



# ASMI Strategic Plan 2018

## 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, and the Halibut 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.

## Vision Statement (?)

**Possible inclusion of a vision statement. Suggested: ASMI exists to increase the economic value of Alaska Seafood and we do so by marketing Alaska as the world's most trusted source of premium quality, sustainable seafood.**

## 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.
- ASMI tells the truth when it conducts promotions or makes claims in the marketplace.
- ASMI conducts marketing activities that provide the largest economic benefit for its industry members.

## ASMI Goals (Vision)

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 broaden the participation by industry members and existing and new customers in ASMI programs and activities.
5. Look for collaborative opportunities and seek out partnerships that align with our goals and principles.

## Industry Assessment

### Threats and Challenges

1. Alaska seafood production must address challenges of high transportation and energy costs relative to other center of the plate proteins.
2. Seafood consumption in some key markets like Japan, is declining.

3. ASMI will need to develop and update position and strategy papers to address factors relating to the seafood supply chain, environmental issues, and social responsibility.
4. The harvestable biomass of wild fish stocks varies year to year due to natural environmental conditions. 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.
5. In fisheries with intense time pressures, slowing the product delivery stream is not possible. Additionally, remote operations and variable harvest timing can constrain product form choices.
6. There is confusion in the marketplace around seafood which causes consumer paralysis and feeds the mindset that seafood is difficult and other proteins are an easier choice.
7. Alaska's RFM program faces hurdles including: Strength of the MSC, marketplace confusion, and insecure future funding, all of which hamper outreach efforts.
8. Social welfare benchmarking standards could present additional industry operating costs and/or market access barriers.
9. Infrastructure improvements and certification gains made by competing seafood suppliers result in steeper world-wide competition for quality, sustainable seafood products.
10. Trade issues including tariffs, trade agreements, exchange rates, and competing supply both overseas and among imports to the US often create an unfair playing field on which Alaska seafood must compete.
11. Technological and digital advances necessitate the industry and ASMI to keep pace and to remain aligned as we move toward digital maturity.

## **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 and Halibut 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 large production 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.
6. New products and product categories that improve quality, flavor, and ease of use have the potential to create life-long brand loyalty and positive impressions over generations.
7. Mariculture, traditionally underutilized species, and full utilization efforts present opportunities to grow the size and value of the Alaska Seafood harvest.
8. The growing prevalence of social media, e-commerce, and other digital innovations allows ASMI messaging and Alaska products to reach a wider market often at a reduced cost compared to print ads and brick and mortar promotions.

## 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. **Differentiate Alaska Seafood in the Marketplace**  
Maintain marketing emphasis on key differentiating factors, primarily: "wild," "natural" and "sustainable."
3. **Continuously improve the quality of Alaska Seafood**  
Education in quality handling and improvement is a priority for ASMI. ASMI will continue to encourage quality standards that promote industry-wide quality benchmarks.
4. **Align ASMI activities with those of the Alaska Seafood Industry**
  - Develop a timeline of ASMI activities so industry can coordinate.
  - Provide access to ASMI information and resources to all processors and harvesters participating in the Alaska Seafood industry.
  - Provide services to all members of the Alaska seafood industry where it is appropriate and cost effective to do so, for example trade shows such as SEG.
  - 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, distributors, customers, and members of the public.
- When possible, schedule ASMI activities to facilitate attendance by a wide range of industry participants, for example by co-locating events.
- ASMI will meet with industry groups, legislators, and key decision makers to stay current on issues facing the industry and the state. ASMI will conduct research and provide references about the economic importance of the fishing industry to the state of Alaska.
- ASMI will meet with key federal agencies and members of the national delegation to stay current on national issues impacting the industry as well as to ensure continued funding.

**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. Independent of State general funds, ASMI will seek additional funding sources where feasible.

**7. Leverage Technology**

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

**8. Bring work in-house**

In light of shrinking budgets, ASMI will restructure programs to increase emphasis on an in-house approach to design and outreach projects when it is economical and efficient to do so.

## 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**

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 Alaska Seafood company 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 Marketing
- International Marketing
- Technical
- RFM Committee
- Communications Committee

The ASMI Species Committees are an advisory body to provide feedback and recommendations on ASMI programs to the Operational Committees. The ASMI Species 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.

