



ALL HANDS 2024 MEETING

PILOT PROJECT TO DEMONSTRATE ACCEPTABILITY OF CANNED WILD ALASKA POLLOCK (WAP) IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM OVERSEAS

Background

The ASMI Global Food Aid Program (AGFAP) has been working with the Alaska seafood sector for twenty years, successfully leveraging our relationships with government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) to introduce and diversify Alaska seafood options in government food and nutrition programs, domestically and internationally. We have been highly successful.

As the challenges of supply and demand facing the Alaska seafood sector ebb and flow, we help introduce and facilitate purchases of wild Alaska salmon (Red/Sockeye, Pink and Keta) and Pollock, making best use of the various food and nutrition safety net programs the USG administers.

Recently, the Alaska Pollock sector has asked our assistance with seeking out additional government sales. Right now, the focus on shelf stable protein options that can stand up to the rigors of the global humanitarian food aid supply chain makes it an optimum time to introduce canned Alaska Pollock through an international food aid program, such as school feeding. It also has potential for the domestic food programs.

Several factors and Administration initiatives have come into play recently, including increased attention to nutrition and food security and sustainable food system practices, coupled with market dynamics. These conditions make this a perfect time to show USDA and USAID that expanding the variety of shelf stable seafood will be well accepted among its program community and align better with international and U.S. nutrition policy while helping to stabilize segments of the Alaska seafood supply chain.

We propose to conduct a pilot project to demonstrate the acceptability and feasibility of canned WAP in an international school meals program as we have successfully done with canned Salmon and Herring. Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers (GAPP) is in full support and has offered about \$60,000 towards cost of the project. This can provide substantial returns in sales over time.



AGFAP Is Well Positioned

We work closely with USDA which purchases all food and commodities for domestic and international food assistance and with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that administers the international humanitarian supply chain and programs including those using food. We also have relationships with the NGOs involved in international food programming, like Save the Children, World Food Programme (WFP).

Justification

Our demonstration projects have introduced food aid consumers to canned salmon and herring around the world and here in the USA. This proved to be an excellent way to convince agencies administering the programs domestically (USDA) and internationally (USAID, USDA, World Food Programme) and the NGOs running the food aid programs overseas to include canned Pink Salmon in Asia, Africa and The Americas. As a result, canned Salmon has been successfully programmed in international food aid and well accepted since 2004. People from Laos and Cambodia to Bolivia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Uganda and Sri Lanka (USDA/FAS GAIN Report No. CE2022-0016, 6 July 2022) for Guinea-Bissau, Congo, Cameroon, Haiti, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda among others were introduced to Alaska canned salmon and herring.

World Food Programme purchases tinned fish (mostly mackerel, sardines and pilchards- not U.S.-sourced) for its humanitarian and school-based food aid activities. Yet canned salmon is the only US sourced shelf stable animal protein approved for our Government's international programs. It provides high quality nutrition in pest- and microbe-resistant packaging, has a 5-6 year shelf life and stands up to the challenges of the humanitarian food supply chain. It is precooked and requires no refrigeration, potable water or special handling, and can be incorporated into any local dish or eaten right from the can.

This year we are looking to develop alternative options, like canned WAP to augment Alaska's sustainable shelf-stable seafood supply for international programs. Canned WAP would have similar nutritional profiles and storage, handling and preparation advantages. Canned Pollock is a mild whitefish alternative to canned Salmon and Herring that we know would be very well received in the food aid community. We are proposing to conduct a pilot project to test out acceptability and consumer appreciation in an international food aid program. This would be a first step to expose consumers and create demand for canned WAP, and opportunities for Alaska's WAP sector.

Canned Alaska Pollock Demonstration Project

We draw on our twenty years of experience developing successful projects demonstrating acceptability of canned Salmon, Herring and Seafood Powder in school meals, maternal and child health clinics, communities and programs for people living with HIV/AIDs in Liberia, Uganda, Guinea-



Bissau, Cambodia, Guatemala and Bolivia (see <https://www.alaskaseafood.org/alaska-seafood-101/global-food-security/> for examples).

