

Public Testimony

Agenda C-3: Crab/Salmon Interceptions by Joint Ventures

Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers, said that the Factory Trawlers had only recently become involved in the industry workgroup and that they are trying to gather information to formulate a position. They feel they can co-exist with the crab industry. The Eastern Bering Sea is the only place where the cod are concentrated in quantities to make the fishery viable. Basically, they are proposing that the area between 160°W and 162°W and north to 58°N be off limits to the trawlers, leaving the rest of the area open to trawling.

Mick Stevens, ProFish International, stressed that the Council should be dealing with these problems with a comprehensive fishery plan, not on a problem-by-problem basis. He is submitting a plan amendment for the BSAI FMP which may help the Council in this effort.

Margaret Dawson, Westward Trawlers, felt that there was no need for closures at this time. Last year they harvested 100,000 mt of pollock and caught only 89 crab. They will continue to participate in the industry workgroup.

Ron Peterson, Seattle, told the Council he felt this issue had become a severe conservation problem and urged the Council to close the Pot Sanctuary to all trawling until the effects of trawling on the crab stocks can be determined.

Kris Poulsen, Coalition of Concerned Crab Fishermen, complimented Thorn Smith on a good job with the industry workgroup but said that the lack of progress is because of the diversity of interests involved. Crab stocks cannot improve until they are protected from incidental harvest by trawlers.

Tom Casey, Kirkland, WA, said that there are several other areas outside the Pot Sanctuary where yellowfin sole can be found and that the protection of crab stocks is vital to the survival of crab fishermen.

Barry Fisher, Midwater Trawl Co-op, said the reason they are asking for continued limited access to the area is that they feel it holds the only feasible economic concentrations of yellowfin sole. They have developed operating plans with their fleet last year which kept them under the level set by the Council.

Bonnar Petersen, Owner, F/V SILVER CHARLIE, said that the midwater trawlers are concerned and have worked hard at reducing the incidental catch of crab. They tried ten different types of gear; last year they had only about 0.5 a crab per metric ton of sole. In the Marine Resource joint ventures they are strictly monitored.

Dave Fraser, Cape Flattery Fisheries, Inc., said he has been active in the industry workgroup for crab interception. If there is a PSC for crab, he felt

it should be equitable to all fisheries. He suggested that a cap on the incidental catch would be a mechanism to make operations most responsible and accountable.

Phil Chitwood, Marine Resources, reviewed their history for crab incidental catch in the yellowfin sole/flounder joint ventures. The catch of king crab was reduced from 14.5 crab per mt in 1983 to 3.5 in 1985; Tanner crab was reduced from 10.5 crab per mt in 1983 to 2.7 in 1985; and halibut was reduced from 4.1 per mt in 1983 to 1.2 per mt in 1985. He stressed that whatever action the Council takes should be equitable to all fisheries.

Steve Drage, F/V COHO, cited two reports on fishing off the ice edge outside the Pot Sanctuary; he stressed that the concentration of sole outside the Pot Sanctuary occurs after the ice moves out, in June or after.

Dennis Petersen, F/V OCEAN SPRAY, said that this is basically becoming an allocation issue between American fishermen. One alternative would be to get some sort of industry or NMFS participation in a survey during the early part of the year to look at stock status. If stocks are as bad as they say, then all hard-on-bottom trawling should be prohibited in the area. He said he doesn't feel that midwater trawling is a problem.

Al Geiser, F/V HAZEL LORRAINE, said that he participated in the flounder joint venture for the first time this year and that MRC keeps a close watch on incidental catch of crab.

Fred Yeck, F/V BLUE FOX, said that the MRC fishermen recognize there is a problem but any action must take into consideration the needs of the trawl fishery; they need to fish in April and May for economic viability.

Lyle Yeck, F/V RAVEN, also participates in the yellowfin sole fishery. He stressed their need for access to the Pot Sanctuary during April and May.

Dave Harville, Kodiak Western Trawlers, said that to single out the trawl fleet might be damaging to a developing American fishery. The Council should also take into consideration the value of the food source they are supplying and the removal of crab predators from that area.

