



History of Suisan

Suisan has a history of overcoming challenges and embracing change while working with the community to build a better future. On September 17, 1907, Torazuki Hayashi and Hitaro Egawa formed a cooperative named Sui San Kabushiki Kaisha. Kamezo Matsuno and other peddlers and fishermen became associates and purchased the entire business of R.A. Lucas, which included the unexpired lease of newly established Gehr Fish Market.

Controversy loomed over this business transaction due to many Japanese fishermen committing to sell their catch to the Gehr Fish Market then later changing to support the new Sui San Kabushiki Kaisha. This matter was settled in the courts and U.S. Suisan Kabushiki Kaisha, Limited was in full swing.

During the early years, Suisan Company LTD overcame a series of trials and tribulations. During WWII, Japanese fishermen were set back when the US military seized property and forbid fishing. Suisan started recovering when this ban was lifted at the end of the war and fishing resumed. The reprieve didn't last long. In 1946 a 7.4 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Aleutian Islands. This quake generated a giant tsunami that destroyed most of the Japanese fishing fleet. Suisan Fish Market was also destroyed and shareholders had to focus on rebuilding their once prosperous business.

Suisan continued to look forward and gained momentum in the 1950s. Improved fishing methods, technological advances and efficient shipping methods allowed the company to become profitable. Suisan was able to harvest larger catches and increase exportation of fish. As part of this progressive movement, U.S. Suisan Kabushiki Kaisha, Limited changed its name to Suisan Company, Limited and purchased the property at 1965 Kamehameha Avenue. Suisan embraces their roots and continues to use the Hilo warehouses as part of their operation supporting the island workforce.

Unfortunately, in 1960 another large tsunami devastated the Hilo Bay area and the Suisan Fish Market was also affected. While Waiakea businesses and residents relocated, Suisan continued to support fisherman at the mouth of the Wailoa River. Suisan's Fish Market still remains open at this location.

Proud to pass on the family business, Mr. Kamezo Matsuno retired his 60 years of experience, and his son, Mr. Rex Yoshio Matsuno, took over as President. His new enthusiasm brought momentum and Suisan broadened its horizons by substantially increasing its storage facilities for frozen, chill, dry, janitorial and cleaning products. Under his leadership, Suisan expanded to the Kona industrial area, purchased additional storage facilities and expanded into new markets. Suisan became the largest food distribution facility on the Big Island of Hawaii.

In 2007, Suisan Company Limited celebrated its 100th year of providing excellent service to the guests and residents of the Big Island of Hawaii. Over the next six years, Suisan rose to new challenges when faced with devastating hurricanes, lava flows, and a fire, all of which have claimed homes, businesses and the main office warehouse. Afterwards, Suisan moved its offices to the Ben Franklin Building at 333 Kilauea Avenue. Still a major part of Big Islander's lives, Suisan continues providing quality goods and products to their customers.

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