



ASMI Strategic Plan 2013

ASMI's Establishing Legislation

There is established the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. The institute is a public corporation of the state. It is an instrumentality of the state in the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, but has a legal existence independent of and separate from the state. Exercise by the institute of the powers conferred by this chapter is an essential governmental function of the state.

Alaska Statutes - Section 16.51.010

ASMI's board of directors is appointed by the Governor of Alaska and includes representatives of 5 processors (4 large processors, 1 small processor) and 2 commercial harvesters, as well as ex-officio members representing the Alaska Senate, Alaska House of Representatives, Office of the Governor, and Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.

Mission Statement

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute is a marketing organization with the mission to increase the economic value of the Alaska seafood resource through:

- Increasing positive awareness of the Alaska Seafood brand.
- Collaborative marketing programs that align ASMI and industry marketing efforts for maximum impact within the food industry.
- Championing the sustainability of Alaska seafood harvests resulting from existing Alaska fisheries management imperatives. (State of Alaska Constitution and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act).
- Proactive marketing planning to address short and long-term goals while remaining flexible and responsive to a changing environment and economy.
- Quality assurance, technical industry analysis, education, advocacy and research.
- Prudent, efficient fiscal management.

Core Principles

ASMI exists to serve the entire Alaska Seafood Industry, harvester and processor alike. It is supported by industry self-assessments and uses available public funds to achieve marketing successes for the common good. ASMI adheres to the following Core Principles:

- ASMI follows the highest ethical standards in its day-to-day operations and in its business relationships.
- ASMI values its employees and members and insists that all be treated with dignity and respect.
- ASMI conducts business in the open so its actions and decisions are visible to all industry members.
- ASMI tells the truth when it conducts promotions or make claims in the marketplace.
- ASMI conducts marketing activities that provide the largest economic benefit for its industry members.

Industry Assessment

Threats and Challenges

1. Alaska seafood production must address challenges of high transportation and energy costs relative to some other center of the plate protein.
2. Seafood consumption in the U.S., and some key markets like Japan, is declining.
3. ASMI will need to develop a green strategy to address market reaction to factors such as carbon footprint and other climate change impacts.
4. The harvestable biomass of wild fish stocks varies year to year due to natural environmental conditions.
5. Alaska's commitment to sustainable management can result in additional harvest variability resulting from self-imposed restrictions to protect the biodiversity and sustainability of the ecosystem.
6. In fisheries with intense time pressures, slowing the product delivery stream is not possible.
7. Remote operations and variable harvest timing can constrain product form choices.
8. There is confusion in the marketplace over "wild" versus "farm-raised."

9. If not properly designed, third party certification schemes can confuse and constrain the markets, dilute the value of the Alaska brand, and threaten governance of Alaska fisheries.

Assets and Opportunities

1. Brand equity in the Alaska Seafood name is strong.
2. Health benefits, nutritional strengths, intrinsic qualities of flavor and texture, and pristine environment ensure Alaska Seafood is superior in the market place.
3. Alaska's constitutionally-mandated commitment to sustainable management practices, as well as the sustainability mandates in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act, ensure that all Alaska commercially harvested seafood species are sustainable.
4. Alaska seafood harvesting and processing as an integral part of its people, communities and history have enormous market appeal.
5. The biological strength and diversity of Alaska seafood stocks make us unique, and the effectiveness of Alaska's sustainability-focused stock management make us leaders among wild-capture fisheries.

ASMI Goals

1. Continue development of the Alaska Seafood brand into the most respected and valued seafood brand in the world.
2. Provide an environment where processors and harvesters can work together for the common good of the industry
3. Facilitate the continuous improvement in quality of Alaska Seafood along the entire value chain through education, research and advocacy
4. Continually increase the level of participation by industry members in ASMI programs and activities.
5. Look for collaborative opportunities with other Alaska-based industries with common interests.
6. Use reasonable measures that allow ASMI to effectively evaluate its programs.

Major Initiatives

1. Strengthen the “Alaska Brand” in the global market

Brand management is ASMI’s number one job. It must be closely aligned with those who manage, harvest, process, and sell Alaska seafood products.

2. Shift Marketing Emphasis Away from External “Certifications”.

In order to preserve and enhance the value of the Alaska Brand, ASMI will focus on “wild” “natural” and “sustainable” rather than “certified.”

3. Continuously improve the quality of Alaska Seafood

Education in quality handling and improvement is a priority for ASMI. ASMI will continue to provide its quality standards and encourage their use as a baseline for the industry.

4. Align ASMI activities with those of the Alaska Seafood Industry

- Develop a timeline of ASMI activities at least 12 months in advance so industry can coordinate.
- Provide access to ASMI information and resources to all processors and harvesters participating in the Alaska Seafood industry.
- Provide consolidated services to all members of the Alaska seafood industry where it is cost effective to do so.
- Seek feedback from the Alaska Seafood industry in periodic surveys to determine how well it is aligned with industry expectations.

5. Constituent Outreach

- ASMI will continue to expand outreach to encourage participation by constituent groups – harvesters, processors and customers.
- When possible, schedule ASMI activities to facilitate attendance by a wide range of industry participants, for example by co-locating events

6. Strong and Diverse Funding Base

Maintain and work to expand a mix of industry, state, and federal funding to support a sustained, and therefore effective, marketing program.

