

the **LODESTAR**

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THE LODESTAR UPDATE

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"Information is the open door to truth, and truth is the lantern by which we see the future." AFDF hopes to meet you there.

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450,000 POUNDS OF ALASKAN SURIMI are headed for market after Alaska Pacific Seafoods completed Round 1 of onshore surimi production in Kodiak, AK. in early March. Surimi was called the "Hottest seafood item going!" by Erkins Seafood Letter ("If you're not involved...too bad!" reads Rob't Erkins' piece) and the first American product is now ready for distribution to U.S. food companies. About 25 firms have requested samples or full shipments so far. Product quality varies from top Japanese shore-grade to mid-grade ship-packed, but APS/AFDF surimi is more consistent, has fewer defects than any Japanese product yet tested. Full spec sheet comes with every lot so customers know just what they're getting. Quality and price figured according to protein content rather than the imprecise Japanese methods. APS/AFDF surimi ranges between 79% and 74% moisture; stress and strain results are multiplied to get overall protein quality indicator. All factors together, with standard deviations calculated in, result in a price accurately reflecting true product quality. Surimi samples from AFDF (less than 100 lb.) are available free within the U.S. Call AFDF if you're interested.

"When the Japanese began making cars they didn't start out with BMW's," said AFDF's Chris Riley. "They started out by offering a good deal. That's at our surimi is--a good deal."

WOULD YOU WALK 3,000 MILES FOR A BACON BIT? Probably not, but 110 food/seafood industry executives flew at least that far for a banquet of surimi-based foods catered by Melinda Post of Tasks Unlimited, and featuring sausage, pork, crab, and bacon bits made from surimi. The event was AFDF-sponsored "Surimi: Alaskan White Gold" workshop and grand opening of the APS/AFDF surimi line March 7 - 9, during which Alaska's Lt. Gov. Steve McAlpine cut the ribbon welcoming the new industry (with \$6 billion potential) to Alaska. Seminars were offered by surimi luminaries like: Dr. Tyre Lanier, N.C. State Univ.; Dr. Jerry Babbitt, NMFS Kodiak; Dr. Chong Lee, Univ. of Rhode Is., Dr. Neil Webb, Webb Foodlab, Inc.; Bob Ryan, Ryan Engineering; T C Swafford, Alfa-Laval, R. Woodman Harris, Seafood Mgmt. Corp; and Doug Gordon of NEPA. The event was videotaped and picked up by Cable News Network, with some interest from KNBC in LA. Copies of tapes are available from AFDF for a reasonable fee.

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NEWSFLASH: Taiyo and Steuart Fisheries have formed Trans-Oceanic, Inc., and will produce surimi crab sticks in South Seattle, opening in Sept. '85. There's some rumbling about other Japanese-owned processors setting up for surimi production onshore in Alaska before end-of-year. An intriguing way for Japanese industry to fulfill its obligation to purchase 35,000 MT (rnd. wt.) U.S.-made pollock products by end of '85. (Japanese coalition has asked that the deadline be moved from Mar. 31 to Dec. 31 at an industry mtng. in March.) They could just buy their own surimi from their own companies. Is this what's meant by Americanization of the industry? Keep your ear to the ground on this one....

"WHEN THE EXPERTS SAY IT CAN'T BE DONE, the best way to prove them wrong is to do it using their own methods," said Bob Ryan (quoted in AK Jrnl. of Commerce). After that, you start adding better methods. Now proven better and being acquired is an Alfa-Laval 418 centrifuge, which can increase yields and recover up to 30% of proteins lost in surimi processing. (More on this in The LodeStar, Spring 1985 issue.) Also being purchased is the first Baader 182 pollock filleting machine to be used in the U.S. After a month in the APS/AFDF surimi line, the Baader proved nearly invaluable to any U.S. surimi processor: it fillets 120 fish/min., removing the dark belly flap (which Japanese equipment doesn't always do). Larger fillets can be removed for sale; smaller or defectivw fillets can be used in surimi. But most importantly, the Baader is capable of feeding the

It's not going to be a Japanese game any more. In 5 years they won't be fishing our pollock any more. We may have individual plants here that land more pollock than some states land fish."

--Chris Riley

(FRONT PAGE, CONT'D)...surimi line with enough volume to keep the meat-water ratio constant, a most crucial part of surimi processing. Disadvantage is cost, nearly four times that of Japanese equipment. But watch out: Ryan Engineering is developing a machine that combines robotics of Baader with simplicity of Japanese equipment, and may have an impressive splitter on the market in a year.

MEANWHILE, "GOOD OLD AMERICAN GO-FOR-IT" is what Dr. Neil Webb calls for in negotiating FDA labeling requirements for surimi. "Don't be blinded by the FDA," he said, "regulations can be changed." Surimi faces a bright future in the processed meat industry, and end-users of surimi should be "at the forefront" with suggested answers to new questions cropping up over this nascent number, he said. Surimi's best feature is it's fat-free, and "fat is the biggest ring around the meat industry's neck," he said. Consumers are choking fat out of their diet but won't compromise on flavor. That leaves food processors searching for new, nutritious tasty tidbits and surimi just may be the answer.

SHOULD JAPAN SET OUR SURIMI IMPORT STANDARDS? That's what Japan Fisheries Association's Hugh Takagi suggested in a letter to Lee Weddig, in response to a concern that FDA may require some proof of real crab content in crab analogue products. Japan Frozen Food Export Assoc. has offered to set standards "relating to the integrity of surimi-based products." All product up to standards would be fitted with a Japanese Seal of Approval, (compared by some to the Good House-keeping Seal in the U.S.) The JFFEA proposes to set standards for crab content, as well as for freezing methods, primary and secondary materials, additives and sanitation. Some fear these standards would seep over into U.S. industry, requiring ALL surimi--American or Japanese--to have the Japanese Seal of Approval before sale or export. Bob Nordstrom of NMFS in D.C. suggests the U.S. comply; other industry leaders are furious. Your comments? Write to Lee Weddig at NFI.

WHAT THE HECK IS MARITEIN? Might be the new common usual name for surimi, if the Brand Group and NFI surimi nomenclature committee have their way. Paul Hile, Comm. of Compliance at FDA, says he's receptive to name change but wants a petition from industry. But Maritein? Might not be the best idea: end-users know the word surimi now--it's names for secondary product (not "imitation") that's needed now, some say. NFI committee is mostly importers; some suggest they appeal the "imitation" label ruling, and leave the name of surimi to surimi producers. FDA is receptive; burden now is on industry to create solutions to the "imitation" label problem, and work toward resolving the problem before '86.

AFDF WELCOMES new members: Supporting member Seafood Management Corp. (R. Woodman Harris); new voting members are Griffith Laboratories, USA (Don Harr & Edwin Heaton, Jr.); U.S. World Trade Corp. (F. Anthony Burget); and upgrading to voting membership was PPF Norda (Vito Russo.) We heartily welcome new members; they are our most valuable resource.

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