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**ALASKA GLOBAL FOOD AID PROGRAM  
REPORT FOR ASMI ALL HANDS MEETING,  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA OCTOBER 2016**

Since the last All Hands Meeting in 2015, the ASMI Alaska Global Food Aid Program (AGFAP) has been concentrating on expanding the impact of Alaska Seafood in domestic and export food aid programs with new species, product forms and package sizes. We are pushing for more seafood to be included in all United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and to align Alaska Seafood with the priorities of domestic and international food aid markets while anticipating future trends.

We are constantly seeking ways to increase the customer base for Alaska Seafood. This year we have had success with the introduction of new products/forms such as Alaska Canned Sockeye Salmon and frozen Salmon fillets and whole-grain breaded Alaska Pollock sticks and expansion of Kosher Alaska Seafood products in the institutional programs. We continue to advise USDA on Alaska Seafood products: what is available and when, in which product form, and what will help them meet the need for shelf stable, cost neutral seafood products throughout the range of USG funded food and nutrition programs. We make full use of our Washington DC based Food Aid and Nutrition Consultants and their research networks to help maintain continuous dialogue with scientific and food aid stakeholder groups. We endeavor to position Alaska Seafood as the “go to” option for the USDA, as it navigates the implications of shifting nutrition science and policy. We always keep in mind that today’s program participant could be tomorrow’s retail customer and increasingly, vice versa.

This report provides an update since the 2015 All Hands Meeting on current priorities.

**THIS YEAR’S DOMESTIC PROGRAM PURCHASES**

The food aid market has been a reliable and very good customer for the Alaska Seafood industry. The preference for Alaska Seafood in several Domestic feeding programs has Alaska Pollock and Canned Salmon as a steady item on the menu. Supporting the balance between supply and demand, in particular when inventory builds up, is also a feature of several domestic food aid programs. Barely a year ago, our successful work with these special purchases was realized with an announcement of intent to purchase \$30M of canned Alaska Sockeye Salmon. This purchase dominated the sales of 1/2lb Canned Sockeye through the spring of 2016. This purchase did its job of moving excess canned inventory and clearly stabilizing the wholesale and ex-vessel prices for Sockeye going into the 2016 harvest season.

<i>USDA Purchases Fall 2015-2016</i>	
Alaska Pollock:	\$4,771,408
Canned Sockeye Salmon:	\$29,958,138
Canned Pink Salmon:	\$13,076,810
Kosher Canned Pink Salmon:	\$5,807,538
Salmon Fillets (new):	\$1,542,960
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$55,156,854</b>



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After the extra large 2015 harvest, it was apparent that the Alaska Canned Pink Salmon market would benefit from the same type of purchase opportunity. The following six months of work led to the May announcement of a large purchase of \$10M of canned 1lb Alaska Pink Salmon.

After much input from the Alaska Seafood Industry, we are currently exploring the possibility of support for similar purchases for half pound canned Alaska Sockeye Salmon and Alaska Pollock. The AGFAP team's collaboration with USDA, US food bank networks, and the Alaska delegation works well together to support all of these programs that offer food insecure Americans the opportunity to eat a variety of Alaska Seafood and become new, retail customers in the future.

**Expanding Markets: Salmon Fillets** Through our constant interaction with USDA, they are drawing on Alaska Salmon Fillets to increase the availability of healthy foods in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) for this key domestic safety net program. The recent purchase of 216,000 pounds of Salmon Fillet portions (Sockeye or Coho) valued at over \$1.5M, was the first in a pilot program to expand the food aid basket of Native American tribes with more traditional food. We will be working to expand this new program this next year.

**Expanding Markets: Value-Added Pollock** We have been working with USDA and the Alaska Pollock producers to increase purchases to both domestic and international food and nutrition programs and to change the way their end consumer products are produced and offered. As we look to new nutrition and food assistance markets, a specification for a direct purchase product (e.g., individual portion size) is needed rather than the typical bulk product that requires further reprocessing. In September of this year, USDA released a Federal Purchase Program Specification for whole grain breaded Alaska Pollock stick to include now in any of their procurements, be it for entitlement programs like school lunch or food bank distribution. This is the latest step in our overall planned activities to increase the volume of Alaska Pollock used in USG programs.

## RESPONDING TO GLOBAL FOOD AID TRENDS AND PRIORITIES

Our interaction with USG food and nutrition programs, Tufts and other University researchers, the scientific community, and the Alaska delegation are keeping seafood in the forefront of US food and nutrition policy and programming. The USG is engaged in an All-of-Government drive to improve the quality of its food aid programs by adapting its food basket to include better products (more nutrient dense and special nutritious offerings), improved supply chain processes and more targeted programming. The USDA has increased its purchase of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein for these programs. The new Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA, 2015), which set US nutrition policy, have been released, recommending at least two servings of healthful seafood weekly (6-8 oz). The US Food and Drug Administration recommends that pregnant women consume two servings of seafood a week to promote healthy fetal development. The USDA/FNS WIC, School Lunch, and other nutrition programs have been slower to incorporate these recommendations than we would like to see. This type of interaction from our AGFAP has initiated expansion of seafood in existing programs and has brought on new programs resulting in increased sales of Alaska Pollock



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and new sales of frozen Alaska Salmon fillets.

