



Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 19, 1991
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ALASKA FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT INTRODUCES NEW TECHNIQUES
TO CUT WASTE AND INCREASE VALUE OF ALASKA'S COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA -- Two projects launched by Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation in February will help seafood producers in the North Pacific increase value-added processing capabilities and make money from fish processing wastes.

Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is pioneering development of fish hydrolysis technology in Alaska--a method of reducing fish heads, guts, bones and other processing byproducts into high-value protein concentrate and fish oil. AFDF now hopes to install hydrolysis equipment into an Alaskan seafood plant and experiment with a variety of fish species including salmon, cod, pollock, blackcod and flatfish.

"We've been experimenting with fish hydrolysis for two years and have produced some high-value oil and protein concentrate," said AFDF project manager Loretta Lure. "This is an idea fish processors are very interested in. It allows them to produce high-value products at low processing temperatures, and the protein and oils are in high demand. Hydrolysis could be a very good way to increase the value of Alaska's fish resources."

The hydrolyzed fish protein could be usable in agriculture feeds, in fish food for hatcheries, and in commercial fertilizers, Lure said. "We're still investigating all the possible markets for it. We've conducted pig feed trials at the University of Alaska, and are beginning some fish feed trials at a couple of hatcheries. At this point, we're studying the whole process--starting with what equipment is available, the processing variables, how it works with different fish species, how to maintain highest quality, and what the markets will pay for the product."

A second AFDF project focuses on flatfish, Alaska's last large underutilized fish species. AFDF and Diamond Stainless of Utah will install experimental equipment in a processing plant to remove the non-fillet meat left on the flatfish frames (bones) after the fillet is cut. This non-fillet meat, along with all the flesh of flatfish too small for the fillet market, might be

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usable in breaded fish portions or in other valuable products, according to T.J. Lukshin of AFDF.

"Our first experiments with recovering this unused flatfish meat produced a very usable mince nearly comparable to cod mince, which gets a pretty good price on the world market," Lukshin said. "There are still some unanswered questions, about the process, but hopefully through further testing, we'll produce a product acceptable to the market."

If the project is successful, shore-based flatfish producers could increase processing yields nearly 8%, and significantly increase revenues from flatfish processing, Lukshin said. At-sea processors would benefit from finding a profitable use for the smaller-sized flatfish they harvest.

The ten flatfish species found in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea could potentially yield more than 1.3 million metric tons per year, though harvests this year will total only 271,000 metric tons. Since AFDF began its flatfish fishery development project in 1988, Gulf of Alaska flatfish harvests have increased threefold.

Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation is a non-profit industry organization of fishermen, processors and support industries that work together to develop new technology and new products for the North Pacific seafood industry.

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