The ASMI advisory committees are:

Customer Advisory Panel (CAP)

The CAP was established by Board directive to provide feedback to the ASMI Board. The panel is staffed by international and domestic customers who remove their company personas and come together to help the industry generically. CAP members are

appointed by the Board serve a three year term. The CAP meetings are held on a biennial basis or as determined by the Board.

#### Fisheries Standard Committee (FSC)

The Fisheries Standard Committee (formerly the Conformance Criteria Committee) assists with the implementation and review of the Standards and the Scoring Guidance for the Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program for Alaska fisheries. The Committee is an objective-based group, representative of fishery science, management, and environment. Representation is sought from both fishery-specific interests and from wider fishery management and stakeholder interests.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee are available on the ASMI website.

#### **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 Budget, Report on Marketing Activities**

ASMI will create an annual marketing budget to be approved during the spring board-meeting. Specific information regarding trends, budget cuts, etc. may be requested from the Board and included in the budget report. The ASMI Operational Committees will play the central role in developing the marketing budgets with their respective Program directors.

ASMI international will prepare an annual marketing plan called the “Unified Export Strategy” each spring which will include annual market assessments for all international regions. All programs will provide the Board of Directors written program reports and presentations at the regularly scheduled Board of Director’s meetings.

ASMI will produce an annual report for the Board of Directors, released with timing to coincide with the Alaska State Legislative session.

## Strategies

### 1. Use Push and Pull Tactics

A pull strategy to build consumer interest and demand, though costly, is a powerful means to influence preference and create brand loyalty for Alaska Seafood.

ASMI will continue to use both tactics at retail and foodservice to complement consumer campaigns for maximum impact in the marketplace. Industry trade spending will also provide a certain level of push activities to complement ASMI's efforts. ASMI will work with the industry members to align activities to the maximum degree possible.

Marketing strategies will be reviewed each year by the board as part of the annual budget build and will help influence which tactics programs select.

### 2. Balance Established Markets with Emerging Market opportunities

ASMI will strengthen and sustain established markets, while examining developing markets, both domestic and international. ASMI will seek guidance from the industry, observe market trends, and conduct research.

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 International Marketing Committee has designated a program line item to explore new markets and each year the committee will approve any new market exploration.

### 3. Capitalize on Unique Attributes

ASMI will emphasize attributes that are unique to Alaska Seafood to build a reputation that will be difficult for competitors to best 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, supporting a way of life for Alaskans, 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.

Recognizing that not all markets respond to the same differentiating factors, ASMI will pull from a wide variety of positive information about Alaska seafood, including scientific sources, fisherman biographies, etc., to craft the most strategic message for the target audience.



**4. Promote Quality and Research**

ASMI will focus on broad technical assistance, analysis, education, advocacy, research and support to the industry. ASMI can engage in seafood research and development with the direction from Technical Committee and the finding that the project 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 and willingness to purchase it.

The goal for ASMI's marketing activities is to create a brand impression across the price spectrum of Alaska seafood products of quality, health, sustainability, abundance, thus generating more value for the Alaska harvest.

**6. Be a Reliable and Respected Consultant to Industry and 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 and will provide information to ASMI contractors, staff and the industry through strategic talking points on issues of concern.

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, 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 the Alaska RFM Certification**

ASMI will support the Alaska RFM Certification as a credible, objective and formally accredited third party certification of Alaska fisheries that:

- Is based on internationally recognized standards
- Is open and transparent
- Is cost-effective for industry and the supply chain
- Preserves the Alaska origin

## **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 ("first wholesale value")
- Percent increase in grounds price paid per pound to fishermen ("ex-vessel value")

Other key performance indicators (KPIs) may be measured, as determined by the ASMI Board.

### 2. Internal

ASMI staff will primarily be evaluated on how well they develop and execute the strategic initiatives in this plan. 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 we create visibility into program activities in a timely fashion that provided industry the ability to tie-in or generate their own promotions or join ASMI activities?
- 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? Applicable to marketing programs only.

### 3. Program Evaluation by Industry

The Domestic, **Communications**, International, RFM and Technical committees will be responsible for gathering industry and target market feedback on the value of ASMI activities conducted under their purview. This information along with strategy recommendations by the respective committees would determine the program's course in continuing, dropping or modifying specific program activities.

Industry members are expected to share non-proprietary data for this purpose. The Domestic Marketing committee will bear the 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.

In addition to the Operational Committees, ASMI's Customer Advisory Panel (CAP) may be called upon to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of ASMI activities both domestically and internationally.

The Finance Director 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.