



Wild, Natural & Sustainable

Whitefish Committee Meeting

Feb 1, 2021

9am PST

Zoom link to follow

Draft Minutes

I. Call to Order

Chairman Risher called the meeting to order at 9:05am

a. Roll Call & Introduction of guests

Present:

Chairman Ron Risher

Vice Chair Frank O'Hara

Takashi Matsumoto

Rasmus Sorensen

Julie Yeasting

Merle Knapp

Mike Cusack

Trevor Murikami

Julia Ying

ASMI Executive Director, ASMI Staff, ASMI Contractors, ASMI Committee

Members, Members of Industry and Members of the Public

Absent:

Joel Peterson

b. Approval of Agenda

Chairmen Risher requested a motion to approve the agenda for Feb 1, 2020.

Sorensen moved to approve. Yeasting seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of Minutes from Nov 11, 2020

Chair Risher requested motion to approve minutes from November 11, 2020.

O'Hara moved to approve minutes. Cusack seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

d. Chair Remarks

Chairman Risher reminded committee of the purpose of ASMI Committee business is to promote wild Alaska seafood.

- e. **Public Comment** – No comment.

II. New Business

a. **Update on China – Julia Ying**

Chair Risher invited Ying to present update on China.

Ying reported Dalian Port is expected to reopen to accepting frozen seafood imports in the next 1-2 weeks. Backlog of approximately 20,000 containers in the port. Unclear how quickly these can be cleared. Reopening of port related to the reopening of reprocessing. In Chinese market, animal protein prices have increased.

Ying reviews tight controls on reprocessing facility staff including preventing staff from exiting the facilities. Tight restrictions under ongoing negotiations with government to reduce social distancing restrictions on plant workers.

Lack of frozen foods in the market currently. Fresh market cannot fully meet consumer demand, driving up prices for proteins.

Dalian port reopening encouraged by leadership in China. Unclear how this may impact pollock market long term.

b. **Market Updates**

i. **Committee Roundtable**

Chairman Risher opened meeting to roundtable updates of whitefish species.

Cusack noted strong Alaska Pollock market. Sorensen noted slow fishing and low yields in 2020 resulted in low quantity of inventory. Retail sector remained strong through pandemic, ensuring movement of pollock products through market. Pollock market remains strong.

Sorensen noted anticipation of strong roe markets this year. Noted season still early and difficult to predict.

Matsumoto provided Japanese surimi market update. Low inventory of Alaska surimi. Competition with Russian factory trawlers.

Yeasting provided additional update on headed and gutted pollock market. Noted challenges and uncertainty related to ongoing port closures. Provided updates on pacific cod markets. Shore products reprocessed in China are under competition with Russian products. Global markets appear steady. Market demand for filets remain strong.

Chair Risher read committee member Peterson's written comments for record,

Chairman Risher invited updates regarding flatfish/yellowfin sole.

O'Hara reported yellowfin sole sales strong in Japan. Small sized flatfish fillets strong in European markets. Inventory remains low in regards to closures at reprocessing plants.

Ying noted historical purchases of yellow fin sole from restaurant chains slowed in the past year.

O'Hara noted the exemption on a 25% tariff on yellowfin sole returning from China. Exemption on the tariff expired in December 2020.

Cusack inquires opportunities to process more Alaska fish in US.

Chairman Risher noted decrease in processing opportunities in the US. Overloaded processors drive interest in outside markets. O'Hara notes tariff exemption of headed & gutted flatfish into Europe.

O'Hara provides update on pacific ocean perch and atka mackerel fisheries. O'Hara notes pacific ocean perch recently received RFM and MSC certification, opening it up to European markets.

Yeasting reported rockfish market maintained demand, ongoing concerns with Chinese port closures.

O'Hara noted atka mackerel also impacted by closures in China. Lack of diversified product forms. Remarked on ongoing ASMI projects to promote atka mackerel new product forms in Japan. Notes large inventory in China and Japan.

Chairman Risher wraps whitefish roundtable updates. Invites final questions.

Committee request clarification on use of ASMI logo on pet food packaging.

Executive Director Woodrow confirmed that ASMI logo is not yet being used on pet food packaging.

Chairman Risher invited ASMI promotional updates from ASMI Staff.

Senior Director of Global Marketing & Strategy Hannah Lindoff offered highlights on several global markets. International program promotions in France and Germany. Focus on non-in-person promotions, radio and video in-store promotions. Developing photo, video assets in France. Notes new platform, Easy Fish, launched in Eastern Europe market. Notes UK focused school lunch pollock promotions. Video featuring Atka mackerel developed for Japanese in-store promotions. Lindoff also reviews promotions in Southeast Asia markets promoting pacific ocean perch, snow crab, halibut, mentaiko. Yellowfin sole and pacific cod promotions in Korea. Product in Peru for reprocessing.

Chairman Risher invited Domestic staff to present updates.

Food service Coordinator Leah Krafft updated on Foodservice. Recent rockfish video promotion wrap. Additional video promos with Plate Magazine. Lenten promotions for operators and distributors underway.

Retail Coordinator Monica George updated on Retail promotions. Lenten promotions in Albertson in 2200 stores highlighting cod and surimi. Chateau St. Michelle wines promotions. Retail promotion of halibut, crab, rockfish and. Rosauers supermarket promotions for cod, halibut, rock, crab, salmon, halibut.

CSC Program Coordinator Susan Marks noted RFM logo can be used on non-human products.

Communications Director Ashley Heimbigner updates communication plan updates messaging around social responsibility, climate change/ sustainability, fisheries, focus on “wild wellness” in Consumer PR.

Executive Director Woodrow noted recent reconvene of Legislature. No general funds anticipated to come from the Legislature. Noted several bills are moving through legislative process. Bill that allows tax credits for improvements of shore-side processing that captures waste water. Additional monitoring of Mariculture Bill that would remove restrictions around marketing mariculture products.

III. Good of the Order

Risher asks committee about timeline for next meeting. Suggestion of early fall. Will send doodle poll closer to that time of year to set the next meeting.

IV. Adjourn

Risher requests a motion to adjourn.

Cusack moved to adjourn meeting. Sorensen seconded meeting. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:31am.