



Communications Committee Meeting

December 4, 2024

1:00 – 4:00 PM AKST

Endeavour Room, Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage

DRAFT MINUTES

Link: [Recording of Meeting](#)

I. Call to Order

Chair Cassandra Squibb called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM.

II. Roll Call

Present:

- Cassandra Squibb (Chair)
- Hannah Heimbuch (Vice Chair)
- Everette Anderson
- Jessica Keplinger
- John Ochoa
- Julianne Curry
- Rachel Kallander
- Shannon Ford Ward
- Tracy Welch

Not Present:

- Nicole Kimball
- Tomi Marsh (Board of Director liaison)

Quorum achieved.

III. Antitrust Statement

Chair Squibb read the ASMI Antitrust Statement.

VI. Approval of Draft Agenda

- **Motion:**
 - 1st: Anderson
 - 2nd: Ward

V. Approval of September 19, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes

- **Motion:**
 - 1st: Welch
 - 2nd: Heimbuch

VI. Public Comment

Matt Alward, President of UFA:

- Fishermen are not seeing the benefit of ASMI, especially salmon harvesters.
- Perception from the salmon harvester that ASMI focuses primarily on pollock.
- Suggested addressing this issue with the board and exploring ways to engage unengaged fishermen.

VII. Committee Member Introductions

The committee members introduced themselves.

VIII. Review and Discussion of Operational Committee Questions

Review and discussion of Operational Committee Questions a. The committee discussed the questions posed to the committee and approved the responses shown below.

How can ASMI make an immediate difference in the marketplace?

- Proactively prepare materials and/or messaging needed by industry and federal partners to respond to any opportunities or challenges, such as changes at USDA, the Farm Bill, Make America Healthy Again, Russian sanctions, trade, tariffs, and origin labeling, that may arise at the federal level.

- Increase social media focus on telling the Alaska Seafood story (e.g. the People of Wild Alaska Pollock campaign.)
 - Develop engaging social campaigns (similar to the Alaska Seafood Hacks campaign) that leverage industry partners and their audiences.
 - Develop strategies to increase demand among younger consumers, especially by highlighting affordable species, utilizing influencers with strong parent audiences and informing industry of ways to increase purchases by school districts.
 - Increase focus of consumer-facing content on priority species and products (cod, sole/flounder, blackcod, pink and keta salmon).
 - Evaluate opportunities to promote undervalued and under-harvested species, such as herring, which could benefit from additional ASMI resources (like a fact sheet in English) and RFM certification.
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What long-term challenges must your program monitor and/or address?

- Climate-related changes in the ecosystem that affect harvest levels and stock status.
 - Increased focus on trade and tariffs.
 - Brand erosion due to stock fluctuations (example: GOA ESA determination).
 - Declining seafood consumption by the US population.
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What resources can ASMI provide to best help harvesters understand ASMI's value to Alaska's seafood industry?

- Develop concise and easily-shareable information for use by ASMI supporters and industry to convey the value of ASMI.
 - Increase utilization of social media, fleet meetings, webinars, industry/harvester ambassadors, harvester, trade and industry groups, and events to communicate the value of ASMI to harvesters, with an emphasis on visible and in-person activities.
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What needs to be done to elevate RFM with our customers?

- Ensure clear and concise messaging and information exists for the industry related to why businesses should choose RFM and the value it provides.
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Are there ways that your harvester group, businesses, affiliate organizations or the companies you represent can support ASMI either in-state or in the market (domestic or global)?

Harvester groups, businesses, affiliate organizations or companies could:

- Advocate for ASMI's value to the state and ASMI's budget.
- Advocate for ASMI with our state and federal delegations and expresses the value/importance of the organization.
- Be a conduit of information between ASMI and harvesters.

- Share resources and amplify content where appropriate. This occurs with the larger marketing organizations (i.e. RSDAs, GAPP or WASA) but should also include other direct efforts that contribute to the Alaska brand. (i.e. relevant SK projects, fleet-specific or vertically-integrated harvesters.)
 - Communicate direct impacts of management success stories (recent example: Prince William Sound Herring) and the direct impact on processors, harvesters, and community economy.
 - Note: Return-on-investment information, such as “ASMI focused on X domestic marketing promotions in 2024 and that created X impact for AK seafood, or “ASMI has worked on opening up additional international markets in X for specific products” would be helpful to partner organizations.
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Please review the summaries of the species committees. Do you have any recommendations for which your operational program should take action?

Halibut-Sablefish

- Sustainability talking points about halibut:
 - Catch method (hook and line)
 - Positive history and story of halibut fishery
 - Sustainability in action regarding declining biomass
- Emphasize the ease of at-home preparation and convenience of sablefish to consumers
- Sablefish harvesting photos and video (focus on slinky pot fishing)

Shellfish

- Promote messaging around limited availability as a positive attribute.
- Highlight the health benefits of shellfish in marketing campaigns.
- Support for direct marketers as new business start-ups: create a guide or clear process roadmap to jump through the hoops of becoming a new direct marketer business
- Cooked crab country of origin labeling remains a complex issue. Consider using the current political landscape to push for supportive legislation.
- Engage fishermen directly in-season at docks and other accessible locations.
- Provide opportunities for fishermen to act as brand ambassadors, elevating the Alaska Seafood brand.

Salmon

- Integrate pink and keta into the influencer program; adjust promotions based on industry input and market demand.
- Rebrand pink and keta products to make them appealing to consumers and increase consumption.
 - Highlight high omega-3 content, mild taste, marinade compatibility, and low cost.

- Educate fishermen on the importance of careful fish handling to improve quality throughout the supply chain (e.g., YouTube videos, imagery).
 - Communications Committee note: Communications program can disseminate materials to industry and fleet.
- Reinforce the value of wild, US-origin, Alaska seafood.

Whitefish

- Prioritize Yellowfin Sole and Alaska Plaice promotion in domestic markets due to decreased sales volume (consumer PR and influencers).
 - Partner with UFA to identify fisherman ambassadors and develop a program in a variety of sectors.
 - Expand marketing materials about fishing families in the whitefish sector.
 - Keep promoting nutritional benefits of Alaska whitefish, including highlighting new study by WASA showing high omega 3 content in Flatfish.
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Committee Recommendations for the Board

- Continue to support and fund the in-state Seafood Sustains Alaska campaign.
- Increase outreach to and education of ASMI, its role and value to elected officials.
- Consider funding RFM Certification for the herring fishery.

IX. Old Business and Good of the Order

None

X. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- **Chair:**
 - Cassandra Squibb nominated Hannah Heimbuch for Chair.
 - Result: Elected unopposed. Hannah Heimbuch appointed as Chair.
- **Vice Chair:**
 - Hannah Heimbuch nominated Shannon Ford Ward for Vice Chair.
 - Result: Elected unopposed. Shannon Ford Ward appointed as Vice Chair.

XI. Adjournment

- **Motion:**
 - 1st: Heimbuch
 - 2nd: Ford Ward

- Result: None opposed. Meeting adjourned at 4:01pm.