Our approach focuses on working closely with NGOs in country to conduct cooking demonstrations that incorporate the fish into local dishes, develop recipes with program cooks and mothers, and demonstrating that they can be successfully programmed in food insecure populations. Working directly with cooks, mothers and children, in schools, clinics and humanitarian settings are key to success.

Project Selection

We propose to select one NGO like Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services or World Food Programme to pilot test **a container or two** of canned Alaska Pollock in a school feeding project. We will target among the current projects in Sri Lanka, Senegal, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Laos, Malawi, and Rwanda.

Protocol

We will work with the program staff and nutritionists to select the school, develop the specific protocol. We will work with school cooks to develop recipes based integrating the WAP with the school ration and locally available ingredients. We will assess product acceptability through interviews with consumers, key informants and focus groups.

The protocol will be developed with the NGO based on program parameters and country dynamics to include the canned Alaska Pollock in the current food aid ration (typically, rice, wheat flour or corn soy blend, fortified vegetable oil, and a bean, pea or lentil).

A container of canned WAP will be procured and shipped to the country by ASMI. It should provide about 3,600 cases of 24 6 oz cans. Sample size will be determined so as to include a serving of WAP in two to three school lunches for students during one semester or a school year.

Methods

We will conduct an initial visit to work with project staff to set up the project and teach them about the product and its benefits. We will work with school cooks to develop recipes, food-safe preparation and handling, and identify secure warehouse and storage locations. We will work with the staff on sound storage, handling and food safety practices.

We will document storage and handling, staff and consumer acceptability through photos, pre and post questionnaires, interviews and group discussions, with a view to generalize the results to promote further programs' acceptance and adoption in future programming.

Pilot Project Supervision

Our Food Aid & Nutrition Consultant, Dr. Nina Schlossman, will coordinate the project, and work with local programs to design and supervise the projects, based on past successful experience with such



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projects. She will be in regular contact with the NGO project contact to make sure that the product is distributed as planned and data collected appropriately. If funding permits, she will travel to the country at the beginning of the project to get things set up.

Illustrative Budget

BUDGET for ASMI Canned Pollock Pilot Project - Consumer Acceptability 2025					
AFRICA: Senegal					
Shipping Costs:		number	unit cost	totals	subtotals
		1.00	105,000.00		
1 container of canned WAP (3000 cases of 7.5oz cans/24 cans per case, labeled in Seattle and ready to ship*		1	105,000.00	105,000.00	
Shipping fee (product) overseas & inland		1	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Handling fees (unloading the ship)		1	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Customs fees		1	500.00	500.00	
Container fees		1	500.00	500.00	
Storage fees (30 days)		1	500.00	500.00	
					112,500.00
Travel Costs - 2 travelers:					
Airfare - Washington DC to Dakar, Senegal RT**		2	2,730.00	5,460.00	
Change ticket fee		2	250.00	500.00	
Extra baggage (US to overseas)		2	100.00	200.00	
rt transfer to /from Dulles Airport		4	100.00	400.00	
t transfer to hotel & airport		4	50.00	200.00	
Hotel - nights Dakar***		14	204.00	2,856.00	
M&IE - days Dakar***		18	134.00	2,412.00	
Travel Medical Insurance	per day	20	20.00	400.00	
					12,428.00
Costs:					
Communication (international data plan)		1	250.00	250.00	
Transportation (local)		10	50.00	500.00	
rials & Supplies - including food for cooking sessions		2	500.00	1,000.00	
Contribution to NGO for local project costs and execution	per project	1	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Consumer Testing: Field Visits & focus Group Expenses****		2	1,000.00	2,000.00	
					13,750.00
			TOTAL		138,678.00
*estimated price pending actual cost after production					
**Refundable airline tickets, economy					
***Based on maximum per diem rates (lodging plus meals and incidental expenses) for State Department.					
****Consumer Testing: research markets, buy food, develop recipes, participant stipends, materials, etc...					