



Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

**Salmon Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 2, 2023**

Aft Deck, lobby level of Hotel Captain Cook &
Virtual

Draft Minutes

I. Call to Order

Chair Dowie called the meeting to order at 3:01pm AKST.

a. Roll Call & Introduction of Guests

Chair Nicholas Dowie

Vice Chair Jose Montero Jr.

John Daly

Carleigh Hugh

Vanessa Aslanian

Sandy Souter

Michael Jackson

Melanie Brown

Matt Alward

Ted McDermott

Alex Pihl

Ex Officio Member Adam Drouhard was not present. His proxy Ben Napolitano was present.

Virtual Members:

Marta Heacock

Robert Gershberg

Eric Jordan

b. Approval of Agenda

Brown moved to approve the agenda. Aslanian seconded. Motion passed.

c. Approval of Minutes from October 11, 2023

Jackson moved to approve minutes from October 11th. Souter seconded. Motion passed.

d. ASMI Antitrust Statement

Chair Dowie read the ASMI Antitrust Statement, and ASMI staff made the statement available in the Zoom chat for virtual attendees.



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e. Chair and Vice Chair Remarks

Chair Dowie noted this is an unprecedented time for the salmon industry; families, harvesters, processors are all hurting. Chair Dowie reminded attendees to treat everyone with courtesy and respect and noted that members of the committee are acting as experts in our field to benefit the whole of the ASMI salmon marketing efforts. Chair Dowie noted that we will discuss topics like origin labelling, traceability, and quality in the marketplace with a focus on what can assist the industry most this year in recovering market conditions. Chair Dowie noted that the committee needs to be sensitive and realistic in its approach and strive for immediate and impactful suggestions for action in 2024.

Vice Chair Montero thanked attendees for their time. Vice Chair Montero provided an overview of what was discussed in the pre-meeting. He noted the high-level points from the pre-meeting: chum market and what can be done to revitalize it with higher harvest stocks coming out of Southeast, conversations on enticing more purchasing power for canned pinks, discussion of sockeye and the timing of the USDA purchase to move 2022 record stocks, geopolitical issues with Russian product being processed in China and then into the US, and finally the messaging to separate king salmon from orca whales in public perception.

f. Public Comment

Comment – Andy Wink with BBRSDA provided the following comment verbally and in written format: *“As Chairman Kimball said, virtually all species and key product forms are under great pressure. In general, we need more people eating Alaska salmon more often. Rather than try to figure out which ones need the most help, I’d suggest the Salmon Committee provide ASMI’s Board with a list of ideas about how we can increase demand for Alaska salmon. So, here’s a list of marketing activities for Committee consideration:*

- *Partner with social media influencers who are driving how consumers make decisions about what they are having for dinner, lunch, or snacks. Also, let’s create 1 to 3 influencers of our own who can show consumers how to make tasty meals using Alaska salmon.*

- *Get more Alaska salmon on more HRI menus by working with distributors and possibly offering incentives, similar to how we drive more retail sales.*

In this same vein, let’s get:

- o *More Alaska salmon on sushi menus*

- o *More Alaska salmon on menus at ski lodges, such as salmon chowder*

- o *School lunch programs*

- *Tell the amazing stories of our salmon fisheries by putting fishermen in stores, more human interest content, and providing more support to direct marketers.*

- *Work with McDonalds to see if we can get them to menu a salmon sandwich.*

- *As Senator Murkowski mentioned, we need more general advertising that drives increased consumption, particularly in Southern California and Bay Area, consider billboards, radio/podcast ads, and social media ads.*

- *More sales of canned salmon to institutional buyers, such as military or global food aid programs.*

- *Develop easy-to-use curriculum for high school home economics classes, so students can learn a few go-to recipes many will continue to make for decades to come, and possibly pair this curriculum with some curriculum for Biology class about the incredible salmon life cycle.*

- *Market to people who are serious about having a lot of prepared foods on hand, like canned salmon,*



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this could include Church of Ladder Day Saints members.

• Finally, continue to connect with consumers who are passionate about fitness and health. Perhaps the best things about Alaska salmon, and something that is unique in the food landscape, is that after you eat it – you feel good! There are not a lot proteins that don't do that.

Thank you for your time and consideration."

Jackson acknowledged the effort that Chair Dowie, Vice Chair Montero and staff put into this meeting.

II. New Business

a. Retail salmon update by Chris DuBois, EVP and Practice Leader, Circana

DuBois gave a presentation entitled, '[Salmon's Dominance in U.S. Retail – Unlocking the Keys for Growth.](#)'

Discussion of Mr. DuBois presentation:

Jackson noted there was a 51% growth for farmed salmon, he asked what farmed salmon is doing well that Alaska Seafood could improve? DuBois noted that farmed salmon hits a price point that US consumers like, and they also purchase salmon for health benefits.

