

Recommendations for B.C. Farmed Fish Sales to the U.S. East Coast



Initially, there were serious questions concerning the benefits of sending fish to the Fulton Fish Market as it is not a quality-oriented sales centre. Damage is being done to the quality status of B.C. farmed salmon since it seems that Fulton is being used as a last resort dumping ground for North American wholesalers. On the other hand Norwegian farmed salmon is being directly shipped on a regular basis, hence there is a perception of better quality and consistent supply.

If production in B.C. reaches volumes that warrant sales to the Fulton Fish Market, then sales should be regular and direct with emphasis on quality and a very strong buyer-education program included. The use of a "Quality Assurance" sticker and program would be a severe liability if the fish were not handled correctly at the wholesaler/distributor level and subsequently presented as a poor-quality inexpensive fish.

Generic promotion in this case appears to be greatly needed. Saving the reputation of Pacific salmon lies in generic promotion and the education of buyers. In open-air markets, the species and price appear more important than a brand loyalty established between individual companies; hence, generic promotion in this case would be appropriate.

The authors believe that one of the BCSFA stated observations, at least as it relates to the Fulton Fish Market, is correct; i.e., there are "too many sellers in the market." This is obvious when one sees a two-week old shipment of fish in New York and tracks its geographic sales path: Vancouver Island-Vancouver-Vancouver (changed hands)-Seattle-Los Angeles-New York.

General Recommendations for Trade Show Participation



1. The presence and image of B.C. farmed salmon must be enlarged and improved. British Columbia (or B.C.), is unknown in the rest of the world. A study is recommended to determine positive alternatives to the present use of "B.C. farmed salmon."

2. Representatives of the B.C. salmon farming industry should participate together under one banner at trade shows. Individual booths have little impact at a trade fair such as the Boston Seafood Show. A significant competitive advantage in profile and presence is lost. To compete internationally, a presence equal to other countries must be created. It is recommended that the BCSFA open a dialogue with B.C. companies participating at major trade shows to convince them of the mutual benefits of group displays. It is further recommended that the BCSFA seek government assistance to fund an enhanced trade show presence as a way to encourage all companies to co-operate in this regard.

3. Currently, the British Columbia Salmon Farmers Association booth presents a pictorial message which is misdirected for seafood buyers. It primarily denotes biology and technology. The message should be simple - pristine environment, high-quality fish, Los Angeles taste-test champions. The fresh fish display should be completely reworked. The brown display table is aesthetically very unappealing. The highest-quality salmon for display should be ensured. At least some of the fresh salmon should be filleted or steaked to expose the quality and deep red colour of the flesh. It is recommended that the Marketing Committee of the BCSFA convene a workshop to solicit input from the membership on the development of a new trade show display.