Steve Hoag, IPHC, stressed that the Pot Sanctuary is probably the most important halibut nursery area on the coast and has been closed to halibut fishing since 1967.

Byron North, F/V PEGASUS, participates in the flounder fishery in the Bering Sea. He said that if trawlers keep their gear in good order the incidental catch can be controlled. Last year his bycatch was reduced from 7 crabs per ton to 1 crab per ton.

Jeff Stephan, UFMA, said their organization believes a conservation crisis does exist and asked the Council to put the issue on the January agenda for emergency action. They believe there are sufficient concentrations of yellowfin sole outside the Pot Sanctuary. They appreciate the progress to date, but feel that not much more can be made through gear technology. He submitted three alternatives: (1) total closure of the Pot Sanctuary to bottom trawling; (2) Trawl closures in the area of 163°30'N, 58°15'E to bottom

trawling; (3) six-month closure of the entire pot sanctuary from April to August to bottom trawling.

Frank Schnider, F/V COHO, stressed the need for trawlers to fish the Pot Sanctuary during April and May.

Dave Seibel, stressed the gear improvements and feels they can keep the incidental catch under control.

Bob Alverson, FVOA, briefly reviewed their position which was included in the industry workgroup report. They encouraged the Council to send it out for public review and put it on the January calendar for emergency action.

Percy Hadley, F/V QUEEN VICTORIA, believes the proposal submitted by the yellowfin sole fleet, presented by Barry Fisher, addresses the problem of conservation and yet gives them a means to retain the yellowfin sole fishery as a viable fishery.

Spike Jones, F/V ROYAL QUARRY, said the Council should study all incidental catch in all fisheries and assess the costs to fishermen before making any decisions.

Loreen Hamilton, Port Townsend, was a NMFS observer. She has seen a lot of derelict pots with crab. She also participated in a study on crab predation and pollock studies. She felt that it would not be productive for the Council to make a decision on the basis of the information they now have.

Gary Loverich, Nor'Eastern Trawl Systems, reviewed his letter on the gear now being used in Alaska. His observation of the gear in tests leads him to believe that the newer gear will greatly reduce incidental catch problems.

Gary Westman, F/V ROSELLA, has participated in the flounder fishery since 1982. He feels the trawlers are probably doing the crab stocks some good by harvesting their predators.

Raymond Hall, F/V LESLIE LEE, participates in the yellowfin sole joint venture. He believes the decline in crab stocks is cyclical and not a result of bycatch problems in the yellowfin sole fishery.

Chester Petersen, F/V PACIFIC CHALLENGER, feels they should be able to fish in the Pot Sanctuary in April and May.

Ben Hogevoll, F/V CAPE KIWANDA, participates in the yellowfin sole joint venture. He said they can't fish north of the Pot Sanctuary before April because of ice, and asked the Council to give them a chance to prove they can reduce the incidental catch of crab.

Al Burch, Alaska Draggers Assn., supports the AP's recommendation that the industry workgroup continue to work on the problem and try to come up with an answer for the January meeting.

Jon Adams, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union. They asked the Council to stop all trawling on the nursery grounds.

Agenda C-4: Sablefish Hook and Longline Limited Entry in the Gulf of Alaska

Thorn Smith, NPFVOA, said they feel the Council should develop a comprehensive policy for development of the groundfish fisheries before looking at any kind of limited entry program. Mr. Smith also read a letter into the record from the Coalition for Open Oceans. The letter is filed with the Council notebook for this meeting.

Bob Alverson, FVOA, said the only alternatives to limited entry would be to shorten fishing time and institute trip limits which also result in large enforcement costs and eliminate the most efficient operations.

Bart Eaton, said that fishermen are getting mixed signals. The Secretary of Commerce felt there were enough fishermen in the black cod fishery to suggest a cut-off date, but the Fisheries Loan Corporation is encouraging investment into the black cod fishery. Publishing a cut-off date will give the Council an opportunity to study the situation.

Jack Barr, Fishing Company of Alaska, said this measure unjustly favors one segment of the industry over another which in violation of the MFMCA. Urged the Council to consider needs of all participants.

Jeff Stephan, UFMA, does not support the establishment of a cut-off date for participation in the sablefish fishery.

