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ALASKA FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION TO STUDY
HOW TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF GROUND FISH PRODUCTS

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA -- Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is seeking an Alaskan groundfish processing plant to participate in a year-long study of the variables that contribute to optimum quality of Alaskan pollock, cod and flatfish products.

Processors interested in participating in the study should submit a proposal to AFDF at 508 West Second Ave., Suite 212, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 by June 5, 1989.

"Groundfish is still a relatively new fishery in Alaska," said AFDF executive director Mel Monsen. "Many of the things we learned about seafood quality from processing crab and salmon are very different when you're processing white fish like pollock, cod and flatfish. The flesh characteristics are different, and the processing methods are different. Groundfish is an almost year-round fishery, as opposed to the seasonal salmon fisheries. We have much to learn about the different variables that affect the quality of groundfish products."

Monsen said the quality study will investigate, among other things, what chemical changes in the fish flesh produce rubbery fillets, and why some species lose their texture and become soft when filleted. It will also include studies of how cold storage temperatures affect product quality.

"The chemical characteristics of fish flesh can be affected by season, by availability of food, by spawning cycles, and by a host of processing variables after the fish are harvested," Monsen said. "We hope to gather data about the

chemical characteristics of Alaska groundfish throughout the year and under different conditions so we can begin correlating changes in these conditions with the quality of the finished product."

AFDF hopes to conduct the study at an Alaskan plant where several groundfish species are processed into different products. Any Alaskan groundfish processing plant may submit a proposal, according to project manager Loretta Lure.

"The foundation will train one or two plant workers in sample collection, preparation and analysis, and will pay some of the expenses and provide technical support during the project," Lure said.

The groundfish quality study is one portion of Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation's 1989 fisheries development program, which includes studies and demonstration projects to help Alaskan fishermen and processors reap more profits from the under-used fisheries in Alaskan waters. Under the same program, AFDF is conducting a flatfish industry development project that has started up the first large-scale, year-round flatfish processing operation on shore in Alaska. The foundation also is studying alternative uses for seafood processing wastes.

AFDF is an industry-supported organization created in 1978 by Alaskan fishermen and processors to aid in development of 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.