



Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, Inc.

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ALASKA FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION NAMES  
KODIAK PLANT FOR GROUND FISH QUALITY STUDY

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA -- Fishermen will harvest 2.3 million metric tons of Alaskan groundfish in 1989, and a new project by Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation will help ensure that those groundfish are top quality.

The Anchorage-based foundation has chosen International Seafoods of Alaska, in Kodiak, Alaska, as the site for its year-long study of groundfish quality and the variables that improve or detract from quality. The project, the first of its kind to be conducted on Alaskan groundfish, will focus on how the flesh characteristics of pollock, cod and flatfish change throughout the year, and how the quality of those species is affected by handling methods on board, at the processing plant, and in cold storage.

"We'll be training plant employees at International Seafoods to take fish samples throughout the year for the research," said Loretta Lure, project manager at AFDF. "We chose International Seafoods because they have demonstrated a commitment to quality improvements in the past. They also have completed the state of Alaska white fish inspection program, which means International Seafoods is a U.S. Department of Commerce-approved plant."

Lure said the groundfish quality project will include studies of how the internal temperature of the fish fluctuates during cold storage, what chemical changes in the flesh produce rubbery fillets in some species, and how to correlate chemical makeup with finished product quality.

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Pollock and flatfish are relatively new commercial species for U.S. producers and even cod, the second most plentiful groundfish in these waters, were primarily processed by foreign fishermen until this past decade.

"We're hoping to bring our understanding of groundfish flesh and its quality characteristics up to par with our understanding of salmon and the more traditional commercial fisheries in Alaska," Lure said.

Mel Monsen, executive director of Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, said the project will bring together the efforts of private industry, universities and federal programs. "Dr. Edward Kolbe from Oregon State University, and Dr. Diana Greene from the National Marine Fisheries Service lab in Kodiak will both participate in the technical aspects of the research," Monsen said. The Fishery Industrial Technology Center, a part of the University of Alaska, will also conduct a related study on parasite detection as part of the Foundation's overall program.

The groundfish quality project was conceived by members of the Alaskan seafood industry will be administered by the Foundation staff. It is part of Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation's ongoing effort to help the fishing industry glean more profits from the commercial fisheries off Alaska's shores, and to make better use of the fisheries resources that are harvested.

The Foundation is an industry-supported organization created in 1978 by Alaskan fishermen and processors to aid in developing the North Pacific fisheries. The foundation is supported by fishermen, processors and food companies, and by the Saltonstall-Kennedy fisheries development program, which is administered through National Marine Fisheries Service.