

Current Major Activities of the Japan Iron and Steel Federation

1. Efforts for orderly development of international steel trade

Collection and analysis of international steel market information

- Significant changes have been seen in the international steel market recently because of increasing demand from emerging countries like China, steeply rising prices of steel-making raw materials and energy, and ongoing global market reorganization. In these circumstances, the Japan Iron and Steel Federation (JISF) has worked to collect and analyze information on steel supply and demand and trade in the world's major steel markets. In addition, recognizing that sustaining and developing a healthy steel trade environment is indispensable for Japan's steel industry, the JISF has also made a range of other efforts. Specifically, the JISF has strived to accurately comprehend trade conflicts in the global steel market and promptly address these conflicts where Japan's interests are involved. Meanwhile, the JISF has offered cooperation to the Japanese government in a wide range of ways to contribute to the government's trade policies.

Bilateral steel dialogues and cooperation for EPA

- To promote mutual understanding and prevent trade conflicts proactively, the JISF has held dialogs on steel-related issues with China, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and other parties. In addition, the JISF has offered to cooperate with the Japanese government to contribute to the country's trade policies by, for example, assisting the government in negotiating the Economic Partnership Agreement with other countries.

Measures to prevent increasing unfair steel exports to Japan

- There is concern that unfair steel exports to Japan may further increase in the future. To address this issue, the JISF has worked to achieve an accurate understanding of the state of Japan's major steel product imports and has made various arrangements to contribute to the solution of the issue of unfair trade in accordance with Japan's Trade Law.

2. Corporate foundation developed response to the globalization of steel industry

M&A-related laws and regulations

- To prevent any damage to the value of Japanese companies and any drain of technology, which is a source of the nation's competitiveness, the JISF has monitored recent M&A trends along with related organizations' activities and has collected information to prepare for a planned reform of M&A related laws.

Call for tax system reform

- In order to enhance Japan's tax system so that it can contribute to the revitalization of the nation's economy and industries and to the sustaining and enhancement of the nation's international competitive power, the JISF has determined a collective opinion of the domestic steel industry. Based on the opinion and through cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Japan Business Federation, the JISF makes requests of and offers recommendations to the national government, the Liberal Democratic Party and other interested organizations for the appropriate review and reform of the current corporate tax system.

Measures in response to oligopoly in resource supplies and soaring crude oil prices

- BHP Billiton's recent move to acquire Rio Tinto in Australia has raised concerns that the oligopoly of steel-making raw material supplies will be further strengthened and fair price formation in the industry will be impaired. The JISF, therefore, announced its opposition to the planned merger and submitted its opinion in writing to the President of the European Commission and the Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. The JISF also called on the Chairman of the Japan Fair Trade Commission to conduct surveys and take appropriate measures so that fair price formation can be ensured in the world's iron ore and coking coal markets.

3. International cooperation and other active measures for the global environment

Global warming countermeasures

Steady progress of voluntary action programs in the steel industry

- In its voluntary action programs, Japan's steel industry has steadily promoted diverse measures to reduce CO₂ emissions, including: (1) energy-saving in steel-making processes; (2) contribution to society's energy-saving efforts through products and by-products; (3) practical use of the Kyoto Mechanism and contribution to other countries' efforts to reduce emissions through export of by-products and (4) promotion of exchanges of professionals under the framework of the Japan-China Steel Industries Conference on Exchange of Advanced Technologies on Environmental Preservation and Energy-Saving, and contribution to local and international efforts by the APP (Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate) and IISI (International Iron and Steel Institute).

Recommendations and lobbying for a new post-Kyoto framework

- To contribute to the construction of a truly effective post-Kyoto framework for reduced emissions to be implemented in 2013, the JISF has worked in diverse areas. For example, in March 2007, the JISF prepared and published an "opinion on efforts and measures for global warming control—post-Kyoto protocol recommendations." It focuses on the major emitting countries' involvement and the establishment of a fair and rational framework. Through this opinion and cooperation with various trade associations including the Nippon Keidanren, and METI, and by keeping a close watch on international movements of COP/MOP (Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties) and G8, the JISF now works to inform the media and the national and international public of the steel industry's points of view.

International collaboration on global warming control measures

- Regarding China, the JISF has worked on technological exchanges, for example, through the Meeting for Environmental Protection and Energy-Saving with CISA (China Iron and Steel Association). The JISF has also actively participated in the Japan-China Energy Conservation and Environmental Issues Forum organized jointly by METI and the Japan-China Economic Association. These awareness-raising activities are intended to deepen the understanding of the importance of technical exchanges and dissemination.
- Through activities at the Steel Task Force of the APP and in collaboration with international organizations such as the IEA (International Energy Agency) and IISI, the JISF continues to contribute to the establishment of a truly effective international framework for the reduction of green house effect gas emissions.

Efforts for environmental issues

Environment preservation for clean air and water

- The JISF has promoted appropriate environmental measures in the steel industry, for example, by implementing action programs for the control of VOC and dioxin emissions. Furthermore, the JISF has worked to enhance the rationality of domestic environmental protection laws and regulations by participating in related councils, collecting relevant information and joining hands with other interested parties.

REACH

- In June 2008, a new scheme, REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals), will be launched in Europe. Since there is concern that the scheme will significantly impact Japan's steel industry, the JISF visited Europe to investigate the situation. Meanwhile, the JISF reviewed and continues to examine an array of measures, having established a working group to support customers of indirect export from Japan.