Spike Jones, F/V ROYAL QUEEN, said he feels the Council would be wasting its time in studying limited entry for sablefish.

Jon Adams, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union, supports study of limited entry for sablefish and the cut-off date of September 26, 1985.

Gary Embry, DSFU, also supports this action. They can see sablefish going the same way as halibut did; if limited entry isn't instituted, then there should be some specific opening/closing dates.

Jack Knutsen, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn, said he used to be opposed to limited entry programs but it seems to be the only rational way of managing the black cod fishery to keep it from becoming overcapitalized and reverting to a pulse-type fishery.

Mark Lundsten, FVOA, agreed with Mr. Knutsen. The fishery is full right now and need of stability; he encouraged the Council to accept the Secretary's offer to publish the September 26, 1985 cut-off date.

Jim Hubbard, Sitka, supports limited entry for the sablefish fishery and the 9/26 moratorium date.

Dave Harville, ADA, said that they have been assured all along during the sablefish negotiations last year that they had the option of going into the sablefish fishery; now they may be kept from doing so and that is not fair. Against the 9/26 cut-off date for participation in the sablefish fishery.

Michael Mayo, Sitka, in favor of limited entry in the sablefish fishery because it is becoming chaotic; there were 193 boats in the Central Gulf

sablefish fishery last year. Suggested three openings for sablefish: April 1, June 1, and August 1.

Ludger Dochtermann, Alaska Coastal Community Alliance, against any form of limited entry because it is anti-free enterprise. Fishermen should have the right to diversify into any fishery.

Agenda items C-5, C-6, C7: JVs, Foreign Allocations, & Foreign Permits

Hugh Reilly, Westward Trawlers, supported a reasonable and timely release of allocations to Japan. Domestic industry has developed through cooperation with Japan and they have supported development of surimi plants, etc.

Al Osterback, Sand Point, said that salmon is an integral part of their economy and it is essential that the interceptions by Japan be stopped.

Jay Hastings, Japan Fisheries Assn., said that release of allocations to Japan is integral to their fulfillment of recent industry agreements.

Dean Paddock, Bristol Bay Driftnetters Assn, asked that the Council recommend withholding Japan's directed allocation until some resolution on the salmon interception is found.

Tomasz Pintowski, Polish Embassy, reminded the Council of Poland's activities in the past and the money they spend on support for their vessels - fuel, provisions, etc.

Jeff Sanders, Western Alaska Salmon Coalition. They are interested in the conservation and enhancement of the salmon habitat and asked the Council to make an Japan allocation contingent upon resolution of the salmon interception problem.

Cindy Lowry, Greenpeace. Concerned about the impact of the high seas interception of salmon on the resources. Also, the high mortality of marine mammals and sea birds in this same fishery. They urged the Council to cut off TALFF for Japan because of their unwillingness to negotiate a successful resolution.

Nancy Davis, Quest Alaska, Inc., urged the Council to support Poland's request for a 50,000 mt allocation in addition to their 50,000 JV request. They have been a cooperative partner and their request is a 1:1 ratio.

Harold Sparks, Nunam Kitlutsisti, presented several statements to the Council on salmon interceptions. These are a part of the Council record and filed in the Council notebook for the meeting. Urged the Council to recommend zero TALFF for Japan until interceptions are stopped.

David C. Harrison, Anchorage. Stressed the importance of salmon stocks to rural Alaskans.

Agenda D-1: Gulf of Alaska Groundfish FMP

Ludger Dochtermann, Alaska Coast Community Alliance, said the bycatch of crab in the Kodiak area is devastating to the local fishermen. Would like to see observers placed on catcher/processors.

Joe Gnagey, Steuart Fisheries, said that the Plan Team's recommendation of zero-ABC for pollock in the Gulf is sending shock waves throughout the industry. They think the stocks will support a harvest in excess of 200,000 mt; this should provide enough to provide for joint ventures and allow the domestic industry to develop.

Don Johnson, Kodiak, said that NMFS should update their trawl techniques used in surveys; he disagrees with the assessment for pollock in the Gulf.

