

ASMI Shellfish Committee Meeting; 10/21/15
Egan Center; Anchorage, Alaska
Room #7
Draft Minutes

Members present:

Rodger Painter – Chairman

Jake Jacobsen – Vice Chair

Mark Gleason

Joe Thompson

Jim Carroll

Linda Kozak

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:50 PM.

Matthew Arnoldt called the roll. It was determined that a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was amended and approved. A vote for chair and vice chair of the Shellfish Committee was added to the agenda. The last meeting's minutes were approved.

The committee discussed crab quotas per species (blue crab, bairdi crab, opilio crab). How much crab will be coming out of various regions?

King crab has been stable but there's market in Adak for processing. Kozak stated that golden king crab was introduced to Dubai. Golden crab is very hearty and can be shipped live unlike other crab. Discussions related to storage and disbursement of crab took place. How can we get an Asian plane to depart with crab? Can opportunities be generated by displaying crab in holding tanks?

Scallop news was reported. Yakutat scallops are up and Shelikof scallops are down. The Bering Sea has not been marketable again, due to weak meat. The color is off and the meat tears easily. No obvious changes to taste.

China has stopped the import of Geoduck from the U.S. Northwest. China did so after receiving two shipments of geoduck clams that contained high levels of arsenic and a toxin that causes PSP. Geoduck is very popular in the Far East, but, the largest importer of geoduck is China where it is considered a delicacy and an aphrodisiac. They are also very popular for the Chinese New Year Celebration (January 31). The committee discussed how rotation of geoduck beds can cause fewer PSP problems.

Alaska Dungeness crab sales should be up due to a west coast algae bloom. The algae bloom is linked to a poisonous substance called domoic acid. California, Oregon, and Washington fisheries have been affected by closures.

Exchange rates globally are causing problems. The China exchange rate was specifically discussed.

Gleason spoke about the IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing) issues. The IUU bill works to ensure that high demand for imported seafood does not create incentives for illegal fishing activity. When the pending US/Russia IUU agreement is finally signed it will allow Russian or U.S. to question imports. Nothing has passed Congress yet, but, President Obama is likely to sign bill. Russians appear to have legalized illegal crabbing. Illegal Russian crab is welcome in Korea and China. Gleason asked if there was ASMI follow up on the previous motion.

Motion: Jacobson renewed the motion from the October 2014 meeting: “Direct ASMI staff to look into the marketing implications of including cooked king, snow and tanner crab products in country of origin labeling laws (COOL).” Gleason seconded. The motion passed.

Without country of origin labeling it is impossible to tell where the food came from. Who gets the reported information? NOAA? We do not have a mechanism to report information of illegal imports. All food comes from somewhere – now just need to identify where.

Kozak spoke about golden king crab nomenclature. The FDA states that the acceptable market name for “golden king crab” is “brown king crab.” There is a petition with the FDA to change the market name from “brown king crab” to the common name “golden king crab.” After a year the FDA still has not stated why they have not done anything.

The committee discussed bairdi and opilio nomenclature. The FDA the acceptable market name ‘snow crab’ represents both opilio and bairdi crab. Per the FDA, the vernacular name “tanner crab” represents both opilio and bairdi crab too. The shellfish committee believes that calling these two species by the same name does not delineate the two well enough for sales. Bairdi crab is often referred to as “tanner crab” and that opilio are sold as “snow crab.” The similarities in appearance and the swapping of market names makes differentiation extremely difficult. Bairdi crab is characterized by a sweet flavor. Opilio crab is found on both U.S. coasts while bairdi is found only in the Bering Sea. As we attempt to market bairdi, the shellfish committee would like a name that sells – an easy marketing name. A naming contest was suggested. The committee discussed if there was enough bairdi stock to warrant a name change. People barely know of bairdi, if we change the name then we would have to re-educate those that currently know it as bairdi.

The industry knows the difference between bairdi and opilio – there is no need to educate them. It is the public that does not know the difference in taste and texture. A suggestion to create obvious difference between the two crabs through catch size was discussed. The bairdi crab are larger. If the bairdi crabs were harvested at their naturally larger potential the consumer could easily recognize the difference (size). Size will sell the product today as a primary indicator of value. The public will eventually recognize the better tastes in time. Consumers are still buying with their eyes. Size and color are the big things. The bairdi catch is cyclical. The crab is also

limited in number and is hard to market. Perhaps this disadvantage can be a marketing advantage: “Get it while it is hot!”

Cyclical fisheries are hard to market to executive chefs. They want to base menus on food available to clients year round. Perhaps focus on the domestic market. However, Claudia Hogue wanted the committee to know that chefs ask her “What’s new? Where is the food trend going? Japan was willing to pay more for bairdi, and then the product fell off. The committee would like to (re)establish bairdi as a premiere crab. ASMI could talk about the differences in taste of the bairdi v. opilio. Tastings could occur on cruise ships as an education for their passengers. Bairdi needs marketing, Dungeness is fine, razor clams no one produces, and king crab is fine.

Patrick from Edelman stated that bairdi sounds sexy and can sell because of its cool name. He also wanted the committee to know that focusing on bairdi does not minimize the other crab and should be viewed just as additional marketing. He suggested that live crab displays would help sell crab.

The committee noted that we want most of the Bairdi to be sold to the U.S. because of exchange rates. Robin Wang noted that there are marketing opportunities for snow crab in China. Chinese consumers can afford and do enjoy snow crab. Typically consumers like whole crab – is China beginning to accept portions? Wang stated that in China portions are accepted in foodservice.

The committee answered the following questions:

Communication with Operational Committees and Board of Directors:

1. What specific concerns, trends or marketing needs do you feel should be brought to the ASMI Operational Committees for them to consider?

IMC/Foodservice/Retail: promote bairdi crab, focus upon promoting bairdi in domestic markets; need to differentiate bairdi from opilio but FDA rules prohibit using bairdi as a marketing name.

2. Do you have any overall industry concerns that should be brought to the Committee Chairs meeting for them to discuss and carry forward to the ASMI Board of Directors?

Currency shifts are making international markets very challenging, increased TACS need to be rerouted to the domestic markets.

ASMI needs to continue to monitor IUU activities and US-Russia agreement implementation.

Despite a 40% decrease in TAC this year opilio resource continues to be sustainable, recruitment is good.

Nomenclature will continue to be a concern for many species.

3. What major challenges do you see ASMI facing in the coming years?
 - In the next one year?
Funding, strength, industry partnerships; uncertainty of world economy
 - In the next five years?
Funding
 - In the next 10 years?

Other questions if you have time:

4. Is there information you would like to be receiving from ASMI that you currently are not?
 - Should ASMI programs be communicating their efforts and promotions in a different way than they are currently?
NO
 - Are you currently receiving the Marketing Updates via email? Is there additional information you would like included in these updates?
Yes
5. Are you familiar with ASMI's websites and social media channels? ASMI has a consumer site, www.wildalaskaseafood.com and a corporate site, www.alaskaseafood.org as well as active accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and Twitter.
 - How often do you visit the ASMI corporate website, www.alaskaseafood.org?
weekly
 - Is there information that isn't on the ASMI websites that should be?
They are doing a very good job.
 - Are there ways we can improve our social media marketing?
Continue efforts

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair - The elected Chair is Jake Jacobsen. The elected vice chair is Rodger Painter.

Adjournment - The committee meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm.