

ALASKA SEAFOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August, 2013
TO: ASMI Board of Directors
FROM: Randy Rice, ASMI Seafood Technical Program Director
SUBJ: Program Review: Activities from May 2013

Program Objectives

- Support efforts that ensure safe, quality Alaska seafood products reach the consumer.
- Position program as a source of technical and scientific information.
- Lead technical focus on health benefits of Alaska salmon/seafood.
- Educate and inform the market, trade and consumers on the purity and quality of Alaska's product.

Background

While in former years the primary focus of this program was on quality, in recent years the program has expanded to include issues of purity (seafood contaminants), fisheries ecological sustainability, organic certification, food safety, and health. Though the program continues some baseline effort on quality at the Alaska industry level, the quality message emphasis has shifted somewhat to foodservice and retail partner applications. A significant component of the Technical Program's effort is in support of the marketing programs on technical matters.

Projects

By a wide margin, the vast majority of effort during this period was in support of the Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification initiative, underway at Board direction with Global Trust Certification Ltd. Meetings, conference calls, and document reviews are ongoing. It is noteworthy the calls of interest I get on RFM from fishing groups in other areas, such as Canada. Many are interested in an alternative to MSC. I am assembling evidence for a new piece directed at demonstrating that Continuous Fishery Improvement is inherent in the Alaska management structure.

Accreditation of the Chain of Custody standard is on track and completion is expected in

September. At that time, ISO 65 accredited CBs could begin auditing to the standard. In addition, after completion, we can consider revisions to the standard, and we have identified some areas that may need updating or modification.

I am in discussion with others interested in RFM about what tools and steps are necessary to elevate RFM in world standing. To that end, Peter Marshall from GT spent 3 days in Seattle and we plotted options and gaps to try to further establish RFM as credible.

We sent numerous eblasts out to continue to provide updates and transparency on RFM reports and milestones. We also continued updating the website with fishery info, the RFM complaints and appeals process, and list of CoC approved suppliers. Tech Program also funded a significant ad campaign directed at trade on RFM in UK, Germany, Holland, Spain and US.

Efforts continue on USDA nutrient database values. The sampling plan has been finalized and contract arrangement with VA Tech and USDA are in place. This should help to ensure acceptance of nutrient values that we provide. We will focus on sockeye salmon this year and 3 companies have agreed to provide samples. We intend to do other species in future years as budget allows.

Publications

Reprints were accomplished for sustainability pieces, which have been in high demand. We are working on revising the MPA brochure.

Work has been ongoing for reprinting meat color guides, with some new digitizing work necessary to complete the sockeye color guide. We are still doing color matching on sockeye image #4 which has proved to be problematic.

At industry request, we reprinted a limited number of Salmon Quality Almanacs.

We were able to procure a sponsorship for the upcoming FMI Sustainability conference in Seattle this coming August. We have engaged Dr. Trevor Branch, an associate of Ray Hilborn, to be the speaker in our breakout session. We intend to present on US fisheries management's inherent sustainability and the absence of clear need for ecologo certification for some world fisheries. We also intend to try to dispel the myth that all of fishery management in the world is doom and gloom.

Other activities

I have had several calls with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership particularly in reference to the Wal-Mart situation, salmon, and media coverage.

We prepared, as part of preparations for the SFP meetings, a white paper detailing the hatchery related conditions from the last MSC audit, and how they are being addressed, and verified, through the RFM process.

I assisted the Executive Director with communications to Wild Salmon Center on salmon certification and RFM.

Travel, Conferences, Trade shows

I attended (with Foodservice Program) the Culinary Institute of American conference in Boston and was on a sustainability panel.