



Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 1988

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276-7315

FAIRGOERS TO GET FIRST TASTE OF ALASKA SALMON CHILI

PALMER, AK -- Visitors to the Alaska State Fair on Saturday, September 3 will get the first taste of a new commercial chili formulation that uses Alaskan pink salmon.

Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) will give away samples of Alaska Salmon Chili, a new product developed to enhance the value of Alaskan pink salmon. The chili was created by Chef Eric Benson of Warrenton, Oregon under an AFDF project to develop new uses for Alaska's seafoods within the mainstream food market.

"We're hoping to get a lot of people to taste the chili and tell us what they think," said Loretta Lure, who oversaw the development of the chili for AFDF. "This is the first new salmon product AFDF has helped develop that is going into commercial production. It's great that we can introduce it at the Alaska state fair, instead of in some shopping center Outside."

The salmon chili will be given away as part of the Alaska Chili Challenge, a chili recipe cookoff sponsored by the fair and local businesses. The salmon chili will not be a part of the contest.

"We're just here for some added interest," Lure said. "Right now, Alaska Salmon Chili is a curiosity. But it's a curiosity that is going to help add value to Alaska's seafood industry, and will eventually help Alaska play a bigger role in the food industry."

Alaska Salmon Chili is made both with and without beans, using minced pink salmon instead of ground beef. Aside from the salmon, the rest of the formulation is "a standard chili recipe," Lure said, "but the exact formulation is proprietary."

Alaska Salmon Chili has caught the interest of Bellboy Crab Company of Seaside, Oregon, which plans to produce the chili commercially for both the foodservice and retail markets. Bellboy Crab Company owner Roy Sigurdson said, "I think the chili is excellent, and we're pretty excited about introducing it. It has a great flavor and texture, and no cholesterol. In addition, of course,

it has all the Omega-3 fatty acids that are getting so much attention right now."

Sigurdson said his company plans to sell one-gallon cans on the retail market beginning next spring. "But I expect we'll be hitting the foodservice market before that," he said.

The salmon chili and several other seafood-based products were part of a New Product Development Contest that AFDF sponsored a year ago to develop new food products using Alaskan salmon, pollock and surimi. Among the winning entries were a pollock chowder, a seafood bisque, a potato-based finger food and a snack chip, all using Alaskan seafood. AFDF now is helping the creators of each product further commercial development of their idea.

AFDF is a private, non-profit corporation based in Anchorage that is active in developing new technologies and new products that will strengthen and develop Alaska's fisheries. The foundation, funded primarily through federal Saltonstall-Kennedy fisheries development funds, was instrumental in starting up the Alaskan surimi industry, and is also sponsoring other fisheries development projects around the state.