

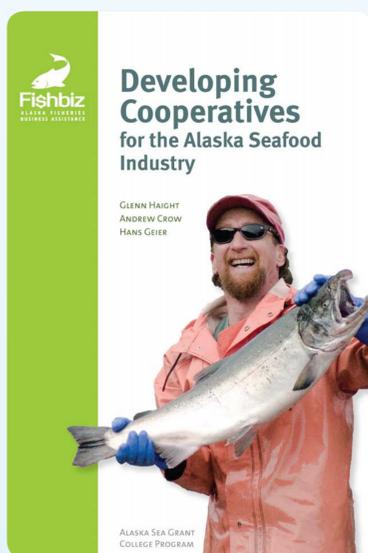
Increasing Seafood Value for Alaskans: The Alaska Fisheries Business Assistance Program (FishBiz)



The Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit participants.



Commercial fishermen from Kodiak attend a daylong hands-on class for onboard refrigeration systems, organized by Cordova MAP agent Torie Baker and taught by industry partner Integrated Marine Systems.



Developing Seafood Cooperatives is one of many informative products produced by ASG/MAP to help the Alaska seafood industry increase product value.

Issue

The Alaska seafood industry is the most valuable and accessible economic opportunity for coastal Alaska. This \$3.4 billion industry requires constant improvement to

- ✦ Remain competitive in the world's seafood market where pressures from aquaculture outside of Alaska threaten all fisheries. Competition from farmed salmon reduced the value of Alaska salmon to the fishermen from \$500 million annually in the early 1990s to \$162 million in 2002.
- ✦ Continue to attract young Alaskans. The average age for permit holders from 2000 to 2008 increased from 46.5 to 48.9 years old.
- ✦ Generate economic value to Alaska residents. Nearly 75% of the Alaska seafood sales to fishermen flows to nonresidents.

Response

Since 2004, MAP worked with over 2,000 fishermen and seafood processors through 140 workshops and one-on-one technical assistance. Emphases included

- ✦ Expanding the pool of highly qualified commercial fishermen and processing industry managers (Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit and Alaska Seafood Processing Leadership Institute).
- ✦ Improving seafood quality through training programs and educational materials (HAACP training, *Care and Handling of Salmon* book).
- ✦ Teaching financial planning for success (Business of Fish workshops and distance classes on UATV).
- ✦ Enhancing value from seafood (refrigeration classes, *Fishermen's Direct Marketing Manual* and training, *Save Money on Boat Fuel* brochure).
- ✦ Strengthening business skills and knowledge of commercial fishermen (Transferring Your Permit, Developing Seafood Cooperatives).

In the immediate future, MAP training and curriculum will push for

- ✦ Greater ease of entry into the fishery.
- ✦ Improved net values for fishing operations.
- ✦ More economic activity for rural Alaska.

Outcomes/Impacts

Seafood Quality: By 2006 the Alaska salmon industry greatly improved its seafood quality and handling practices.

- ✦ 32% of fishermen in 2006 delivered within 6 hours, up from 22% in 1991.
- ✦ 59% of fishermen in 2006 chilled their fish, up from 34% in 1991.
- ✦ 72% of fishermen in 2006 remove their fish from the nets by hand, up from 64% in 1991.
- ✦ 49% of fishermen in 2006 bleed their fish, up from 27% in 2001.

Salmon Industry Rebound: MAP's dedicated offering of operations, marketing, and financial management technical assistance, coupled with significant public support in marketing, infrastructure, and increased mechanization, propelled the salmon industry back into prominence.

- ✦ The gross value paid to Alaska salmon fishermen in 2008 was \$452 million, \$193.9 million more than what would have been earned with 2002 salmon prices.

Aging of the Fleet: With three years of directed efforts there are indications of new entrants into the seafood industry.

- ✦ By 2008, the average age of individuals buying or receiving permits was 39.4, down from 41.1 in 2003.

Partners

U.S. Department of Agriculture, North Pacific Fishery Management Council, United Fishermen of Alaska and several other fishing organizations, Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, several Community Development Quota groups, salmon hatcheries, several University of Alaska branches, state and regional economic development organizations, seafood processors, Alaska rural communities and local organizations.