



Wild, Natural & Sustainable

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI)
Domestic Marketing Committee Meeting
July 22, 2020
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM Alaska Time
Zoom
Meeting ID: 851 1617 3399
Password: 757608

DRAFT MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Chairman John Salle calls the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Committee members present: John Salle, Lilani Dunn, Thea Thomas, Mike Cusack, Kendall Whitney, John Daly, Ron Christianson

ASMI staff and contractors: Megan Rider, Sarah Cannard, Emily Gisler, Leah Krafft, Jann Dickerson, Mark Jones, Jeremy Woodrow, Hannah Lindoff, Nicole Stangeland, Michael Kohan, Katie Goldberg, Tessa Ward, Sara Truitt, Josie Curtis, John Burrows, Ashley Heimbigner

Others present: Andrew Hutchins, Ron Risher, Pat Shanahan, Tom Gemmell, Tomi Marsh

Absent: Larry Christensen, Branson Spiers, Nelly Hand

Opening statements from Salle.

III. Approval of Agenda

Cusack moves to approve the agenda. Dunn seconds.

IV. Approval of minutes from meeting held February 11th, 2020

Whitney moves to approve minutes. Cusack seconds.

V. Public Comment

Tomi Marsh has joined the call at 9:11 a.m. No public comment.

VI. Industry Update

Whitney provides an update with regard to the direct to consumer website for Seafood Producers Co-Op. Reports that the consumer business was extremely busy initially when Covid-19 hit but has slowed. Working with FedEx and UPS was difficult due to both companies being overwhelmed. Salle asks if there have been new consumers and Whitney explains that yes, there are new customers and he has had much more contact with consumers on preparation methods for Alaska seafood and health messaging.

Dunn provides an update from BBRSDA around direct marketers. BBRSDA is pivoting to share simple recipes directly to consumers with an emphasis on making Alaska seafood appeal to consumers at retail.

Cusack provides an update on the Covid-19 incidences on American Seafood's vessels. Shares that the Alaska pollock business is doing well in light of the pandemic. American Seafoods is working to increase consumer awareness of Alaska pollock, especially uncoated products. Cod market has been good due to direct to consumer market.

Thomas gives a harvester update on Copper River/PWS and notes that the region had a really weak sockeye run with low prices due to the shift to retail from foodservice. The town of Cordova is being very safe and cautious and processing plants are isolated. Working with tenders in the area has gone smoothly. There has been a weak chum run in PWS and low prices have made it a very challenging year.

Daly shares a salmon update. The timing of the salmon run and the precautions for Covid-19 have increased costs to operate. Processing plants are isolated with no visitors. Bristol Bay has had a strong run which condensed in the last two weeks. Small sockeye would be a product for ASMI to focus on, potentially refreshed market.

Christianson shares information on the packaged goods segment. Canned salmon and smoked fish have had an increased lift recently. White tablecloth restaurant market has dramatically declined which has made it difficult to move premium products like halibut. Distributor sector has seen a huge hit. Initially there were challenges with personnel at fresh cases due to retailers shutting down their fresh cases but that issue has recently been righted.

Salle tells the group that all workers going to Trident processing plants around the state are being quarantined at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage. Processing facilities have been on lockdown with no visitors. Employee safety has been the number one priority for Trident. The value-added processing facilities in the Lower 48 have had different challenges with regard to Covid-19, due to employees coming and going from the plants.

Risher updates the group on the reduced production capacity and the large Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run. Trends in the market include a lack of single frozen fillets and lack of production of sockeye in the Gulf of Alaska. Sockeye will see a large can pack but also reduced frozen H&G and fillets compared to the last few years where production was spread out. The lack of chum has

been challenging. The Dungeness crab season in southeast Alaska has been strong this season and clusters will go into the retail market domestically.

VII. Retail Update provided by Mark Jones

Jones provides an update on the Domestic retail market and reports that initially retailers were underwater and overwhelmed when Covid-19 hit but now are getting operations under control. Jones shares slides showing the retail promotions from January through May and displays images and results. Since demos are not being executed due to Covid-19, many retailers are pivoting to ecommerce and digital activations. Retailers are focused on origin of seafood. Target has added the Alaska seafood logo on their Good & Gather brand packaging, and Walmart has the new RFM logo on display in their stores. Publix has put forth a great effort in promoting Alaska seafood including their new breaded Alaska pollock product.

Christianson asks for details on the mix of product forms and if there is information on demand for the different products. Jones shares that his data is anecdotal due to not being able to travel, but that frozen bunkers are doing well as well as refreshed and frozen cod. Jones also shares that smoked salmon appears to be promoted heavily at retail. Christianson asks if retailers are more receptive to a broader range of Alaska products. Jones agrees that Alaska Seafood is positioned well to include multiple species and product forms in retail promotions.

Salle ask about third party delivery like Instacart and how does ASMI plan to work with those companies. Jones responds that Alaska seafood species are options at those companies for deliveries. Could be a possible opportunity for ASMI to explore. Hello Fresh is a meal kit company that is in contact with the team.

VIII. Foodservice Update provided by Jann Dickerson

Dickerson shares an update on recent learnings and promotions for both the foodservice operators and distributors. Operators have been shifting to takeout and delivery. Seafood is the second most missed menu item during quarantine. Consumers are highly focused on nutrition at this time and seafood helps with immunity. Dickerson shares information on Lenten promotion partners such as Long John Silvers, White Castle and DQ. New operator partners in FY21 include First Watch and Pacific Catch.

