

Calendar of Events

November-December 1985

- 20-24 Nov. Food Fest '85. Hong Kong Exhibition Center, Hong Kong. SHK International Services, Ltd. Third Floor Admiralty Centre Tower II, Hong Kong, telephone 5-8225505.
- 20-21 Nov. Sea Fare Southeast '85. International Seafood Exposition, Buena Vista Palace, Orlando, Fla. Sea Fare Expositions, Inc., 4016 Ashworth N., Seattle, WA 98103, telephone 206-547-6030.
- 27 Nov.-3 Dec. SAPEHDAK. Senegalese Exhibition for Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Hydraulics. Sofidak, BP 3329, Route de l'Aéroport de Yoff, Dakar, Senegal.
- 4-6 Dec. USIFS '85. Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, Calif. Andry Montgomery, Inc., 116 East Blithedale Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941, telephone 415-381-8206.
- 4-6 Dec. Fish Pacific. Seattle Center Exhibition Hall, Seattle, Wash. National Fishermen Expositions, P.O. Box 7437, Portland, ME 04112.

January-February 1986

- 9-12 Jan. International Work Boat Show. New Orleans, La. H. L. Peace Expositions, Inc., P.O. Box 2400, Covington, LA 70434, telephone 504-893-2930.
- 14-16 Jan. Tropical and Subtropical Fisheries Technologists 11th Annual Meeting. International Airport Holiday Inn, Tampa, Fla. John Koburger, 449 Food Science Building, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.
- 23-26 Jan. 12th Annual East Coast Fisherman's Trade Exposition, Ocean City, Md. Betty Duty, MWA, 48 Maryland Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401, telephone 301-268-7722.
- 11-12 Feb. Seafare '86. Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, Calif. Seafare Expositions, telephone 206-547-6030.
- 17-19 Feb. Pacific Fisheries Technologists 1986 Annual Meeting. Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, B.C. J.S. McMillan Fisheries Ltd., 2199 Commissioner Street, Vancouver, B.C., V5L 1A4, telephone 604-255-5191.
- 25-27 Feb. Inforfish Tuna Trade Conference. Bangkok, Thailand. FAO-INFOFISH, P.O. Box 10899, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Telex INFISH MA 31560.

26 Feb.-2 Mar. Shrimp World II. Maui, Hawaii (shrimp marketing conference). Shrimp World II, 417 Eliza Street, New Orleans, LA 70114, telephone 504-368-1571.

March

- 8-13 Mar. Alimentaria '86 (Salon International de la Alimentacion). Barcelona, Spain. John Kosmark, Seafood USA, telephone 301-266-5530.
- 9-13 Mar. Symposium on Common Strategies of Anadromous and Catadromous Fishes. Park Plaza Hotel, Boston, Mass. Robert A. Rulifson, Symposium Secretary, Institute for Coastal and Marine Resources, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27834.
- 11-13 Mar. Seafood '86. World Trade Center, Boston, Mass. Denex International, telephone 207-832-6346.
- 16-21 Mar. 51st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. MGM Grand Hotel, Reno, Nev. Larry Jahn, Vice President, Wildlife Management Institute, 1101 14th Street, N.W., Suite 725, Washington, DC 20005.
- 20-22 Mar. Fishing '86. Scottish Exhibition Center, Glasgow, Scotland. AGB Heighway Ltd., 87 Blackfriars Road, London, England, SE1 8HB.
- 24-29 Mar. CHEMRAWN IV. Conference on the Global Ocean: Its Chemistry and Resources, Minerals, Food, Drugs, Chemicals, Technology. P. A. Meyers, Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science, University of Michigan, 2455 Hayward Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109, telephone 313-763-2316.

June-October

- 17-21 June. The Total Fish Show. Bella Center, Copenhagen, Denmark. ITF International Ltd., Radcliffe House, Blenheim Court, Solihull, West Midlands, England B91 2BG, telephone 021-705-6707.
- 10-15 Aug. Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade in Conjunction with the Symposium of Groupe d'Etude des Ressources Maritimes Third Conference. University of Quebec at Rimouski, Canada. Sharon Kelly, IIFET, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331, telephone 503-754-2942.
- 21-23 Oct. Third International Salmon Symposium, Biarritz, France. Alex Prichard, Courtleigh Manor, Sunningdale, Berkshire, England SL5 9QH.

