



Wild, Natural & Sustainable®

Shellfish Committee Meeting
ASMI All Hands Meeting
Anchorage, Alaska
DRAFT

Present: Rodger Painter, Jake Jacobsen, Frank McFarland, Mark Gleason, Tomi Marsh, Jerry Eagle, Jim Stone, Joe Thompson

Meeting was called to order by chairman, Mr. Painter.

Agenda was reviewed by committee. **Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Jacobsen.**

Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Marsh seconded.

Mr. Jacobsen presented an overview of the shellfish harvest:

Crab:

- Market for king crab is being flooded by illegal Russian crab. Illegal Russian fishing has increased significantly.
- The red king crab market is looking at a diminished price due to the illegal Russian crab fishing flooding the market.
- The snow crab market is experiencing a similar issue with regard to the illegal Russian fishing, though not as extreme as king crab.
- The snow crab market appears to be a healthy, however a significant amount of Russian product is landing on U.S. shores.
- Canadians are actively marketing their snow crab harvest and with that, they have been successful in the China marketplace for 4-5 years, as well as shipping crab to Europe.
- There is a premium in the marketplace for Alaska crab however the general public does not know where there crab is coming from.
- Better differentiation in the marketplace is needed. Country of origin labeling is the first step to doing so.
- There is confusion in the market place regarding Opilio and Bairdi crab, many consumers do not know what it is.
- Currently, customers view bairidi crab as a large opilio in the marketplace.

Mr. Jacobsen state that the name “tanner crab” is not an adequate name in the marketplace and feels that there needs to be more effort in reestablishing its niche in the marketplace as a premium.

Mr. Thompson stated that a problem with bairidi crab in the marketplace is that the season closes and customers move to large opilio crab, which brings down the bairidi prices.

Mr. Stone stated that it is difficult to market a species which harvest season comes and goes. Though, it may be an opportunity for ASMI to market it as it is available.

Mr. Eagle stated that there is a market for bairidi crab with the help of ASMI’s marketing. He feels more energy needs to be put into differentiation in the marketplace.

Mr. Eagle stated that ASMI needs to continue driving Alaska product using the Alaska name and can do so with marketing materials to bring brand awareness to the customers. Customers need to be asking the buyers for the Alaska product, as buyers tend to purchase by price and not origin.

Mr. Painter said that getting the information and brand awareness down to the consumer level is vital to the success.

Mr. Thompson requested that ASMI be more aggressive in getting Alaska crab into the European Market.

Geoducks:

- The market is experiencing persistent problems with high levels of PSP, resulting in area closures.
- There is a desire for new markets but the difficulty in getting product is difficult.
- Currently, most of the product is going to China.
- PSP problems have been increasing steadily in the past 5 years.

Mr. Jacobsen stated that when the public hears there is an issue with a fishery, it becomes an issue in the marketplace. It is up to ASMI to be prepared to respond to these inquiries and give them information that tells the facts in a way that doesn't appear to be bad news.

Mr. Thompson stated that the FDA website lists brown crab instead of Golden though the State of Alaska calls the species “golden king crab.” The official name of the species is “brown” because the FDA calls it that.

Mr. Thompson stated that ASMI should petition to the FDA to have the species called "Golden" instead of brown king crab. The FDA will only consider a petition from the original petitioner, which is ASMI.

Mr. Stone made a motion to ask ASMI to be a co-petitioner to change the name “brown king crab” to “golden king crab.” Mr. Gleason seconded. Motion was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Stone and Mr. Thompson presented on Russian vs. Alaska Crab & traceability of shellfish:

Mr. McFarland stated that he feels the Alaska origin is important to the traceability aspect.

Mr. Painter stated that Alaska crab is getting mixed with Russian product and that it is important to distinguish Alaska crab from Russian crab in the marketplace.

Mr. Stone stated that the sustainability story can be pushed to differentiate Russian and Alaska crab in the marketplace.

Mr. Jacobsen stated that he would like to see ASMI be more aggressive with the traceability aspect. Would like to see ASMI develop its own traceability program.

Mr. Eagle stated that the underlying issue is that, as a whole, the most important story to tell is the sustainability and traceability story. The most important questions to be able to answer is: is it sustainable and is it traceable?

Sustainability certification for smaller fisheries:

Mr. Stone stated that golden king crab is attempting to go through the certification process but lacks the necessary scientific data. The weathervane scallop fishery is also lacking the necessary data to become RFM certified.

Mr. Stone stated that due to the lack of available data, some of the smaller fisheries will not be able to pursue the RFM certification. With this, he sees a mixed message issue in that some fisheries will be certified and the smaller fisheries will not be.

Mr. Stone also stated that there will be a various fisheries that will be left without RFM certification, yet ASMI will continue to say that the fisheries are sustainable. ASMI needs to be prepared to answer these questions and to prove that all fisheries are sustainable regardless of certification, due to lack of data.

Golden King Crab certification:

The fishery has gone through extensive work and concluded that it is sustainable; however more data is needed to make the RFM certified claim.

Mr. Stone asked how ASMI will plan to pursue certification of smaller, data poor fisheries.

Mr. Thompson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Jacobsen seconded.