Alward asked whether DuBois' data shows different margins and price points in farmed versus wild salmon? DuBois noted he does not have margin data, but that retail shelf prices vary dramatically between retailers and the salmon types.

Daly asked whether DuBois has data specific to the various formats (chilled, frozen, shelf-stable), or was seafood a category of 350 SKUS?

DuBois said Circana utilized all the seafood SKUs to forecast the data in the presentation.

Conclusion of Mr. DuBois presentation.

b. Roundtable Discussion

Market share discussion

Chair Dowie opened up discussion about optimizing market share, and posited whether there are strategies ASMI can employ to capture consumer demand and growth.

Pihl commented that messaging surrounding quality would be beneficial.

Souter noted that identifying products as Alaska-origin aids consumers in identifying the product is wild versus farmed, and prompts purchases.

Jackson commented that a multi-pronged education campaign for consumers and retailers about the benefits of wild-caught salmon is important. Daly reiterated Circana data that 40% of customers get their seafood information from the seafood counter; ASMI education programs for staff at the store level could assist in telling Alaska's story.

Jordan emphasized that salmon families are a story that sells fish.

Gershberg commented that the main issue between farmed and wild is the retailer; the retailer won't spend resources educating a consumer about a product that they can't do long-term forecast planning for.

McDermott noted that another focus could be in the frozen category; there is less visual discrepancy between wild and farmed salmon in this area of the store.



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Origin-labeling and chain of custody discussion

Jackson notes that this is part of the education program for retailers at the counter about health benefits, sustainability, nutrition, and the RFM certification program.

Brown complimented ASMI on their inbound trade missions, and followed that a school lunch ambassador, or a military food service ambassador could expand educational opportunities in other sectors.

Chair Dowie noted that Alaska salmon is RFM certified which helps differentiate the product.

Alward commented that private industry can educate Washington D.C., and ASMI can help educate consumers (through media etc.) about the benefits of purchasing product with RFM certification labelling.

Chair Dowie asked industry members about how many salmon products have an RFM label?

Daly noted that there are large volumes of canned salmon produced by industry currently and the majority of those carry the ASMI label. Overseas is considerably different than domestic, but the MSC label is a smaller portion internationally.

Jackson asked Mark Jones to comment on any cons of pushing RFM, and what he is seeing in retail with RFM labels. Jones commented that the domestic ASMI retail program works in conjunction with RFM to expand this labelling. Jeff Regnart notes that RFM would like to work in conjunction with the Alaska Seafood label to be featured on packaging; and that RFM is seeing an uptick in CoC's across the industry, especially in the last six months.

Harvester discussion

Chair Dowie highlighted topics that could assist harvesters from the pre-meeting: origin labelling and RFM. Jackson commented that placing the harvesters in the stores and telling the Alaska Seafood story in-store is powerful. Daly noted that there is an increase in requests for transparency throughout the supply chain; there is momentum and demand from customers asking for traceability and the story of the product. Alward commented that ASMI could serve as an educational resource for fisherman about how the global commodities market and industry functions. Pihl said that ASMI could play a role in communicating to fishermen.

Discussion continued.

Sushi discussion

Brown posits whether a new cut that is specific to sushi (i.e. loin cut), would be beneficial to expanding product forms? Alward said that based on DuBois research it is the largest in the growth market, and this is an avenue for ASMI to investigate. Hunt suggested working with a Japanese chef for these types of promotions. Alward mentioned that if you can make fish eaters out of young kids then you are making a lifetime of consumers.

Daly said there is a big emphasis on value-added and building something exciting that isn't already readily available on the market. Jackson suggested a survey to the retailers about how to introduce wild Alaska fish into the sushi market. Brown said there is an opportunity to direct whole fish to sushi restaurants and educate HRI about how to use the fish for full utilization.

Discussion continued.



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Collaboration with influencers discussion

Chair Dowie posited how best Alaska seafood can work with influencers.

Souter mentions that the seafood counter is where 41% of where consumers choose Alaska seafood, suggests ASMI conducts road-trips/fam trips for the retailers to train them. McDermott says that getting retail Managers to Alaska could be a positive avenue for education. Pihl comments that ASMI materials at the seafood counter could be beneficial.

Domestic market is the strongest for salmon, the US would be the best area of focus for marketing support for domestic foodservice promotions.

Dowie notes that the international markets are facing many geopolitical issues.

Montero notes that the market value of chum salmon could begin to get closer to Atlantic salmon.

Discussion continued.

- c. Answering species questions from the Board of Directors

[Responses available here.](#)

- d. Committee Chair Election

Chair Dowie's term is complete at All Hands 2023. Floor was opened to motions for a new Salmon Committee Chair. Alward moved to nominate Jackson, Souter seconded. None opposed, motion carried.

- III. Good of the Order

- IV. Adjourn

Chair Dowie expressed thanks and the opportunity to serve. Motion to adjourn by Jordan, Jackson seconded. No objections, the motion carried at 5:20pm AKST.