



*Wild, Natural & Sustainable*

Whitefish Committee  
Tuesday, November 28, 2017  
Beginning 1:30pm  
Quadrant Room, Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage, AK

**The meeting was called to order at 1:30 by committee chairman Rasmus Soerensen.**

Members Present: Rasmus Soerensen, Dean Pugh, Frank O'Hara III, Mike Cusack, Julie Yeasting, Tim Meixner, Pat Shanahan, Merle Knapp

Others present: Jessica Hathaway, Keith Singleton, Gerardo Suarez, Ksenia Gorovaya, Ben Fissel, Sinclair Wilt, Jeremy Woodrow, Matt Heres, Becky Monagle, Megan Rider, Ron Risher, Victoria Parr, Allen Kimball, Lance Magnuson, Carolina Nascimento, Jeus Kombech, Katie Goldberg, David McClellan, Robin Wang, David Woolley, Jamie Marshall, Jason Chandler, Jullie Matinegall, Dan Sullivan, Monica George

**A motion was made by Knapp, seconded by Pugh to approve the agenda as is. The motion passed unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Yeasting, seconded by Meixner to approve the minutes from October 26, 2016. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Old business:**

There was no old business to discuss.

**New business:**

Pacific Cod, Tim Meixner

- Markets have been good in 2017 and continue to strengthen
- Led by high salmon prices, people are looking for alternatives. Cod prices have escalated, and it is somewhat suffering from its own success
- Looking forward, there are significant challenges. Quota has been cut 15-28%, and in the gulf as much as 50-55%. The question will be how to keep revenue streams flowing with reduced fishery.
- There will be no way to increase the price enough to offset the shortage. People have been calling asking at what price they can secure fish, but they are having to pull out of markets. Which markets companies pull out of will be up to each company.
- OMR's are going to have to watch for market indicators, because when cod is down, tilapia starts kicking back in.

## Rockfish, Julie Yeasting

- Quotas for perch in the Aleutians are well utilized and caught
- Not looking at a lot of investment dollars in the Gulf of Alaska
- This year caught about 70% of quota. There is under catch and quota is available, but they are harder to catch
- There is good opportunity for marketing whole round fish in China, and it would be great to diversify and open up the China domestic market

## Flounder/Sole, Frank O'Hara III

- Flatfish finally had an outstanding year, due to better markets in Europe which increased demand.
- 2013-16 prices were extremely low, but supply volume was good, so a lot of suppliers picked them up and now there is demand.
- Now there is decrease in supply, so nervous moving forward, as people might turn to other species to fill demand.
- The U.S. takes 25% for retail and foodservice, and demand is relatively stable. Japan takes 15% for kiritomi. Wants to keep pushing Chinese market.
- Even though prices have increased it is still affordable. Looking ahead, if prices get too high customers will switch to tilapia.
- Discussed flounder/sole/arrowtooth flounder labelling confusion. Requests that we use "Alaska Flounder and Sole" in all U.S. Market labelling

## Pollock, Mike Cusack

- Coming out of an oversupply globally, and seeing a slight turnaround due mainly to supply and demand, as well as historical prices
- Roe recovery and values down
- Pollock roe is seeing same issue as herring roe in the last 5-6 years, of having one or two markets where the consumption decreases, and so does the value. Suffering from lack of market expansion. We will need to keep a pulse on markets in Russia, China, etc.
- On pollock in general, expects uptick in quota
- Markets are improving, largely due to cod
- Sees a need to educate the world on what a great piece of pollock really is. We need to get beyond the fish stick.
- New products and formats are being welcomed in the industry, but there is not always inventory to fit consumption. We need to create an identity for Alaska pollock. It is an exciting time for Alaska pollock.

## KEY QUESTIONS:

- 1. What specific concerns or marketing needs do you feel should be brought to the ASMI Operational Committees for them to consider?**
  - Pollock is still the species that needs the most focus
  - Elevate flatfish and pollock from volume to specie stars

- Focus on other sectors for foodservice other than QSR, fast-casual for pollock
  - Include FAO67 in ASMI communications especially in international communications
  - Communication has been much better since last year, however communications usually happens after-the-fact. Would prefer better inclusion beforehand.
  - Pollock roe is still a huge challenge. There are two main markets now, and we need to develop new product forms.
  - Surimi is a real opportunity. Industry and ASMI need to work together to make material to promote the product.
  - Use “Alaska Flounder and Sole” as trade names in the U.S. – too much confusion in the market about the actual species.
  - China has been identified as a market for flatfish, pollock, and rockfish. Recommend species differentiation with focus on Alaska Origin.
  - Industry species training for ASMI staff should be a priority.
- 2. Do you have any overall industry concerns that should be brought to the Committee Chairs meeting for them to discuss and carry forward to the ASMI Board of Directors?**
- Continue to focus on pollock, and include FAO67 in ASMI communications, especially in international communications.
- 3. What major challenges do you see ASMI facing in the coming years? (short-term and long-term)**
- Lack of availability would be a major challenge for everything but flatfish, along with high prices.
  - Closing the Seattle office will also be a challenge, as it is currently used as a convenient place to pick up materials, network, and access staff.
- 4. What trends or opportunities can you identify that ASMI Programs can capitalize on?**
- a. Leveraging specie – use high value to leverage up the abundant volume ones
  - b. Full traceability, authenticity, and story buzz words. Leverage our assets in those categories.
    - Use high value species to leverage up the abundant volume ones
    - Utilize full traceability, authenticity, and story buzz words. Leverage our assets in those categories.

**Elections of the Chair:**

- New Chairman of Committee: Mike Cusack
- New Vice-Chairman of Committee: Frank O’Hara III

Chairman Soerensen recommended the committee meet again in about six months, and the committee agreed. The new committee chairman will set up a date and time, and work with an ASMI representative to make sure the information is publically available.

**A motion was made by Knapp, seconded by Soerensen to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.**