**US Seafood Consumption & Nutrition Policy:** The US population is not eating enough seafood and according to the latest DGA (2015), Americans need to at least double their intake of fish and seafood to meet the minimum recommendations set forth. Fish consumption (at least 2-3 servings a week) has remained a priority recommendation in the 2015 DGA. AGFAP is pushing hard for this policy to be implemented in all USG food and nutrition programs. We continue our intensive interactions with USDA and other food aid decision makers on specifications and marketing with food-aid customers. **We are focusing on efforts to harmonize USG approaches to include only US origin shelf stable fish and seafood in all USG supported programs.**

**Global Nutrition Needs and Marine Protein:** On the international side, scientific evidence is shining a spotlight on maternal and child nutrition as a key driver of impact measurement globally. Nutrition

solutions for this target group are becoming a growing priority for food aid programmers. In recent years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has added new products to better support the nutrition of vulnerable people in food security and humanitarian programs. At the same time, USDA/FAS has been pilot testing new fortified food aid products to add to school meals in the McGovern- Dole (MGD) International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program (FFE). Oily fish like Salmon and Herring are the best sources



of essential fats and high quality protein for people of all ages and this is particularly true for mothers and babies during and after pregnancy – the critical first 1,000 days. Protein is gaining recognition as the key to healthy growth and development. There is increasing demand for protein and growing international concern about how to provide sustainable, affordable protein to an expanding middle class. **Marine source protein will take its place in this debate and we are there to make sure that Alaska Seafood is clearly a best option.**

### STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE BASE

At the request of USDA and other institutional food aid partners, AGFAP has been exploring new marine based products (Herring and Seafood Powder) for some time. We have tested various prototypes during the last several years with consistently high consumer ratings and broad appeal in diverse countries. In this last year, AGFAP finished up a dramatic Alaska Seafood Protein Powder pilot project in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) with primary school children and most recently an Alaska Canned Herring feeding product in Cambodia to determine how effective other forms of seafood like



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Alaska Canned Herring and Seafood Powder could be in improving nutrition in food and humanitarian assistance programs and how these new products can expand opportunity and add value to all sectors of the Alaska Seafood industry.

### **Alaska Seafood Protein Powder**

Based on the results of our pilot project with school children in Congo Republic, we and the Food Aid Community are seeking an improved seafood powder—with better sensory characteristics and mild flavor profile that will deliver at least 50% of daily protein requirements in a single serving. This R&D phase is the next step to conducting a controlled pilot project to gather evidence on the nutritional effects of the product over a period of time. We are again re-submitting a proposal to the Saltonstall-Kennedy grant program for continued development of a seafood powder that is commercially viable and turns fish waste into a human-grade highly nutritious product to be tested in several locations. We will be seeking other opportunities for funding. A small amount of this newer product has been produced, and we have been sampling it across the Food Aid community with great reception. **The international Food Aid business is ready, willing and able to purchase this new product and put it to work in their many programs around the world.**

### ***Canned Herring Acceptability Trials in Cambodia:***

In January 2016, AGFAP and the Don Bosco Foundation of Cambodia partnered on a pilot project to test the adaptability and acceptability of Alaska Canned Herring in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The project serves over 1,000 children and students in Don Bosco's schools in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, and Kep City. The schools are technical and vocational training of young adults for more economically advantageous positions in Cambodia's growing economy. The Canned Herring was distributed in March and April 2016. Recipes were developed to incorporate the Canned Herring into local dishes. Reviews show that it is greatly enjoyed by the students and children being fed in the Don Bosco schools. School Directors would happily include Canned Herring in all of their programs as the product is highly nutritious and widely accepted by the people they serve.





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## RESPONDING TO WORLD CRISES



Canned Salmon or Herring is perfect for use in crises, whether they are sudden moments of destruction due to natural disasters or ongoing demands for humanitarian aid. The world is experiencing three large-scale emergencies at the same time in South Sudan, Syria, and Iraq. Droughts due to El Niño in the Horn of Africa will increase the demand for in-kind food aid in those regions. Domestic, natural disasters like the recent flooding and hurricane are also examples of unprecedented situations that require swift and effective nutritional aid. Disaster preparation, both domestic and international, is more relevant now than ever, and we are pushing for shelf stable canned Alaska Seafood to be

prepositioned for staging and readiness to meet humanitarian needs anywhere in the world. **This should be a priority product to be used in All domestic emergency food aid situations.**

## THINKING AHEAD

We are continuing our successful approach of identifying promising new products, laying the groundwork with agencies and potential markets, finding partners to work with and opportunities for R&D that promote Alaska Seafood resources.

These many (and growing) USG programs have become a very good and steady customer for Alaska Seafood. In the last year, US origin Tuna has come back to compete for this market after being out of play for the last five years or so. As our supply volume naturally changes from year to year, it is important to keep in mind the demand that we have created in these programs and their importance to our overall market share from year to year.

We look forward to working hard for the industry again this year to support the Industry's priorities with higher use of Alaska Pollock and Alaska Salmon while expanding opportunities for new Alaska Seafood products and applications to address not only the changing nutritional science here and abroad but the dietary preferences of our Alaska Seafood customers.

Bruce Schactler  
Global Food Aid Program Director