7. Leverage Technology

ASMI will control costs by using technology to the greatest extent possible for communications and management.

General Guidelines

1. Fund activities for the common good.

In allocating marketing funds, the ASMI board will seek a balance of fairness to those who provide funding, areas of industry need, and maximum overall impact.

2. ASMI activities must be fair and open to all.

ASMI is funded by the industry at large and its marketing efforts must focus on those activities that benefit the industry as a whole. The ASMI Board fully supports the limits in Alaska Statutes against marketing an individual brand or individual region. It is incumbent on industry members to self police the demands placed on ASMI to ensure its activities are fair and open to all members of the Alaska seafood industry from individual direct marketers to the largest processors.

3. ASMI organizational structure represents the industry.

ASMI Committees are organized into Operational and Advisory committees. The Operational Committees will be the primary interface with the staff and guide the efforts of ASMI programs on behalf of the entire industry. Members of these committees are not expected to advocate for individual species. The Operational Committees are:

- Domestic Foodservice Marketing
- Domestic Retail Marketing
- International Marketing
- Technical

The ASMI Specie Committees are an advisory body to provide feedback and recommendations on ASMI programs to the Operational Committees. The Specie Committees will be advocates for their respective constituent base. The ASMI Specie Committees are:

- Salmon
- Halibut and Sablefish
- Whitefish
- Shellfish

ASMI will periodically review its committee structure for streamlining opportunities but will also be mindful of the need for a broad cross section of the industry to be represented.

4. Priority goes to those who pay.

Although ASMI will support all who market Alaska Seafood products in a way consistent with ASMI goals and guidelines, priority will go to those members who directly support the cost of ASMI operations. For this purpose, the Alaska Seafood Industry is defined as processors who have “intent to process” permits or fishermen who have active fishing permits issued by the State of Alaska.

5. Build an Annual Marketing Plan.

ASMI will create an annual marketing plan to be approved during the spring board-meeting. The plan will have both a domestic and an international component and be based on this strategic plan as well as the most current conditions in the marketplace. An annual market assessment will be a part of the marketing plan.

The ASMI Operational Committees will play the central role in developing the marketing plan with their respective marketing directors. Guidance for developing the marketing plan will be approved at the fall board-meeting in order to be ready for presentation to the Alaska State Legislature as part of its annual review of ASMI funding requests contained in the Governor’s budget.

A measurement plan will be part of the marketing plan. The responsibility for development and oversight of this measurement plan rests with the marketing committees and the Executive Director who will report the progress and results to the Board of Directors semi-annually.

Strategies

1. Use a Push-Pull Strategy

A pull strategy to build consumer interest and demand, though costly, is the most powerful means to influence preference for Alaska Seafood.

ASMI will continue to use retail and foodservice relationship marketing activities (push) to complement consumer advertising for maximum impact in the market place. Industry trade spending will also provide a certain level of push activities to complement ASMI’s consumer advertising efforts. ASMI will work with the industry members to align activities to the maximum degree possible.

This strategy will be reviewed each year by the board as part of the annual budget build.

2. Balance Traditional Markets with Emerging Market opportunities

ASMI will focus primarily on strengthening and sustaining traditional markets. ASMI will examine developing markets, both domestic and international, and seek guidance from the

industry on which ones to pursue. On occasion, as was done with the Hispanic market in the U.S., ASMI may take the lead but only after careful consideration of the impact on the traditional, established markets.

Constant attention to changing market conditions is critical to ASMI's future success. An emerging markets strategy, based on market research will be part of the International program and be included in the Unified Export Strategy to the USDA. The ASMI board will revisit this direction on an annual basis.

3. Capitalize on Unique Attributes

ASMI will emphasize attributes that are unique to Alaska Seafood to build a barrier that will be difficult for competitors to penetrate and thereby increase the value of Alaska Seafood branded products.

Alaska Seafood has many attributes that play well in the market place. Wild, sustainable, healthy, natural, etc. are all excellent vehicles for telling the Alaska Seafood story and marketing Alaska seafood. ASMI's long term marketing effort will build upon those attributes that are especially unique to Alaska seafood such as the name Alaska itself, plus terms like wild, abundant and sustainable. Other attributes will be leveraged to the degree they increase our reach, but the focus should be on separating Alaska seafood products from other proteins in the market.

As part of Alaska's positioning as wild and sustainable, ASMI will incorporate information and messaging that address the industry's carbon footprint and other environmental ("green") accounting measures.

4. Promote Quality and Research

ASMI will focus on broad technical assistance, analysis, education, advocacy, research and support to the industry. It will not engage in R&D except in special circumstances when recommended by the Technical Committee and approved by the Board as something that will benefit the industry as a whole.

5. Select Appropriate Target Audiences

ASMI will target audiences (consumer groups and geographic areas) that are most likely to develop a broad preference for Alaska Seafood and have the resources to pay for it.

