member of various functions including NGO/NPO Company Environment Policy Recommendation Promotion Committee (Ministry of Environment), and Environment Section Committee, Industry and Environment Subcommittee, Regional Circulated Business Ad Hoc Committee of Industrial Structure Council, and as the chairman of Container/Packaging Recycle WG (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry). Currently Prof. Gunjima is also appointed as the chairman of Eco Mark Committee for Establishing Category and Criteria and a member of Eco Mark Steering Committee.

Committee Report/Decisions

Eco Mark Committee for Establishing Category and Criteria (28th meeting)

The 28th Eco Mark Committee for Establishing Category and Criteria (EMCECC, Chairman: Prof. Takashi Gunjima, Doshisha Univ.) was held on April 8, 2004 at Kokukaikan. After the discussion, the following decisions were made;

Decisions

- Primary assessment of 2 categories presented at the 28th meeting of the EMCECC was conducted. As a result, none was subjected to secondary assessment.
- The partial revision of certification criteria for Eco Mark product category No.103 “Clothes Version2.0”, No.104 “Textile Products for Home Use Version2.0”, No.105 “Textile Products for Industrial Use Version2.0”, No.108 “Sanitary Paper Version2.0”, No.117 “Copier” and No.123 “Building Products Using Recycled Material” that are submitted by Eco Mark Committee for Product Certification was approved and decided to be revised on April 8, 2004.
- It was decided to add “Digital Printer (Digital Press Printer)” to the scope of Eco Mark product category No.117 “Copier” under revision at working group.

Status of Certification Criteria (as of May 1, 2004)

Classification	Category No.	Category	Period of Open to Public	Date of Establishment/Revision/Discontinuance	Certification Criteria
Partial Revision	103	Clothes Version2.0	-	April 8, 2004	Annex 1
	104	Textile Products for Home Use Version2.0			
	105	Textile Products for Industrial Use Version2.0			
	108	Sanitary Paper Version2.0			Annex 2
	117	Copier			Annex 3
	123	Building Products Using Recycled Material			Annex 4

Topics

Results of Market Share Survey on Eco Mark Certified Products of Information Paper, Sanitary Paper and Paints

Eco Mark Office has been conducting a series of survey to assess the market share of Eco Mark certified products by sampling a specific product category in each survey. The latest survey was conducted on the following 3 items; information paper, sanitary paper and paints. Summary of the result is as described below.

Estimated sales volume shares of information paper certified by Eco Mark are as follows (based on the manufacturers shipping volume in 2003); PPC paper 16.5%, inkjet paper 4.0%, form printing paper 3.8%, diazo type paper 67.6%, and OCR paper 0.9%. Considering the nature of product the ratios of Eco Mark certified form printing paper and OCR paper are low while inkjet paper and diazo type paper increased more than 140% year-on-year (volume) basis. In the meantime the corporate sales ratio of Eco Mark certified products for 4 items excluding inkjet paper exceeds 95%, which reflects the high demand from the government and other public offices, etc.

The survey on sanitary paper showed the estimated sales volume share of each item as follows; toilet role 41.5%, tissues 1.4% and bathroom tissues 24.9%. Toilet role and bathroom tissue have the relatively same share year-on-year (volume) basis while tissues decreased to 60.6%. As to sanitary paper the sales ratio of Eco Mark products to retailers is significantly greater (84.6-99.2%) for all items.

The survey on paints focused on the synthetic resin water paint was conducted and the result showed the Eco Mark certified product share in the synthetic resin water paint market is 9.6%, which is 61.9% of the previous years result. The survey result showed the high corporate sales ratio (86.5%) of the Eco Mark certified products in this product category.

Please refer to the internet homepage of Eco Mark Office, etc. for the detailed report on this survey.

Information

“Eco Mark Talk Show” will be Held at MITSUKOSHI (Ikebukuro branch)

We position influence to distribution stage as one of pillars of promotional activities in order that more Eco Mark products can be sufficiently circulated in the market.

As a series of this policy, auspicious to MITSUKOSHI LTD, we will have “Eco Mark Talk Show” featuring Mr. Hiroshi Yagyu (photo), an actor, at special event space in their Ikebukuro branch shop on May 4. He will give us interesting talk with the subject of “Live with Forests, Learn from Forests”. Please come to the talk show.

Also, 5th Anniversary Fair of original brand “Suteki Seikatsu (wonderful life)” will be held from the above date to 10th (Mon) at this shop and Eco Mark certified products corner will be set up.

Person in charge of this event of MITSUKOSHI LTD talks as follows; We would like to deal with environmental preferable products such as Eco Mark products enthusiastically as a company, not limit to this event. We will respond to consumers needs towards environmentally friendly products by putting force into development of ecology products including “Suteki Seikatsu”.

Eco Mark will continue to communicate with retailers frequently.

Hiroshi Yagyu “Eco Mark Talk Show”

Date & Time: May 4 (Tue/holiday) 15:00-16:00

Venue: 7F special event stage, MITSUKOSHI Ikebukuro branch shop



Booth at “MIE 21st Leading Industrial Exhibition” (Eco Mark Consultation Meeting is held at the same time)

Eco Mark Office will participate in “MIE 21st Leading Industrial Exhibition”, by setting booth and so on. The activities of companies and organizations of whom efforts have been put into the development of new technologies and products for the environmental protection, etc. will be introduced at this exhibition. Please drop by.

Date & Time: May 21 (Fri), 22 (Sat) 10:00-17:00

Venue: Yokkaichi Dome (5169, Ooaza, Hazuko, Yokkaichi City)

Organizer: MIE 21st Leading Industrial Exhibition Executive Committee

Contact: Eco Mark Office, Ms. Mizuno TEL 03-5114-1255

Eco Mark Consultation Meeting in Mie (held during the above exhibition)

We will hold an “Eco Mark Consultation Meeting” on application at the above “MIE 21st Leading Industrial Exhibition”.

Time: 1) Morning 10:00-12:00 2) Afternoon 13:00-16:00

Place: Eco Mark booth at “MIE 21st Leading Industrial Exhibition”

If you wish to attend the consultation, please apply to Eco Mark Office with following information by fax. The deadline is May 14 (Fri). We will contact you after May 17 (Mon). Please understand that we will accept early arrivals when applications excess our capacity. Consultation is only in Japanese.

- 1) Company/Organization
- 2) Names of attendants
- 3) Phone and Fax number of attendants
- 4) What do you wish to consult about ? (Please specify the product category and questions.)
- 5) Date and time you wish (1st priority, 2nd priority; May 21 or 22)

To apply Japan Environment Association Eco Mark Office Certification Section
FAX: 03-5114-1257 Contact Mr.Suzuki

Eco Mark Consultation Meeting in Osaka (the 10th)

We will hold an Eco Mark Consultation Meeting (the 10th) on application at Osaka ATC Green Eco Plaza on June 18 (Fri), 2004.

Time: 1) Morning 10:30-12:30 2) Afternoon 13:30-16:30

Place: ATC Green Eco Plaza (Eco Mark Zone in Green Eco Plaza, 11F, ITM Bldg., Asia and Pacific Trade Center 2-1-10, Nanko kita, Suminoe-ku, Osaka-shi)

Manner: Individual consultation on application (Eco Mark staff will consult with you)

Consultation Fee: Free

Number Limit: 10 groups

If you wish to attend the consultation, please apply to Eco Mark Office with the information mentioned in page 5 (Eco Mark Consultation Meeting in Mie) by fax. The deadline is June 4 (Fri). Please understand that we will accept early arrivals when applications exceed our capacity. Consultation is only in Japanese.

xellent Ecological Topics

In this column, we introduce the eco-friendly activities of corporations and organizations.

Movement toward the Promotion of Thinned Wood Usage

Tree thinning is an important work during the course of promoting the growth of trees and cultivating the healthy forest, and the usage of thinned wood has been actively promoted from the point of the effective utilization of resource as well as the consumption control of imported materials. In such circumstance various organizations are carrying out the activities.

National Federation of Forest Owners Co-operative Associations carries out the product certification and application of the thinned wood mark. They organize the competition for the tree thinning and the usage of thinned wood to promote such activities and the products made from/with thinned wood. Kutsuki Board of Education that uses the thinned wood material for the furniture of the local library (bookcases, desks & chairs, counters, etc.) and Daian Junior High School in Daian Town that donates the benches made by the students with thinned wood to the local park and other places were among the award winners of the competition in 2003.

Number of companies, which promote the development of products using the thinned wood materials, has been increasing and various products including paper, office supplies, furniture and housing architecture/interior materials have been launched in the market. Akita Plywood Co., Ltd. developed "Akita Cedar Structural Plywood", to which they applied the thinned wood material of local Akita cedar to enforce the usage. Although the thinned wood material from cedar wasn't really in use as the plywood material before, Akita Plywood has successfully applied the material to the surface of plywood and has also generating the cost profit as a result. Also "Council on Promoting Paper Drink Container for Cultivating Forest" was established on April 14, 2004 by the manufacturers of drink, container and paper and National Federation of Forest Owners Co-operative Associations to popularize and promote the paper drink container, "Cart Can" that uses the thinned wood material.

Eco Mark has established the product category No.115, "Wooden Products Using Waste Wood, Thinned-out Wood, Small-diameter Logs, etc.", to promote the development and usage of the furniture, interior materials and civil engineering and construction supplies, etc. made from/with such materials. About 130 products have already been certified in this product category. We are aiming at cultivating the healthy forest in Japan and reducing the environmental burden by promoting the application of the thinned wood materials to various products further.

