

Ako Kasei Co., Ltd.

< Corporate Profile >

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URL	https://web.ako-kasei.co.jp/en/
No. of employees	200
Capital	30,000,000 yen
Founding	November 1971
Representative	Yoshinari Ikegami

< Business Overview >

Chemical products business (manufacturing inorganic salts such as magnesium chloride and calcium chloride), functional material business (manufacturing fine particle salts, titanium-based black pigments, and radiant materials), food business (manufacturing coagulants of tofu and fried tofu, etc.), health business (manufacturing “Amami’s Water” containing deep-sea water and minerals, “Heat Buster” water, etc.), salt business (manufacturing edible salts such as “Ako’s Amashio” containing nigari), and related businesses

< Technology >



Utilizing “salt-making” traditions that date back to the Edo Period
To offer salt, water and nigari bittern with a higher level of safety

Ako Kasei is engaged in five businesses utilizing its developmental technology based on marine science.

The first is salt business; the company manufactures salt and salt-based seasonings such as "Ako's Amashio," "Amami's Salt," and "Ako Higashihama's Salt," using a traditional production method.

The second is the health business; the company develops and manufactures health-oriented products such as "Amami's Water/Deep-Seawater," a healthy drink made by desalinating clean, deep-sea water that springs up off Cape Muroto, Kochi Prefecture and adjusting its mineral balance, and "Heat Buster" water featuring deep-sea water minerals.

The third is the food business; the company develops and manufactures coagulants for tofu and other items. The fourth is chemical products business; the company develops and manufactures magnesium, calcium and other inorganic salts for industrial products, food additives, and pharmaceutical ingredients. In particular, the company leads the domestic market of magnesium chloride, and other chemical products also boast high market shares.

The fifth is functional material business; the company produces items such as fine particle salts tailored to users' needs; "Tilack D," a titanium-based black pigment; "Scales Color," a photoluminescent pigment launched in 2017; and "Black Diamond," a radiant material that expresses brightness and blackness without discoloring.

[History of development]

As a successor to the age-old salt-making skills and spirit of Ako, and following the principle of "People and Business," Ako Kasei has pursued a functional, healthy, environmentally safe, clean and sophisticated business since its foundation. Based on the idea that a company's fundamentals, power and strength are based on each of its employees, the company has always made efforts to enhance its framework for employee education, focus on the development of wisdom that supports knowledge, and enrich the emotions of its employees. In this way, the company has proactively challenged itself to create a "new oceanic culture" and achieved significant results. Above all, Ako Kasei served as a pioneer of deep-sea water utilization in its business field. Since 1999, the company has continued research on its effect on health for over 20 years, and made over 100 presentations at academic conferences. Furthermore, the company started to apply deep-sea water to the fisheries industry in projects such as cultivation of oysters that can be eaten raw. The company will continue its efforts to contribute widely to society by maintaining its founding spirit.

[Originality]

Since its foundation, Ako Kasei has worked to improve its developmental technology based

on marine science, focusing on traditional salt-making technology in Ako and the nigari (bittern) industry, and has achieved growth through product development and the manufacture of salt, nigari and water. Currently, the company not only makes salt and chemical products, but it has also successfully expanded its business through the development and sales of healthy foods and salt-related products such as deep-sea water products featuring marine minerals.

Future Development

In February 2020, Ako Kasei started nationwide distribution of a new product "Lemon Chicken Sauce," supervised by Ako City's school meal service center. Lemon chicken is a popular menu item produced by the center since 1981, which is currently served once a month at schools. This product, helping you to recreate a traditional school meal menu item, is already a smash hit. Thus the company will keep challenging itself in developing new products that satisfy customers' needs, based on its salt-making and marine science technology.

< TOPICS >



Original, safe and reliable pigments

When the environmental problem became a major topic, reduction of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) was a primary issue, and the largest source of VOCs was organic solvents in oil-based paints. Carbon black was devised as a major substitute black pigment, but its poor dispersibility in water caused by its hydrophobicity was a problem. To solve this, Ako Kasei developed "Tilack D" as a pigment having good dispersibility in water. In addition, based on the know-how obtained through the production of Tilack D and inorganic powder production technology, the company succeeded in developing "Scales Color." Plate-like particles of Scales Color are covered with Tilack D, and when seen from different angles, the

product clearly expresses two different colors. Featuring different interference and surface colors, Scales Color can be used in cosmetics and packages, enhancing their design and value. Six color patterns are available as of now, and it is also possible to adjust them to different tones by changing the color shades and particle sizes.



Smart factory in operation

A division dedicated to the promotion of a smart factory, which supports continuous and constructive reform of operating process and improvement of quality and productivity at production sites through the use of digital data, has been established. By proactively introducing cutting-edge technology such as AI and IoT, Ako Kasei aims to create a smart factory as soon as possible. Some departments have already started operation and achieved positive results.

< Corporate History >

- 1947 The predecessor of Ako Kasei, the chemical department of Ako Higashihama Salt-making Cooperative Society, was established.
- 1971 Due to the introduction of the ion-exchange membrane electro dialysis method, salt-making on salt terraces was abolished in line with the execution of an act on modernization of the salt industry. As a result, Ako Higashihama Salt-making Cooperative Society was dissolved and Ako Kasei Co., Ltd. was established by reorganizing the society's chemical department.
- 1973 "Ako's Amashio," a salt containing nigari, was launched supported by the "natural salt movement" for salt made on salt terraces.
- 1995 Prior to the deregulation of the salt business, the company started research on mineral-rich, clean, low-temperature deep-sea water.

- 1998 Deep-sea water was commercialized as "Amami's Water," rich in magnesium. In 1999, the company started sales of "Amami's Salt."
- 2000 The Office for Deep-Seawater Business was established in Muroto City, Kochi Prefecture as a production base of deep-sea water products.
- 2003 The company repurchased its stocks from Unitika Ltd., and restarted its history as a new, independent company on April 1. Akol Co., Ltd. was established as a mail-order company.
- 2008 The company subsidized Amashio Co., Ltd. The company began sales of "Heat Buster" water, which was developed to prevent heat stroke.
- 2009 The AKO Group, made up of Ako Kasei Co., Ltd., Akol Co., Ltd. and Amashio Co., Ltd., was established.
- 2015 Amashio Co., Ltd. opened Amashio Studio Tokyo as a place to pass down food and culinary culture through cooking classes, dietary education events and rental studios. In 2016, Amashio Studio Ako was opened at the head office.
- 2018 The company was selected as a "Driving Company for the Regional Future."
- 2019 The company was selected as a "Hyogo Only-One Company."