



Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, Inc.

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SURIMI IS APPROVED FOR USE IN CURED MEATS

USDA CALLS SURIMI APPROVAL "PRECEDENT-SETTING"

ANCHORAGE, AK -- In a move federal officials called "precedent-setting," surimi was approved in June by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for use in a cured meat blend. It is the first time a commercial product blending fish proteins (surimi) and meat has been approved by the agency, which governs meat industry regulations.

The approval was for "Spicy Bites," breaded pork nuggets with 15% surimi produced by Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) of Anchorage, Alaska. USDA approval means the product can be commercially produced and sold in interstate commerce.

AFDF submitted Spicy Bites to USDA as part of an ongoing project to maximize the potential of surimi in the food industry and help Alaska benefit more fully from its bottomfish resources. For the past two years, AFDF and the National Marine Fisheries Service have pursued USDA approval of surimi to help expand its markets. Historically, surimi has only been used in crabmeat analogs and Oriental ethnic foods.

Surimi is a washed, purified protein paste made from white fish, and is high in functional proteins. Ninety percent of the surimi produced in the U.S. comes from Alaska, where three shore plants and more than half a dozen factory ships are expected to produce at least 40,000 tons of surimi in 1988.

Mel Monsen, executive director of AFDF, said that USDA approval of surimi in meats has opened up a new arena of opportunity for Alaskan surimi producers.

"Several years ago we targeted the meat processing industry as the market that represented the greatest opportunity for surimi," he said. "Surimi is an extremely valuable, functional protein in processed meats. It makes a strong emulsion, increases protein content, improves the texture of the product and adds no fat. We've been working with some meat technologists who are very excited to see surimi come along as an alternative protein."

Monsen said lack of USDA approval has been a stumbling block for expansion of the surimi market.

"It has taken almost two years to answer the regulatory questions," he said. "Now we hope to see the industry educate meat and other food producers about the functionality and economics of surimi. It will be up to them to make sure the Alaskan surimi industry benefits."

AFDF hired Manning, Batson & Associates of Seattle, Wash. to walk the product through the approval process. Barbara Batson, a principal in the firm, said approval of surimi could have a significant impact on the growth of the surimi industry outside seafood analogs.

"USDA approval of this label is symbolic," Batson said. "We hope this will serve as a catalyst for other food industries to begin serious exploration of surimi as a raw material for products outside the analog market."

The approval was considered a major event by USDA personnel. Standards branch chief Judy Quick of the Food Safety & Inspection Service in Washington, D.C. said that the action was presented to the top administration of the USDA because the approval was precedent-setting in nature. It is expected that the approval will take some of the risk out of surimi product development that is associated with any new protein material, and may result in more food and non-food products being approved in the future.

"Surimi product development doesn't have to stop with surimi-meat blends," Batson said. "There are other product concepts to consider, from pharmaceuticals

to confectionery applications. The future looks bright for surimi processors who are committed to the commercialization of surimi as a raw material."

Spicy Bites are breaded nuggets made with regular pork trimmings, water, Alaska pollock surimi, sodium nitrites and spices. Nitrites were added to prevent outgrowth of Clostridium botulinum type E.

Manning, Batson & Associates also submitted a sketch label and received approval for another product they developed called "Southwest-style Golden Morsels," a blend of beef and surimi with cheese, tomato paste, onions and spices. Golden Morsels are also battered and breaded and deep-fat fried. The product is low in fat, adequate for either commercial market or restricted diet programs, and is less expensive to manufacture than similar all-meat products, Batson said.

Any subsequent meat/surimi products would have to be submitted to USDA for approval. However, the data AFDF and MBA compiled for approval of these two products -- including intensive microbiological studies, shelf life tests, Type E botulinum studies and investigations into the interaction of meat and fish proteins -- will help pave the way for new products.

AFDF has sponsored development of other new surimi and meat blends, including surimi-moosemeat sausage, a surimi-based imitation chicken meat, surimi-based lunchmeat called "Bay-loni," and surimi-salmon jerky.

AFDF is a private, non-profit corporation funded by Saltonstall-Kennedy monies, whose objective is to help develop Alaska's undervalued fisheries. AFDF was instrumental in starting up Alaska's first surimi plant at Alaska Pacific Seafoods in Kodiak, and was the primary force behind Alaska's surimi industry development.

FULLY COOKED  
KEEP FROZEN UNTIL USE

USDA  
INSPECTION  
STAMP

# SPICY BITES

A BREADED, CURED BLEND OF PORK AND SURIMI\*  
(CALCIUM PROPIONATE ADDED TO RETARD SPOilage OF BREADING)



*Land meets the Sea  
in a historically new  
protein partnership...*

\* PROCESSED, MINCED FISH

NET WEIGHT 12 OZ (3 KG)

## BACK PANEL

### Ingredients:

Meat Pattie --

Pork, surimi (Alaska pollock fish, sucrose, sorbitol, sodium phosphate), water, spice, sodium phosphate, sodium erythorbate, sodium nitrite.

Batter and Breading --

Water, bleached and bromated wheat flour, corn flour, modified food starch, salt, whey, sugar, leavening, yeast, partially hydrogenated soybean oil with TBHQ, spice, calcium propionate.

### Heating Instructions:

Conventional oven --

Preheat oven to 350° F.  
Place frozen Spicy Bites on a cookie sheet and bake for 12 to 15 minutes. Turn over half way through heating time.

Microwave oven --

Line microwave-safe plate with paper towels. Place a single layer of frozen Spicy Bites on towel. Heat uncovered for 2 minutes.

Packed for Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, Inc., Anchorage, AK