Note: Listing of trade names or commercial firms does not imply endorsement by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Providing Service to the Seafood Industry Through Market News

DONALD R. WHITAKER

Preface

Probably few businesses are subject to greater threats to profitability than the seafood industry. There are myriad fishing regulations, inspection laws, quotas, gluts, shortages, wide price fluctuations, competition from other protein foods, processing regulations, and every conceivable hindrance to the orderly marketing of a food product.

The seafood industry is probably the last U.S. industry which has as its foundation the hunting and gathering of creatures in the wild. Unlike farming, and industry that has most production sources under control, except for the weather, the seafood industry faces uncertainties that would unnerve most businessmen. Take, for example, the natural cycle of the industry's raw material, the live sea products. Despite vast amounts spent on research, there is no way to predict, on a short-term business basis, whether a good run of fish is going to occur. The problem is equally serious for both the fisherman and the processor. Yet it is hard to imagine the fruit and vegetable industry operating under such uncertain conditions. The agriculture industry has more influence and control of its supply by knowing what acreage is planted, the yield to be expected, and contracts for production from so many acres.

For 47 years the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)¹, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

agency, has recognized that the seafood business is an inherently unstable business which often requires Government action to supply information to the producers, processors, and the rest of the marketing chain by providing the Market News Service to the seafood industry.

Introduction

The Fishery Market News Program is carried out under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. The service provides local, regional, national, and international market information. The information is current and covers supply, movement, contractual agreements, inventories, and prices at specific markets for practically all seafood commodities. The marketing of fishery products is characterized by a series of decision points through which product flow concentrates and transactions take place. Market News provides those engaged in the production and marketing of fish products, as well as those supplying the fishing market, with timely, accurate, and unbiased market information. Thus, on a day-to-day basis, those interested in market conditions are in a position to make the critical decisions of where and when to sell, and at what price.

Market information is obtained through joint Federal/industry efforts. Federal Market News reporters visit markets or gather data by telephone. Information and detailed data collected by these reporters are analyzed and immediately disseminated

to the seafood community by automatic telephone, current printed reports, Western Union, and radio spots.

The Fishery Market News Service is first and foremost a service-oriented program. Market News is in the forefront of the effort to make Government programs meet the most strenuous of all tests—the market test—by offering its services to users and letting their payment for services reflect part of the value of the program to the marketplace. Because of this, Market News must maintain a high quality of service and remain completely unbiased.

The most important contribution of the Market News Service to the seafood industry is the reduction of risk in the marketing of sea products. The industry's risk factor is among the highest of any section of the U.S. economy. For the industry to make full use of the information provided, it must have unbiased, accurate, and timely information on market conditions throughout the country, and increasingly, in international markets. The Fishery Market News Service provides the seafood industry with the information necessary for successfully reducing marketing risks.

The program gives everyone in the marketing chain a fair shake. It helps the fishermen keep a finger on the pulse of the marketplace. It helps buyers and sellers know what is happening and enables them to deal with markets throughout the country. Market News is, in effect, a third party referee in the marketplace, and as such, it observes, records, and reports market conditions. It is a service agency. The services as referee make possible reduced costs for all levels of the marketing process. In this capacity, it contributes to many Department of Commerce goals as will be seen later.

Market News Purpose

A primary function of the Fishery Market News Service is to provide accurate and unbiased reports depicting current conditions on supply, demand, price, trend, movement, and

¹Earlier named the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries (BCF), and once a part of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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other pertinent information affecting the trade in fish and fishery products. Timely and equal access to the latest market information and statistics is provided to those who want the information (i.e., fishermen, shippers, packers, dealers, processors, importers, wholesalers, and retailers), to help them decide the best time and the best place to buy and sell their products.

This information provides the industry with tools to determine where and when to buy and sell. Market reports assist producers in their production planning and help promote orderly marketing by placing producers and others in the industry on a more equal bargaining basis. Related industries which process and distribute seafood products also make considerable use of market reports to conduct and plan business operations. Market News Reports also reflect the consumer's preference back through marketing channels to producers. Statistics prepared by the Service are used by all segments of the industry and as basic data by Sea Grant colleges, universities, Government agencies, and private research organizations.