The new foodservice distributor promotions program is discussed and Dickerson shares that the team has been talking directly with suppliers in the industry to gather insights, suggestions and feedback. New program goals include expanding the partnerships with distributors and using ASMI resources in different and creative ways. The goal is to make sure distributors know about ASMI as a resource rather than a funding source.

Salle asks about Lent planning in 2021. Dickerson says that operators are not able to think that far ahead due to the pandemic. A vaccine will likely bring new creativity to the foodservice industry. Chains will likely stay in business with independents being hit hard and likely to close.

Salle suggests a 15 min break. Will reconvene at 11:05 a.m. The meeting recesses until 11:05 a.m. AK time.

Salle reconvenes the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

- a. **Discussion to follow regarding how ASMI has pivoted and is addressing challenging environment in foodservice distribution, and national accounts**

IX. Marketing Updates provided by Sarah Cannard, Emily Gisler, and Leah Krafft

- a. **How ASMI has pivoted during Covid**

Cannard provides an update on the Domestic foodservice program. A new chef recipe development project is in the works with 15 new recipes from four nationally known chefs. Recipes include whitefish, salmon and shellfish. The foodservice program created videos on takeout and delivery with Barton Seaver which are available on the website.

Gisler shares a brief update on the Domestic retail program including statistics and images from the updated Cook It Frozen campaign. The retail program sponsored a series of canned salmon videos with Barton Seaver as well as an Ugly Crab plug in a separate Barton Seaver video.

Krafft shares updates to the distributor promotions program in addition to the campus and universities program. The goal this year is to have the distributor program work in conjunction with the operator program and find synergies with communication.

Cusack asks how ASMI is helping these operators and distributors during the pandemic and offering support. Cannard responds that we can help by providing education and training to staff to ease the burden of operators as they hire new staff. Dickerson says that cooking from frozen has been gaining momentum due to uncertainty around how many visitors are coming through door.

Salle adds that every segment is impacted and different. How can seafood move into different segments like drive-through?

X. Discuss budget and if funds should be reallocated to see greater returns

Rider shares that the budget has been approved by the board but asks the committee if there are suggestions with regard to moving funds from one program to another. Cusack comments that trade shows and conferences are not likely to happen and ASMI should be looking to see if funds should be moved.

Salle adds that the direct to consumer sector is exploding and asks if we should we explore new sectors. Salle asks that ASMI staff report back with recommendations where funds can be moved. Rider shares that the trade support budget line would be an easy one to move around; direct-to-consumer may be a good sector to look to. Whitney says that ASMI will need to be

creative because an opportunity may not fit neatly into the retail or foodservice bucket and may be more of a hybrid. Thomas shares that the salmon committee had a similar conversation in May and recognized that foodservice was in trouble. Salle concurs that we have a moving target. Christianson notes that in the past he supported more retail promotions but that they should be targeted. Salle offers that leaning on the Alaska seafood industry to support ASMI is important.

Rider confirms that ASMI staff will develop a list of opportunities in retail and foodservice to share with the committee before the board meeting in September.

XI. Wild Alaska Pollock Week results provided by Megan Rider

Rider shares results from Wild Alaska Pollock Week this past spring. Fine dining establishments in the Seattle area were targeted, and well-known chefs developed creative recipes using Alaska pollock. Coverage was generated by local and national news outlets. Salle thanks Rider for the successful campaign and suggests looking into expanding it to other Alaska species in the future.

XII. Technical Update pertaining to Alternative Fish provided by Michael Kohan

Kohan asks for the committee's response in putting together a survey regarding alternative fish. Packaging seafood has become a primary focus in the foodservice sector and the technical team has been putting best practices together for cooking, cooling and delivery times. Kohan provides information about research in packaging for seafood to-go. Cooking seafood from frozen is becoming more popular at foodservice and there is a potential ASMI branding opportunity.

Kohan also shares details on plant and cell-based seafood products, and the market for those products. Cell-based seafood is currently in the R&D stage. Plant-based seafood is currently for sale at retail and foodservice. The FDA will be regulating the production and labeling of cell and plant-based seafood.

Committee feedback is requested on a SWOT analysis that Kohan is designing regarding alternative fish, to rank the strengths and weaknesses of Alaska seafood. Salle asks if Kohan can send the questions to the committee after the meeting so that members can spend more time considering.

XIII. Communications Update provided by Ashley Heimbigner

Heimbigner shares updates from the Communications program, including resources about Covid-19 and messaging about food safety. Digital asset database NetX, has been a great resource, and the team has seen an increase in registration due to direct marketers needing assets and logos. Heimbigner showcases the communication efforts from Edelman in the consumer PR space. There are many opportunities for Alaska seafood during these challenging times as consumers are cooking more at home.

XIV. RFM Update provided by Susan Marks

Marks updates the committee on the transfer of RFM from ASMI to the Certified Seafood Collaborative (CSC). The marketing agreement is in the final planning stages with the goal of having five retailers and three foodservice operators/distributors to support RFM and raise awareness. The RFM logo and language is currently used at Walmart locations, in addition to the origin logo.

XV. Old Business and Good of the Order

Salle asks Woodrow to give a brief update. Woodrow reminds the committee that the Board of Directors currently meets every two weeks and everyone is welcome to join those meetings. The transition between ASMI and the CSC for the RFM program is commended by Woodrow.

a. Schedule Next Meeting

Rider proposes the next meeting in September before the ASMI Board meets. ASMI staff will set up a poll and share it with the committee to gather feedback on a date.

Adjourn

Cusack move to adjourn the meeting and Dunn seconds. Salle adjourns the meeting at 1:04 p.m.