



Wild, Natural & Sustainable®

Salmon Committee

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM (Alaska Time)

Virtual

APPROVED MINUTES (approved 10/11/23)

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Dowie called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM Alaska Time.

Present:

Chair Nicholas Dowie

Vice Chair José Montero, Jr.

Matt Alward

Vanessa Aslanian

Melanie Brown

Julianne Curry

John Daly

Marta Heacock

Michael Jackson

Eric Jordan

Ted McDermott

Sandy Souter

Alex Pihl

Absent: Adam Drouhard, Ex Officio

Also present were ASMI staff, ASMI board members and members of the public.

II. Chair's Remarks

Chair Dowie read the ASMI Antitrust Statement. He welcomed everyone and thanked all for attendance.

III. Approval of Agenda

Jordan moved to approve agenda and Alward seconded. Motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes from November 9, 2022 Meeting

Jackson moved to approve minutes from November 9, 2022 meeting and Souter seconded. Motion carried.

V. There was no Public Comment.

VI. Industry Updates (Roundtable Committee Discussion)

Chair Dowie thanked everyone, including ASMI staff, for joining today and then opened the floor by inviting committee members to share any updates. Aslanian wondered about fresh market. McDermott commented that 2022 fish still in market. Jackson shared that he is encouraged by cooperation of industry to promote sockeye. Souter said that salmon markets across board are soft; chums and pink will be challenge. Daly said that ADF&G came out with forecast with no surprises; we've heard a USDA promise to help with surplus but nothing yet. 2023 inventory should be higher and still need to push through 2022 inventory. There was discussion around a large pink salmon harvest in Russia. Alward said that the cabinet level sees this as a concern. Montero said there are 3 things to keep in mind: 1) Huge push for sockeye since inventory is still high so keep market price in mind because it will affect 2023 price; therefore, goal at SEG in Barcelona will be what can push be to move 2022. 2) Promote pink season. 3) We will probably see processing in Japan. Jordan said it is troubled times for trolling and longline in Southeast. Pihl has concerns as a harvester. Curry wants to express frustration with fellow fishermen over costs of processing and we need to help educate fishermen on costs. Brown said she'd rather have number 3 over farmed salmon. Heacock is concerned about the closure of the king salmon troll fishery in SE and how that's going to negatively impact our independent harvesters.

VII. Presentations

- a. ASMI Seafood Technical Director John Burrows gave an update.
Curry asked about timeline of SK grant completion. Current timeline is end of Sept but going to ask for year extension because some facilities haven't been available for testing. Chair Dowie asked about contaminants and if age is a consideration. Burrows replied that yes, age is being evaluated. Jordan commented that Puget Sound salmon are contaminated so it's important to differentiate with Alaska salmon. Burrows said that information is housed on ASMI website. Chair Dowie asked for priority on accuracy of website with AI programs out there and what's being pulled and how information is collated.
- b. ASMI Communications Director Ashley Heimbigner gave an update on the in-state outreach which is focused on helping Alaskans better value and understand their relationship to Alaska seafood industry. Jordan said ASMI is doing such a great job; it really makes a difference. Chair Dowie asked if Heimbigner had questions for committee; Heimbigner said please keep communication lines open and always give ASMI heads up when they hear things that might be happening. Brown encouraged others to take swag traveling with you because it really helps get brand recognition out there.
- c. ASMI Domestic Marketing Director Megan Rider & ASMI contractor for Retail National Accounts Mark Jones gave a salmon market update on the many different brick & mortar and e-commerce promotions happening throughout the U.S. Montero asked for more details on the Publix promotion because they've weaned off fresh program in favor of frozen starting during pandemic. Jones explained that the funds allocated by board are to be used by fiscal year-end so it's spent on frozen, but Jones said that there are discussions to promote fresh. Daly said that historically fresh has sold itself but upcoming market will be dependent on packers. Bruce Schactler asked about fresh seafood counter closures. Jones hasn't really seen or heard of any domestically; McDermott added that there have been closures in Europe.

- d. Katie Goldberg and Tessa Ward of Edelman gave a consumer PR update on how salmon is highlighted year-round sharing how they've focused on reaching three target audiences with an omni-channel approach.

VIII. Future Industry Projections: Challenges and Opportunities (Roundtable Committee Discussion)

Chair Dowie opened the meeting to comments. Jordan said that it is the stories that help sell Alaska seafood and is thankful for the amazing work ASMI does. Chair Dowie knows Seafood Technical has discussed use of ASMI logo on pet food and full-utilization of salmon; Dowie asked for salmon committee input on these topics. McDermott, Daly and Jackson cannot think of reasons why it shouldn't be on pet food. Brown shared that possible drawbacks could be that some people's perception could be that they can't afford salmon but it can go in pet food. Souter thinks it's a good thing to do. Jackson suggested that perhaps a different logo could be utilized to differentiate human consumption. Chair Dowie asked for discussion on cans. Chair Dowie asked should other product forms be available in can form. Heacock agrees that boutique can sales have a place. Daly said that some places in Europe think canned is the highest quality; the market grew during pandemic, and boutique cans are here to stay. Brown share the many advantages to tinned fish. Chair Dowie asked about international vs. domestic patterns going forward. Souter said there is going to be more diversity in product forms; reprocessing is happening in other countries and new technology will advance as well. McDermott said a seafood choice, even if farmed, is still better than beef, etc. and Alaska will always win. Daly said that farmed can add scale, but our strongest asset is the message that ASMI continually promotes of wild, natural, sustainable. McDermott said there are premium farmed salmon companies that compete against each other and together they compete against us. Chair Dowie asked about domestic demand for sustainability – where will we be required to be in 10-15 years? What messaging will be needed? How get ahead of the obstacles like packaging, etc. Montero share that part of this is what other foods are doing, and consumers want traceability; plus sustainable packaging will be after that and seafood will follow the other foods. Daly seconded that – traceability is definitely here; we won't lead the way but as industry shareholders we need to keep ASMI appraised. Brown commented that full-utilization should be tied to sustainability. Jordan spoke to fuel changes and messaging about earth-friendly practices. Chair Dowie asked about AI and how it will affect our industry going forward. Souter said that AI is still in development and maybe ASMI is already using it; he feels it will be positive. Curry said it's a really great question but she's not expert; however, industry needs to move towards more automation because labor problem is driving up costs, etc. Aslanian agreed that labor is a huge factor. Daly said that ADF&G has 150 years of data so as technology grows it will be interesting how we will be able to utilize it.

IX. Old Business

Chair Dowie asked Bruce Schactler for update on salmon burger. He shared that development has been complicated for a variety of reasons like how to serve it, cook it, heat it up. So he asked them to look at nuggets because they're easier and kids like them.

Chair Dowie asked committee to share any old business they would like covered ahead of the next meeting so it can be included on the agenda.

X. New Business

Chair Dowie asked committee to please use the Dropbox and share information. Be a resource for each other and ASMI.

XI. Final Comments

Chair Dowie thanked the ASMI team for their hard work and all they do for the industry. VC Montero thanked Chair Dowie for running the meeting and asked committee to keep the momentum going.

XII. Adjourn

Jordan moved to adjourn and Curry seconded. Meeting adjourned at 12:53 PM Alaska Time.