The goal for ASMI's marketing activities is to stake out a niche in the higher end of the overall global seafood market, thus generating more value for the Alaska harvest both through higher value and by establishing market opportunities for lower end seafood products.

6. Be a Reliable and Respected Consultant to Industry and the Trade

ASMI will be a reliable and factual source of information to both the seafood industry and seafood consumer. ASMI will base any statements or positions on controversial issues such as contaminants, sustainability, health and nutrition upon sound science and research, not speculation. In order to do this ASMI will maintain the technical capability to stay current with food science, regulatory, technical and ecological issues.

ASMI staff will serve as consultants to the Alaska Seafood industry, developing training programs, materials, presentations and feedback that will help the industry better position itself to compete in the marketplace. ASMI staff meets regularly with a cross section of foodservice operators, broad line distributors and retail store operators during their marketing activities. As such, they have broad knowledge and expertise about the expectations and desires of these groups. This information needs to be available to the Alaska seafood industry members as they develop their own marketing plans and strategies.

7. Seek Customer feedback

A Customer Advisory Panel, consisting of members of the international and domestic foodservice, and the wholesale and retail grocery industry will be maintained to advise the board on the market challenges and provide feedback on the effectiveness of ASMI's marketing activities.

Regular surveys to assess stakeholder satisfaction and attitudes towards the Alaska Seafood Brand will be conducted and the results shared with the entire Alaska seafood industry.

8. Support Certification of Alaska Fisheries as Sustainable

ASMI will support industry adoption of third-party certification by means of schemes that are:

- Credible and objective
- Based on internationally recognized standards
- Open and transparent
- Cost-effective
- Consistent with ASMI's mission and the Alaska brand

Cooperative Activities

1. With others in Alaska:

Within the limits of its founding legislation, ASMI will work with other entities that promote quality, innovative processing and handling methods, and other efforts to improve the marketability of Alaska Seafood. This includes Regional Seafood Development Associations, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, Alaska fishermen organizations, Alaska seafood processor organizations and others who are working for the common good of the industry.

ASMI will also work to cross-market Alaska with others in the state who are engaged in promoting Alaska products or Alaska itself such as agriculture and tourism where it makes sense and as budgets allow.

2. With other domestic seafood industries:

Through ASMI, the Alaska seafood industry will partner with other organizations that promote US seafood whenever possible to increase the competitive position for US seafood products at home and abroad.

3. With other US producers of complementary products:

Through ASMI, the Alaska seafood industry will partner with commodity groups such as wine and spice producers to increase the value of our combined sales efforts in both the domestic and export markets.

On behalf of the Alaska Seafood industry, ASMI will continue to partner with organizations such as the US Agriculture Export Development Council and its members to leverage the overall competitiveness of US seafood products in key export markets.

4. With state and federal resource managers:

While it is not ASMI's role to engage in stock or environmental management, ASMI will maintain a close relationship with Alaska Departments of Commerce, Fish and Game, Environmental Conservation, Health and Human Services, as well as the National Marine Fisheries Service and other resource managers to ensure ASMI is aware of changes that may impact its ability to effectively market Alaska Seafood products.

Measurements

1. External

The following measures will be used to assess the overall economic health of the Alaska Seafood Industry and how well the industry is leveraging ASMI's activities. ASMI programs are structured to support the efforts of Alaska Seafood industry to improve these measures. *The Board recognizes that ASMI does not have control over these measures. They are simply a gauge of the health of the industry and areas that ASMI programs are intended to support:*

- Percent increase in market value of Alaska Seafood over 2002 ("first wholesale value")
- Percent increase in grounds price paid per pound to fishermen over 2002 ("ex-vessel value")

2. Internal

ASMI staff will primarily be evaluated on how well they develop and execute the strategic initiatives in this plan, including the annual marketing plans. The following overall program evaluation questions will form the basis for an annual measurement report for each program:

- Did the program meet the Board's direction and expectations?
- Did the desired information get out to industry to be acted on in a timely manner?
- Did we create visibility into program activities that provided industry the ability to tie-in or generate their own promotions?
- Did we communicate to the trade in a timely fashion?
- Did the materials developed by ASMI meet the needs of industry as well as providing a sound base with which to build upon?
- Did we increase participation and product placement at retail and foodservice in U.S. and international markets?

3. Program Evaluation by Industry

The Retail, Foodservice, International and Technical committees will be responsible for developing a simple set of measures for industry feedback on the value of ASMI activities conducted under their purview. These measures will be used to form the basis of recommendations by the respective committees concerning continuing, dropping or modifying specific program activities.

Industry members are expected to share non-proprietary data for this purpose. The Foodservice and Retail Marketing committee will share joint responsibility for adopting a simple set of measures to provide industry feedback on the value of marketing campaigns. These measures should rely on statistical data available to industry members to the greatest extent possible.

The International Marketing Committee will use USDA reporting requirements as a basis for their evaluation of ASMI programs. They may develop additional measures as deemed appropriate to gauge the value of International Marketing Program activities.

Program measures will be included as part of the annual marketing plan developed by staff in consultation with the respective operational committees.

The Fiscal Officer will report to the Board during the annual budget process on ASMI's performance relative to a basic set of overhead and administrative cost measures.