4. Efforts for developing safe, comfortable and environment-friendly social infrastructure

Development of social infrastructure

- As part of its marketing development activities, the JISF has worked to develop new materials and construction methods for the building and construction sector, develop applications of steel products and their dissemination in new areas, establish social infrastructure, and enhance steel demand. Specifically, the JISF:
 - ① Has participated in a national project involving several ministries (the Cabinet Office; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism) named “research and development of new structure system building using innovative structural materials,” and has promoted the development of innovative structural materials and members manufactured with such materials.
 - ② Has reviewed steel product application technologies, particularly those usable in disaster prevention measures (regarding earthquakes, floods, etc.).
 - ③ Has reviewed the possibility of using “multilevel crossings exclusive for passenger cars” to mitigate congestion and restore sound road traffic functions in urban areas.
 - ④ Has offered research assistance to researchers and students who study steel structures at universities and research institutes around the nation and has promoted the understanding and dissemination of steel structure studies.
 - ⑤ Has disseminated steel product application technologies for the construction sector in the Chinese and Southeast Asian markets.

Construction of a recycling-oriented society

- ① Voluntary action programs concerning final disposal volume and expanded use of slag
 - In the voluntary action programs concerning final disposal volume, the JISF has enhanced its efforts aiming at meeting the goal of reducing the volume to 500,000 tons by fiscal 2010.
- ② Resource recycling
 - In cooperation with other interested parties including the Nippon Keidanren, the JISF has made recommendations about institutional development toward the creation of a recycling-oriented society. These efforts are made with the recognition that resource recycling as well as advanced reuse of a by-product from steel-making processes, slag, and an external resource, waste plastics, have a significant impact on global warming control.

5. Accurate understanding of steel supply and demand trends

Survey and analysis of economic climate and national steel demand trends

- It is important to accurately understand the economic climate and the demand trends of the steel industry’s demand sources, to be aware of changes in the economic structure and steel supply and demand trends. Based on this notion, the JISF has surveyed and analyzed steel production, shipment, inventory, import and export and real consumption trends, while making special investigations, from time to time as the need arises, to note changes in the macro economy and the steel demand structure and their influence on direct export and indirect import in the steel industry.

6. Efforts to improve society’s recognition of the steel industry

- The steel industry does not have many points of contact with the public. It could be said to be an industry that cannot easily improve social recognition and understanding. The JISF, however, has implemented a range of activities and has tried to improve social awareness of the industry, based on the common view that the industry’s top priority is to secure next-generation human resources that can lead the industry. Here are details about the efforts:

① Recruitment of excellent human resources

Efforts have been made to enhance the recognition of the innovativeness and potential of the industry among the general public through posters displayed at train stations and publicity at job-hunting websites

② Development of generations to lead the future

Efforts have been made targeting elementary school children to spark their interest in the steel industry. These have included an educational text entitled, “Tetsuzan Sensei No Tetsugaku Jya,” fieldtrips to steel plants, and workshops held at the steel exhibits room of the Science Museum in Tokyo.

③ The 150th anniversary of the birth of modern iron making

Modern iron making began in Japan on January 15, 1858, and on January 15, 2008, the steel industry celebrated the 150th anniversary of its birth. Nationwide “commemorative events for the 150th anniversary of the birth of modern iron making” will be held throughout the year around Japan.

④ Dissemination of information

The JISF website has been enhanced to be a comprehensive site offering steel-related information that is useful to everyone, including school children, high-school and university students, teachers and other members of society, as well as people in the steel industry.

7. Enhanced efforts for safety and industrial accident prevention

Support for member companies' efforts to improve safety and health

- Aiming at improving safety and health and eliminating industrial accidents, the JISF set up a “Safety and Hygiene Promotion Committee” in 2006. Since then, the JISF has promoted industry-wide safety and health activities involving all member companies' headquarters and associated companies and has carried out prioritized and detailed efforts in each area that is important to the industry.

Development of a new safety and health control system

- In a project for the “development of a new and IT-based safety and health control system” commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in fiscal 2006, the JISF has carried out demonstration experiments and located issues to be addressed related to the effectiveness of risk reduction and control level enhancement.

Proactive measures for controlling the occurrence of problems related to the environment and industrial accident prevention

- To proactively prevent problems related to the environment and industrial accident control, the JISF has worked to address the reform of laws concerning the environment and industrial accident prevention. The JISF has also actively promoted information-sharing by improving and promoting the use of the JISF website (in exclusive areas for members) and through interchange meetings for the environment, industrial accident prevention and safety.

8. Promotion of standardization

- For the broad examination and testing of iron ore and steel products, the JISF has made efforts to develop international standards under JIS and ISO schemes. In these efforts, the JISF has tried to meet requests from demand sources and distribution industries and reflect recent advancements in manufacturing technologies. Specifically, the JISF has worked for the establishment of JIS standards for high-performance steel sheet for bridges, and for the revision of JIS standards for permissible dimensional deviation for H-shaped steel.
- The JISF has offered cooperation and support for Japan's national strategies for international standardization by, for example, responding to the request to develop action programs for the planned international standardization activities.
- In September, the JISF hosted a commemorative conference to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of its Standardization Center.