



Wild, Natural & Sustainable

**Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI)
Whitefish Committee Meeting**

October 25, 2016, 1:30 PM AKST
Quadrant Room, Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage, AK

Draft minutes

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM by Chair Rasmus Soerensen.

Members present: Chair Rasmus Soerensen, Frank O'Hara III, Merle Knapp, Mike Cusack, Tim Meixner, and Julie Yeasting. Absent: Dean Pugh, Tony Macedo, and Jason Anderson. A quorum was established.

Others present: Lisa Martinson, Linda Driscoll, Karl Uri, Mark Jones, Tricia Sanguinetti, David Woolley, Alexa Tonkovich, Megan Rider and Jann Dickerson.

A motion was made by Cusack, seconded by Meixner to approve the agenda as is; the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by O'Hara, seconded by Meixner to approve the minutes from the October 22, 2015, meeting; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Soerensen wished to thank Jason Anderson for his hard work with the Whitefish Committee and wish him bon voyage on his next adventure. A gentleman from the gallery commented the new chair was doing a great job. There were no other public comments.

Old Business: Due to scheduling conflicts, item three will come before items one and two.

1. Jann Dickerson, Foodservice Marketing Representative, gave an update on foodservice chain restaurant promotions.

- Quick-service and fast casual restaurants target Alaska pollock
- Others target Alaska cod and Alaska pollock
- Chain restaurants often fund the whole promotion (via social media, print, POS materials, TV, radio)
- Checkers and Rally's, Sonic, White Castle, Rubio's, Sharky's, am pm
- Alaska pollock signature is required on the ASMI logo as fast food POS materials often have very little messaging
- Aiming to promote Alaska pollock twice a year in addition to the Lenten period but our dollars are not a large incentive for these large fast food chains

- An aim to put more Alaska pollock in front of kids to create the next generation of fish eaters: K – 12 Sodexo program
- All videos are available on the ASMI YouTube site

2. Mark Jones, Retail Marketing Representative, gave an update on retail in-store demonstration promotions.

- A big hit with many retailers across the US
- Cook It Frozen! for Alaska salmon
- Cod portions and refreshed cod for October Seafood Month
- Retailers are eager to line up demonstrations for Lent
- ASMI promotions must by statute be non-branded
- At this time, there are no unbranded Alaska pollock retail portions on the market

3. Market conditions, by species

Alaska Pacific Cod, Tim Meixner

- Production is good, global and domestic demand has been consistent
- Minimal surplus and some currency issues are factors
- Bering Sea and Barents Sea quotas, there could be a price hike if there's less product in the market
- There's very little product in Brazil, there's an opportunity
- This is a wonderful refreshed product and we should be open to more product forms

Rockfish, Julie Yeasting

- The Pacific ocean perch (POP) is popular in Japan and China in many forms, fillets, butterflied, and especially whole as the red color is maintained with the current treatment
- Those who commented appeared happy with the current market and wish to focus there and not necessarily go to the expense of creating new markets (i.e. Spain or Portugal)

Flounder and Sole, Frank O'Hara III

- Prices have remained low and raw material supply is down significantly
- Any surplus from 2015 has cleared out
- Fillet and finished product prices have remained flat as the demand is still good, especially in China
- Younger generations like the fillet product compared to the whole fish
- Total allowable catch (TAC) wasn't utilized but will be in the next couple of years
- Boneless product is very popular with hospitals and schools as they don't have to worry about bones for their clientele
- The EU requires the Latin name to be on the package, but it's often so small it's hard to read and the majority of product that comes out of China can't be traced. This makes it difficult for the Overseas Marketing Representatives (OMRs) to market flatfish
- Committee members wish to increase the market in Asia

Alaska Pollock, Merle Knapp

- Resource is strong, biomass is good
- Russia continues to develop their fisheries and new boats

- Foodservice (McDonald's especially) and retail on the bandwagon to call out "Alaska pollock"
- Good to manage the fisheries, distinguish Alaska pollock from Russian, and fight the battle against double-frozen
- Roe market is way down. Tastes trending away from traditional towards western
- Due to issues with a strong dollar and Brexit, prices can't be raised

There were no questions.

4. Update on the Whitefish Buyers Guide (WBG)

- The WBG has gone through a wonderful update. Let it be a model for the other buyers guides
- OMRs request POS material for their regions
- OMRs looking forward to the WBG to be translated into their languages. Some already done, all others in process
- The ASMI Japan site has a new Alaska pollock page
- Looking forward to marketing the Alaska pollock paste in the surimi industry

New Business:

The committee discussed the four key questions below. A summary of their comments is attached to the minutes.

Key Questions:

1. What specific concerns or marketing needs do you feel should be brought to the ASMI Operational Committees for them to consider?
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?
3. What major challenges do you see ASMI facing in the coming years? (short-term and long-term)
4. What trends or opportunities can you identify that ASMI Programs can capitalize on?

The chair commented that this committee needs more members, at least two. Lance Magnuson and Ron Risher expressed interest in joining the committee.

A motion was made by Knapp, seconded by Yeasting to recommend Lance Magnuson and Ron Risher (?) as new committee members; the motion passed unanimously. This will be determined by the Board of Directors, as they appoint committee members.

The committee chair offered a time to add an additional meeting to the calendar, such as the beginning of May 2017. Committee members will check their calendars and the next meeting time will be finalized in the near future.

A motion was made by Knapp, seconded by Yeasting to adjourn the meeting; the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45PM AKST.

KEY QUESTIONS:

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

- Red Lobster salmon and cod promotion. They are a big buyer of flounder. How do we get the “Alaska” flounder in there? Promote breaded products (Alaska Pollock + Flatfish)
- Need focus on promoting breaded and refreshed items because this is where most of the pollock is sold
- Recommendation to the board to allow branded promotions for Alaska Pollock
- Russian quality is getting better and better and soon will be more quality competitive with Alaska products. We need an answer for this. Keep pounding on the Alaska AND the quality message
- Pull products through the secondary processors, message to the consumer

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?

- Pollock the biggest challenge – big solutions needed
- Pollock roe – New markets outside of Japan for roe. China? The industry needs to work on new product development
- More communications between the committees and markets is really helpful
- Industry needs to build new products and then build market for emerging products
- Tilapia is a challenging competitor. Sometimes it is priced higher than cod! Promote our whitefish against the farmed species (wild vs. farmed). “Forever Wild” is awesome
- Pollock inventories are big. We have to keep moving the needle

3. What major challenges do you see ASMI facing in the coming years? (short-term and long-term)

- The financial challenges are long-term issue. But we’ve done a lot with what we have, keep utilizing this fantastic team we have
- Consumers seem less and less concerned with wild vs. farmed. Promote wild and natural.
- **Authenticity** is a great advantage for us. We should own it
- Global market shifts (Russia embargo, Brexit, etc.)
- We have to be picky about what we do
- We have to guide staff; keep a strong focus on communication
- Consolidate where we can, share resources

4. What trends or opportunities can you identify that ASMI Programs can capitalize on?

- *Authenticity!*
- Healthy / sustainable
- Stay focused on core message: wild, natural and sustainable. Careful not to run with short term trends
- Online blogs, chef demonstrations, millennials, children of our current customers
- Breed fish eaters
- How to promote ourselves with home delivery and online, where there is no POS. how does Alaska fit in?