The Market News Service proposes to stay abreast of changing patterns in the market and continues to compile and disseminate information which aids producers, consumers, and distributors in the sale and purchase of fishery products.

The Concept

The Market News Service answers the needs of many phases of the marketing process. Reports are:

Impartial—An unbiased third party (a Federal government employee) gathers the information and evaluates it. Neither buyer nor seller has control over the information.

Current—The information gathered is disseminated as rapidly as possible.

Reliable—The market or area of the country to which market news information applies is identified in each report. When possible, the entire spectrum of prices is included, show-

ing a range of prices. Information is frequently verified by double-checking two or more sources before it is released.

Confidential—Information provided by individual firms is combined with that from other firms before it is issued, to insure that no confidential information is released. Virtually all firms contacted by Market News reporters respond freely, with complete confidence that their information will not be used in any way that would disclose their individual operations.

Market News takes the pulse of the market. Other services may try to diagnose the market, but Market News merely observes, records, interprets, and reports. It does not interfere with the operation of the market, although it may influence the decision of buyers, sellers, and others. The role of spectator is intrinsic to Market News. It has become the "eyes and ears" of the seafood industry.

Authority

Market News was first mentioned in U.S. legislation in the 1937 bill which provided the Commerce Department's Bureau of Fisheries appropriations for the start up of Market News in 1938.

Aside from the annual appropriations for running the Market News Service, the basic authority in law for fishery market news operations is found in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1927). Section 1622(g) deals with the collection and dissemination of marketing information. Section 1622(k) specifically was concerned with the collection and dissemination of marketing statistics. In section 1626 on definitions it states, "when used in the chapter, the term 'agricultural products' includes . . . fish and shellfish, and any products thereof, including processed and manufactured products."

On 22 March 1958, (23 F.R. 2304), the Director of the Bureau of the Budget transferred all functions of the Department of Agriculture which pertained to fish and shellfish (performed

under 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) to the Department of Interior consistent with various provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956.

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as well as several other acts, does not specifically mention Market News. However, it details responsibilities of the Secretary which could not be conducted without the use of the data and information gathered by Market News. For example, under this Act the Secretary is authorized to disseminate information concerning the production and flow to market of fishery products. In a similar vein, the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act of 1954 (15 U.S.C. 713c-3) made funds available to promote the free flow of domestically produced fishery products.

Getting back to the Fish and Wildlife Act, the Secretary was to study the economic condition of the industry and to develop promotional and informational activities to stimulate consumption. This work could not be undertaken without knowledge of market prices and market data reported by Market News.

The Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801-1882) established eight Regional Fishery Management Councils to develop fishery management plans. Each plan has a section discussing the economics and the status of the industry. Market News data is always used in preparing this section of the plan.

The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to make acquisition and disposal of surplus fishery products under 15 U.S.C. 713c-2, 15 U.S.C. 713c-3, 7 U.S.C. 612c and 16 U.S.C. 742e. In making recommendations to the Secretary regarding purchases of fishery products, Market News again is always used.

The Department of Commerce has 20 major goals to direct its most important activities. Of the 20, the Market News Service contributes to 9 of the goals. These are:

- 1) Establish trade expansion as a major national priority.

Market News Capsule History

1937

The first session of the 75th Congress passed a Bureau of Fisheries appropriation with an amendment which provided for and established a Fishery Market News Service. The first Fishery Market News office was opened in New York City in November.

1938

The first daily report was issued in New York City on 14 February, a location chosen because it was the largest and most important wholesale fish market in the country.

The second Market News office was opened in Boston, Mass., in May. Boston was chosen because of its importance as a fishing port, fish-processing center, distribution center, and proximity to such other New England fishing ports as Gloucester, New Bedford, and Provincetown, Mass.; and Portland and Rockland, Maine. The first daily report was issued 26 May. The third office was opened in Chicago, Ill., in August, because it was the nation's largest inland market and distribution center for domestic and imported saltwater products and an important market for domestic and Canadian freshwater fish. The first daily report was issued 1 September.

The fourth office was opened in Seattle, Wash., also in August. Seattle was chosen because of its importance as a salmon, halibut, bottomfish, crab, and oyster landing, processing, and distribution center. The first report was issued 1 October. For a few years a suboffice was opened in Astoria, Oreg., but it was closed because of a shortage of funds.

