ENHANCING THE QUALITY AND MARKETS FOR ALASKA SALMON

Workshop
January 27 & 28, 2003
University of Alaska Anchorage • Commons 106

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Sponsored by the
Washington Sea Grant Program
School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, Marine Advisory Program
Institute of Social and Economic Research
University of Alaska

As part of the
University of Alaska and Washington Sea Grant Program
Tools for the Salmon Industry Initiative
www.sfos.uaf.edu/salmontools
The Goal of this Workshop

The Alaska salmon industry is facing serious challenges. Throughout the salmon industry and Alaska, people are discussing what can be done to address these challenges. This workshop has been sponsored by the University of Alaska and Washington Sea Grant to help facilitate this discussion.

Two issues being discussed by the salmon industry are how to upgrade the quality of Alaskan salmon harvested, processed, and marketed and what steps could be taken to enhance the marketing and market development of Alaska salmon. The goal of this workshop is to examine the current situation and explore options in both these two areas. The workshop will address the following broad questions:

- What are the shortcomings of quality control of Alaska salmon?
- Should quality standards be mandatory? If so, what should they look like and how should they be enforced?
- What is the quality level that is consistently possible for Alaska’s gillnetters, seiners and trollers across our vast state?
- How are export and domestic markets for Alaska salmon changing?
- Should Alaska and its regional fisheries develop marketing “brands” and how do they go about accomplishing such an objective?
- What options do salmon fishermen have to direct market their catch?
- What role do cooperatives have in enhancing quality and marketing of Alaska salmon?

The workshop will address quality and marketing improvements that are both short and long term. Our starting premise is that each salmon fishery is different, that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, that there are no easy answers, and that any quality/marketing options are likely to involve difficult tradeoffs between different kinds of important objectives.

There are many different perspectives on these subjects. For these reasons, this workshop should be considered only a beginning in a long and important debate. We hope it can help stimulate new ideas and further discussion.
Workshop Schedule

Each session will begin with presentations by panelists. These presentations will be followed by general questions and discussion among all workshop participants.

Monday, January 27

9:00 Welcome
Paula Cullenberg, UAF Marine Advisory Program
Pete Granger, Washington Sea Grant Marine Advisory Services

Keynote address:
Overview of Options to Upgrading Quality and Enhancing Marketing of Alaska Salmon
John Sund, Vice-President of Operations, NorQuest Seafoods,

9:45 Should Quality Standards Be Mandatory?
Steve Grabacki, President, Graystar Pacific Seafood, Ltd.
Lisa Goche, Surefish, Inc.
Jim Yonker, Director of Corporate Quality Assurance and Government Relations, Ocean Beauty Seafoods
Randy Rice, Seafood Technical Program Advisor, Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
MODERATOR: Chuck Crapo, Seafood Quality Specialist, UAF Marine Advisory Program

The goal of this session is to discuss ramifications of voluntary or mandatory standards for salmon landed and processed in Alaska. It will start with a discussion of the status quo and recommendations of the Governor’s Task Force.

11:00 Break

11:15 How Great Can You Make An Alaskan Salmon?
Don Kramer, Director, UAF Marine Advisory Program
Ray Wadsworth, AlaskaCatch LLC
Rick Tennyson, Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp.
John Lowrance, President, Leader Creek Fisheries
Pete Knutson, SE Alaska gillnetter, (invited)
MODERATOR: Terry Johnson, UAF Marine Advisory Program

This session will link to the previous one by presenting basic information on what factors affect the quality of salmon. Then, it will examine what processors and fishermen are doing to maintain and upgrade the quality of salmon landed and processed in Alaska.

12:30 Lunch
1:30  **How Are Export Markets for Alaska Salmon Changing?**
Chris McDowell, McDowell Group  
Marcus Hartley, Vice-President, Northern Economics  
Michael Turner, Trader, Ocean Dragon Seafoods  
MODERATOR: Quentin Fong, Seafood Marketing Specialist, UAF Marine Advisory Program

The goal of this session is to report statistics from world salmon markets that show trends and changes in where Alaska salmon and its competition are sold and what opportunities and challenges present themselves at the present time.

2:45  **Break**

3:00  **What are Domestic Customers Expecting?**
Larry Andrews, Retail Program Director, Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute  
Jeff Bailey, Prime Select Seafoods  
Jim Yonker, Ocean Beauty Seafoods  
Chuck King, Seafood Team Leader, Whole Foods Markets - Seattle,  
John Jackson, New Sagaya Markets  
MODERATOR: Pete Granger

This session will ask retailers, processors, and sellers what customers in the US salmon marketplace are demanding: trends, experiences, competition, new products, and opportunities.

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**Tuesday, January 28**

8:30  **Keynote: How Do You Increase Market Share?**
Bob Waldrop, President, Redpoint Associates

Bob will offer his insight into the challenges competition presents to Alaska salmon in the fight to keep and increase its share of the marketplace.

9:00  **To Brand or Not To Brand?**
Pat Shanahan, President, Shanahan Planning & Communications  
Jeff Bailey, Prime Select Seafoods  
Mark Powell, President, Cook Inlet Salmon Branding Program,  
Thom Wischer, Chairman, United Salmon Association - Kodiak,  
Terry Elwell, Marketing Director, Oneonta Trading, Inc.,  
MODERATOR: Bob Waldrop
This session will discuss the option of creating a brand or marketing image for a particular salmon region or salmon fishery in Alaska. Who and what areas have started such programs? What is the motivation behind such efforts and what are the pitfalls? Examples of food products outside the salmon industry will be presented as well.

10:45 Break

11:00 Options for Direct Marketing By Alaska Fishermen
Stephen Aghjahan, President, SeaCom Marketing,
Randy Hartnell, President, Vital Choice Seafoods
Pete Knutson (invited) SE Alaska gillnetter
Terry Johnson, UAF – Marine Advisor
Greg Fisk, Fishery Development Specialist, Alaska Dept. of Community & Economic Development
MODERATOR: Pete Granger

The goal of this session is to present examples of fishermen (Alaska and non-Alaska residents) who have decided to market all or part of their catch beyond traditional channels. It is intended to show the options that may be available and the planning and effort that must take place to realize success in such options.

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Marketing With Cooperatives & Commodity Success Stories
Hans Geier, Research Associate, Dept. of Resource Management, University of Alaska Fairbanks
Terry Elwell – Oneonta Trading
Axel Kopun, Chignik Cooperative,
Pete Granger
MODERATOR: Paula Cullenberg

This session will define what a marketing cooperative is and present examples of current seafood sectors that have formed cooperatives. It will also present success stories of non-seafood commodities in domestic and export markets that salmon cooperatives might emulate.
Workshop Proceedings

Written materials presented at this workshop will be posted on the University of Alaska’s “Tools for the Salmon Industry” website at www.sfos.uaf.edu/salmontools. Hard copies are available by contacting:
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Funding in support of this workshop was provided by a grant from the University of Alaska Foundation to the Institute of Social and Economic Research in support of Alaska economic development studies and Alaska Sea Grant.