Jack Knutsen, FVOA, re: sablefish. He thinks the information on sablefish is poor and that 18,000 mt is too much; they agree with the AP recommendation. Eventually there will have to be a size limit for sablefish.

Wally Pereyra, ProFish Int'l, supported the SSC's recommendation for pollock OYs and suggested Council adopt them. He recommended that the season for pollock in the Western Gulf not be split so that the JVs will have the maximum opportunity to take the fish during the winter period. He also suggested that the JV fisheries in Shelikof not begin before Feb. 15. This would encourage exploring outside Shelikof.

Leroy Cossette, Uganik Bay Seafoods, objects to joint ventures for pollock in Shelikof Strait because domestic processors cannot compete with foreign prices.

Mick Stevens, ProFish Int'l, said he feels there is a very significant difference in the industry DAP survey and actual performance.

Jon Adams, DSFU, re: halibut mortality. He supports the AP's recommendation for a 2,000 mt mortality rate for halibut in the Gulf of Alaska. Also believes the sablefish OY should be below 18,000 mt because of insufficient stock data.

Gary Embry, DSFU, agrees with Jon Adam's testimony and urged the Council to adopt a very conservative approach for the sablefish OY.

Ted Evans, AFTA, said that there is a significant increase in domestic demand for pollock. He would like to see 40,000 mt held for the post-Shelikof Strait fishery to allow a constant supply for the new surimi plants coming on line. For Pacific cod, he would like to see the harvest remain at the historic level; ABC is too high. Supports zero-TALFF in the Gulf. On sablefish, he agrees with the SSC's recommendation for 18,000 mt, supports the distribution proposed by the Plan Team, and is very concerned that their fishery will be closed down because of excessive bycatch of sablefish.

Bernie Burkholder, Dominion Fisheries, Inc., is concerned that bycatches will shut down the trawl fisheries. Also, he is against limited entry for sablefish because he and a lot of others have invested in equipment to get into this fishery in 1986.

Harold Thompson, Sitka Sound Seafoods, supports AP recommendation of 15,000 mt for sablefish. Urged the Council to support only the joint ventures who have participated in helping develop the domestic fisheries.

Bob Alverson, FVOA, supports the AP's recommendation for the halibut PSC limit of 2,000 mt mortality in the Gulf. In reference to trawlers targeting on their 20% sablefish allocation, he feels that it is an "in-house" problem that should be dealt with by the trawlers. Urged the Council to give the Regional Director all the tools he needs to deal with the fisheries in a timely manner.

Oliver Holm, Kodiak Longliners Assn, is against the 9/26 cut-off date for sablefish. He is in favor of the 15,000 mt OY for sablefish in the Gulf. Also in favor of the 2,000 mt halibut PSC and a 5% trip limit for trawlers on sablefish or some other method that would allow them to stay within the limit and keep the fishery going year-round.

Tim Thomas, F/V MARK I, feels the timing of the NMFS pollock survey is off; he was there from February 1 to April 15 when the pollock were congregated and no NMFS personnel were in evidence.

Mark Lundsten, FVOA, said that for the health of the resource, there should be a size limit on sablefish; too many immature fish are being harvested. Supports a 15,000 mt OY for sablefish and the 2,000 mt PSC for halibut. Feels the only way this can be enforced is through a domestic observer program.

Eric Jordan, Sitka, supports the AP recommendation on the sablefish OY and distribution.

Ron Hegge, ALFA, supports AP recommendation on sablefish and the 2,000 halibut PSC.

John Jemewouk, Craig Willoya, Myrtle Johnson, KEG Fisheries Co-op, stressed the importance of joint ventures with Japan and urged the Council not to withhold their allocation.

William Nicholson, Joe McGill, Ray O'Neill, Bristol Bay Herring Marketing Co-op, also depend on their arrangements with Japanese longliners and it is important to their economy.

Mike Mayo, Sitka, said he feels the survey for sablefish is in error; he thinks there's more available than the Plan Team says.

Jeff Stephan, UFMA, shares Bob Alverson's concerns that the trawlers will target on sablefish and shut down other fisheries. Requested that the cod and flatfish OYs be set as low as possible. He supports the 2,000 mt halibut PSC and urged the Council to move forward on a domestic observer program.

