

# ALASKA SEAFOOD MARKETING INSTITUTE

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October, 2013  
**TO:** ASMI Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Randy Rice, ASMI Seafood Technical Program Director  
**SUBJ:** Program Review: Activities from Dec 2012

### 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 and elements of technology and processing, 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

Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification initiative, underway at Board direction continues to dominate my activities. Meetings, conference calls, and document reviews are ongoing and seemingly never-ending. The number of splinter, additional, or new sustainability efforts, initiatives, and new groups emerging never ceases to amaze.

### RFM Update

Fishery Certifications and annual audits proceed. Salmon annual audit was lengthy and required a good deal of diligence, owing to the MSC recertification effort on this fishery,

the hatchery issues, and the emergence of a new paper on hatchery effects. Other annual audits were completed without much difficulty.

Owing to availability of information and some data gaps, RFM certification will not proceed on AI Golden King Crab.

RFM Fishery Certification on a 12 species complex of flatfish is proceeding on schedule in the Bering Sea.

AK fishing groups interested in other fishery certifications are making inquiries regarding the future of RFM certification. It is my view that direction for any new certifications to be undertaken would come from the Board.

Accreditation of the Chain of Custody standard is now complete. ISO 65 accredited CBs can begin auditing to the standard as soon as we develop some guidance documents.. In addition, after completion, we can consider revisions to the standard, and we have identified some areas that may need updating or modification.

There was a large increase in interest of the RFM Chain of Custody seal as a result of the movement away from MSC by Alaska Salmon. There are now 67 certified companies.

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. Further work is ahead on moving RFM to the next rung on the ladder. In addition, as a result of meeting with the Sustainability Consortium, we can see a need for some adjustments in the program, which we also think will benefit us in the GSSI process.

We sponsored Dr. Trevor Branch, an associate of Ray Hilborn, as a speaker in our breakout session at the FMI sustainability conference in Seattle in August. We presented on US fisheries management's inherent sustainability and the absence of clear need for ecologo certification for some world fisheries. We also dispelled the myth that all of fishery management in the world is doom and gloom.

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.

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. We also prepared a cross-referencing document showing that there is a high degree of overlap on essential sustainability elements between a Scoring Guide 80 on MSC, and RFM with no no-conformances.

We sponsored a luncheon (featuring Alaska Black Cod) at World Seafood Congress in Newfoundland, October, 2013.

We were a sponsor of a Seafare event at Aquarium of the Pacific, Long Beach October 2013. We are having some discussion with AOP and other neutral NGOs as we look for positive collaboration on RFM with an NGO partner.

We continue dialog with interests associated with the Global Seafood Sustainability Initiative (GSSI) and monitor the developments, particularly as the ramifications for RFM are important in advancing the model. We are concerned with the populating of GSSI Working Groups with persons

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

We attended a comprehensive meeting in Bentonville on RFM with Wal-Mart

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

## **OTHER PROJECTS**

Efforts continue on USDA nutrient database values. With assistance from the technical committee and 3 companies, we completed re-sampling for sockeye salmon. The committee will be updated on the project at this 2013 All-Hands meeting by Dr. Joyce Nettleton. 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 was completed on reprinting meat color guides.

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

## **Other activities**

I am in discussion with GAPP on the issue of Alaska Pollock nomenclature, and whether to consider an initiative on naming change.

## **Travel, Conferences, Trade shows**

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

I attended the World Seafood Congress, presenting on Sustainability.

I attended a workshop of The Sustainability Consortium (referenced by Wal-Mart).

I attended and presented at Bering Sea Fisheries Conference in Seattle.

I conducted trade meetings in Europe on RFM in January 2013.

I attended both Boston and Brussels Seafood Shows. I held numerous one-on-one meetings with interested parties in RFM and sustainability.

I met with PEI lobster fishermen, and Massachusetts lobster fishing association on sustainability certifications topics.