

Building the Evidence for Wild Alaska Canned Herring

Scientific evidence is shining a spotlight on maternal and child nutrition as a key point of impact globally. Oily fish like herring are the best sources of essential fats and high-quality protein for people of all ages. This is particularly true for mothers and babies within the critical first 1,000 days. Protein is gaining recognition as key to healthy growth and development. There is increasing demand for protein and growing international concern about how to provide sustainable, affordable high-quality protein for humanitarian efforts and food safety net programs.

Small fish, such as herring, play a key role in the diet of many developing nations and offer a unique opportunity to combat malnutrition and promote healthy growth and development. Herring is high in protein and healthy Omega-3 fatty acids that are vital to growth and development but are often lacking in the diets of the most at risk for undernutrition. Canned Herring is also calorically and nutrient dense, delivering large amounts of the essential building blocks of life in small amounts. In Africa, the consumption of fish has decreased, even though its availability has increased worldwide. Many nations with the highest burden from undernutrition are missing out on a clinically effective, and cost-effective way to combat this health problem. Fish consumption can also address the flip side of malnutrition and help protect against the chronic diseases associated with overnutrition and excessive weight gain. Canned Herring and other easy-to-use fish products are a largely untapped resource in food aid baskets, but they have potential for a positive impact in at-risk populations, as well as for the general public.

FISH ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A HEALTHY DIET:

- ✓ The World Health Organization recommends one to two servings of fish a week to help prevent against heart disease and stroke.
- ✓ The United States Food and Drug Administration recommends that pregnant women eat 8-12 ounces of fish a week to promote healthy fetal growth.
- ✓ The American Heart Association recommends eating fish twice a week for a healthier heart.

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) Global Food Aid Program (AGFAP) have been exploring new marine based products, such as Herring. We have tested various prototypes during the last several years with consistently high consumer ratings and broad appeal in diverse countries. In 2012, ASMI launched a series of pilot projects and research to strengthen the evidence in Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Uganda and Cambodia.

Improving School Meals in Cambodia:

In 2016, AGFAP and the Don Bosco Foundation of Cambodia partnered on a pilot project to test the adaptability and acceptability of Alaska Canned Herring in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The project serves over 1,000 children and students in Don Bosco's schools in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, and Kep City. The schools are technical and vocational training young adults for more economically advantageous positions in Cambodia's growing economy. Distribution of the Canned Herring took place in March and April 2016. Recipes were developed to incorporate the Canned Herring into local dishes. Reviews show that the Canned Herring is greatly enjoyed by the people being fed in the Don Bosco schools.





Wild, Natural & Sustainable®

Preventing Malnutrition in Guinea-Bissau among Village Children under 5:

In 2015, we conducted a randomized controlled trial, using within village randomization, of Alaska Canned Herring with 1,000 children, mothers, and fathers as a way to mitigate malnutrition during the lean season in four villages in Guinea-Bissau. This study examined the efficacy of Canned Herring as a nutrient dense food rich in high quality marine protein and essential Omega-3 Fatty acids, which can deliver strong nutritional benefits in very marginal conditions. Our nutritionist and her colleagues from Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy conducted the research with International Partnership for Human Development. The Canned Herring helped to prevent a decrease in weight during the lean season for children compared to the control group. This difference was statistically significant, indicating that Canned Herring could be used as a ration when programming for lean seasons.



Improving Nutrition in Liberia for Women, Children & People Living with HIV/AIDS:



Canned Herring was enthusiastically accepted and successfully integrated into local dishes. But even more importantly, we found that these products had dramatic effects on the health of the people that were involved in these development projects and emergency settings. In Liberia, significant blocks of the community – children and adults alike – progressed to safe and healthy nutrition levels with nine-months of Alaska Canned Herring consumption. The Herring was particularly beneficial for people living with HIV/AIDS, and provided an incentive for individuals to come to the clinic for their medications. These positive results warranted further investigation and research because, while these products already have proven effective on a small scale, they could have a wider impact for people around the world. This work took place as a result of early experience with Alaska Canned Herring in Uganda (2009, see below).

Improving Nutrition in Uganda for School Children & People Living with HIV/AIDS:

It all began in 2009, when World Help and Back to the Bible Mission approached the ASMI Alaska Global Food Aid program to provide Alaska Canned Herring to populations in northern Uganda. This region is vulnerable to food insecurity as a result of conflict, poverty and HIV/AIDS. The high quality marine protein and omega-3 fatty acids are particularly important for this group where malnutrition and HIV/AIDS are prevalent.

The school children had little more than maize and cassava porridge, so the Herring greatly improved the nutrient profile of their school meal. The children enjoyed the canned herring. The HIV/AIDS patients also found the Herring to be tasty and tolerable. Lack of appetite and difficulty tolerating high-protein food is one of the main issues for the AIDS community and their health suffers greatly from lack of protein. The experience with Herring in Uganda led to further evidence building projects (see above).