Tom Stewart, Petersburg Vessel Owners' Assn, supports AP recommendations for Gulf OYs.

Steve Johnson, Japan Deep Sea Trawlers Assn., supported the SSC's approach to the pollock OY to encourage exploration of stocks outside Shelikof. He feels the ABC recommendations are too conservative based on the NRC analysis. Also

David Thompson, State Board member, suggests an amendment of 15,000 mt for...
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...the domestic fisheries.

Mr. Weaver, TWA, suggests the AA's recommendation for the higher 200 limit...
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asked the Council to take a close look at the DAH estimates for pollock; he thinks they are unrealistic. In regard to zero-TALFF and zero-JVPs, he asked the Council to set bycatch figures which would allow these fisheries to continue.

Paul MacGregor, Japan Longline Assn, said that the OY for Pacific cod in the Gulf has been kept below ABC to protect halibut; but now that Amendment 14 is in place, this should no longer be necessary; he recommended an OY of 100,000 mt for Pacific cod in the Gulf. He also said that in the past DAP projections have not been reached and suggested the Council take that into consideration. Mr. MacGregor reminded the Council that continued JV fishing operations are important to domestic fishermen.

Steve Hughes, NRC, said that on the basis of the study they did for pollock in the Gulf, they feel the OY could be set within a range of 120-160,000 mt. They agree that the pollock biomass has decreased in the Shelikof Strait, but do not agree that those stocks comprise the vast majority of the stocks in the Western and Central areas of the Gulf.

Frank Bohannon, Northern Deep Sea Fisheries, Inc., said he is concerned about the low ABCs for pollock in light of the NRC report. Feels that NMFS surveys are underfunded and do not cover the whole resource. Last year their CPUE was up even though the size of the fleet was increased. He feels an OY of 200,000 mt for 1986 is conservative. Urged the Council to use the NRC report as a guideline. Mr. Swasand, who was with Mr. Bohannon, said that DAP figures should be reasonable and there should be enough bycatch allowed for target fisheries to go forward. Japan should be given at least their historic allocation.

Al Burch, ADA, said that in 1986 four groups will be targeting on cod; to set the OY too low will send a message to industry that will slow Americanization. A PSC will protect the halibut so he feels the pollock estimates in the Gulf are too conservative. After DAP and bycatch needs are protected, he would like to see the excess pollock released to joint ventures; this is very important to the Kodiak economy. Urged the Council to reject AP's recommendation to delay joint ventures until July 1. Mr. Burch also said that he supports a domestic observer program. In regard to the cut-off date for sablefish participation, he feels it is not fair for the draggers who have been assured the ability to diversify.

Thorn Smith, NPFVOA, supports the NRC assessment of pollock stocks in the Gulf and urged the Council to set reasonable DAP figures and to establish adequate PSCs for fully-utilized species. Agreed with the 2,000 mt halibut PSC.

Dave Harville, Kodiak Westward Trawlers, encouraged joint venture allocations in Shelikof Strait and was concerned with DAP estimates which he felt were unrealistic. Does not agree with delaying the Shelikof season.

Byron Kelly, Alaska Pacific Seafoods, told of plans for processing surimi in 1986. They estimate that they will need a maximum of 16,400 mt of pollock and it's important for them to have it spread throughout the year.

Charles Christensen, Petersburg Vessel Owners Assn., feels the SSC recommendation of 18,000 mt for sablefish is too high, both for conservation and market reasons. He supports the AP's recommendation of 15,000 mt. Also would like to suggest a size limit be placed on sablefish.

Richard White, is concerned with the sablefish distribution; he urged the Council to support the Plan Team's apportionment. He also suggested there be a minimum size of 22" for sablefish.

Danny Graham, Eldaw Alaska, Ltd., is concerned that decisions are being based on economic reasons rather than conservation. Agrees with the AP's recommendation on sablefish; he would rather have less fish now and allow them to grow. He also agreed that a size limit of 22-23" is necessary for sablefish.

Jim Hubbard, Sitka, agreed with the Plan Team's recommendations for sablefish and sees no reason to redistribute. He also supports a size limit for sablefish.

Annie Burnham, Alaska Joint Venture Fisheries, supports the SSC recommendations on pollock; the suggestion to open the Shelikof fishery on February 15 is a good one; it will provide an opportunity to explore stocks outside Shelikof. Also concerned that DAP estimates may not be realistic. Also questioned the zero-ABC recommended by the Plan Team for pollock; based on the NRC report this would seem unnecessary.

Terry Baker, Arctic Alaska Seafoods, supports the Plan Team apportionment for sablefish and recommends no TALFF in GOA. This will increase domestic opportunity for exports both to Japan and European countries. He feels that 80,000-90,000 mt for DAP is realistic.

Alec Brindle, Ward Cove Packing Co., reviewed their plans for 1986; for shoreside facilities to be economically viable they need year-round supply of fish in close proximity to plants.

Mr. Leppink, Shoney's Inc. Shoney's would buy all American-processed product for their restaurant chain if it was available. This year they used over 40 million pounds of cod. Urged the Council to do whatever is necessary to foster development of the U.S. fishing and processing industries.

Agenda D-2: Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

Steve Johnson, Japan Deep Sea Trawlers/Hokuten Trawlers, feels the TAC for pollock in the Bering Sea could go as high as 1.3 million mt. Does not believe zero-TALFF and zero-JVP are necessary if adequate bycatch amounts are set aside for target fisheries. Splitting the TAC between the Bering Sea and Aleutians is not necessary; there would be no benefit at this time.

Ted Evans, AFTA, feels that Pacific cod should be reserved for the domestic fleet. Stocks are expected to decline and should be preserved. It's difficult for him to comment on the TACs because figures in the Resource Assessment Document are constantly changing. Pollock should also be strictly for domestic fishermen.

Charles Christian, Veterinary, Federal Government, Alaska, feels the 200 recommendation of 12,000 is not realistic in the light of the fact that Alaska and other areas. He suggests the 12,000 recommendation of 12,000 is not realistic. He also suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic.

Richard White, is concerned with the exhibit distribution. He suggests that the Council to support the 12,000 recommendation. He also suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic.

James Graham, Fishery, Alaska, feels the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He also suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic.

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Dr. James, Alaska, feels the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He also suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic.

Agenda Item 2: Review of the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Act

James Johnson, Alaska, feels the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He also suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic.

Dr. James, Alaska, feels the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic. He also suggests that the 12,000 recommendation is not realistic.

Bart Eaton, Trident Seafoods, recommends zero-TALFF. Also encourages separating turbot species. Reviewed Trident's plans for the coming year. Concerned about the shift of effort that may come out of the Gulf into the Bering Sea.

Mick Stevens, ProFish Int'l, stressed the importance of having sufficient resource for domestic fishermen. Recommends the Council not link allocations for Japan to the salmon interception problem.

Jay Hastings, Japan Fisheries Assn., stressed that the industry agreements with Japan are linked to their allocations.

Jeff Sanders, Western Alaska Coalition, is interested in conservation and enhancement of salmon habitats. Opposed to high seas interception of salmon and urged Council to make allocations contingent on resolution.

Barry Collier, Pacific Seafood Processors Assn, read a telegram into the record from Bob Morgan which is filed with the Council notebook for this meeting. Mr. Collier said that testimony at this meeting has shown that the DAP estimates for 1986 are realistic. Recommended that the Council request the same industry compromises in the FDZ for 1986.

Phil Chitwood, MRC, supports status quo on Atka mackerel. Without observers it would be very difficult to split out the POP complex.

Oliver Holm, Kodiak Longliners, supports AP recommendation on Pacific cod. Urged the Council to support the domestic industry.

Paul MacGregor, Japan Longline Assn., suggested the Council use reserves to allow the codfish fishery in the Pribilofs. Their CPUEs remain high even though the domestic trawlers say they can't find sufficient concentrations.

Thorn Smith, NPFVOA, said that they support the allocation of the maximum TALFF available for support of the industry agreements.

Ed Zeasor, Mrs. Paul's Kitchens, said that a large amount of pollock fillet blocks is important to their operation. If the product was available in sufficient quantities at a reasonable price, they would buy all American product.