1939

The fifth Fishery Market News Service office was opened in Jacksonville, Fla., in January. The office issued a report giving daily fishery landings for and shipments from the principal Florida ports and market data for New York City covering the species of Florida seafood shipped to that market for sale. The first daily report was issued 6 March.

1940

The sixth Fishery Market News office was opened in New Orleans, La., in January, and issued reports on the production, processing, and marketing of shrimp, oysters, and crabs in the entire Gulf area.

1942

Wholesale prices were collected in 1942 for the Office of Price Administration and used in preparing Maximum Price Regulations. From 1943 through the end of World War II, *Current Fishery Trade* was published monthly during periods of heavy production and quarterly the rest of the time.

1943

The Jacksonville office, opened in 1939, was closed in August owing to a cut in funds.

1945

The seventh Market News office opened in San Pedro, Calif., and the daily report, first issued 1 August, covered data on the tuna, mackerel, sardine, and anchovy fisheries.

The eighth Market News office was opened in

Hampton, Va., covering the oyster and crab fisheries and the local trawl fishery. The first report was issued 4 September.

The Jacksonville, Fla., office, closed in August 1943, was reopened in January.

1947

On 1 July, the Hampton, Va., office was closed owing to a lack of funds.

Again the Jacksonville, Fla., office was closed in June owing to a cut in funds.

1948

Because of heavy industry interest, the Hampton, Va., office was reopened in July after a year's closure.

1954

Saltonstall-Kennedy Act gave increased funding to Market News in late 1950's. Programs were increased to cover foreign imports, cold storage, frozen prices.

The Boston frozen fish block and fillet prices are used worldwide and promote a stabilizing factor in international trading. The frozen shrimp and lobster tail prices published in New York reports have gained international standing. These frozen prices are published in other NMFS Market News Reports and reproduced in many international trade reports.

Many foreign governments use the prices, cold storage holdings and import data for economic evaluations relating to their fisheries and markets.

1957

The operations of the Hampton, Va., Market News Service Office were expanded to include Baltimore, Md., market coverage at the request of the industry. In September, a suboffice was established in Baltimore to report daily receipts and prices on the Baltimore market for publication in the Hampton daily report.

1958

"Boston Annual Summary" expanded to the "New England Fisheries Annual Summary."

1966

The *Commercial Fisheries Review*, a monthly periodical begun by Market News in 1939, was transferred to another office for publication.

1972

As of July, Monthly and Annual Summaries were discontinued—Market News was to provide current marketing information.

1973

Automatic telephone message centers were set up in Boston, Gloucester, and New Bedford, Mass.; New York City, Hampton, Va., and Chicago, Ill.

Hampton, Va., and Chicago, Ill., discontinued publishing Fishery Market News Reports on 5 March. Some of the information from Hampton and Baltimore was published in the New York Report. The Chicago information was put in the Boston Report.

Major changes were made in the coverage of the Market News Reports. Weekly summaries were discontinued. Fish meal and oil prices were not carried in all reports. Weekly cold storage reports were discontinued. However, industry

strongly requested that Boston return to publishing the weekly cold storage report.

1975

Fishery Market News-Report began a paid subscription system on 1 July. Reports had been free from 1938 to 1975.

Weekly summaries were established as part of the Market News Reports.

1978

Telephone message centers at Gloucester and New Bedford, Mass., increased to two-line service to meet demand.

Commenced publishing "Fishing Export Opportunities" as a supplement to the Boston and New York Fishery Market News Reports on 1 October.

1979

Boston Market News office began providing Boston and New Bedford daily landings and morning auction prices to Western Union's FYI—News Alert on 5 March.

An automatic telephone center began 26 July at Gloucester, Mass., to report the Atlantic giant bluefin tuna catch figures during the summer months.

On 27 September a contract was issued to collect foreign export market information in five European countries.

1980

On 9 January, first issue of European Weekly Frozen Fish Report (distributed by telephone message center for the first four months—separate mailing list created as of 23 April).

Baltimore Market News office was closed 28 February.

Automatic telephone message center began 23 July at Portland, Maine.

Because coverage of the Baltimore Wholesale Fish Market was accorded a low priority, reporting for that market was suspended on 28 February. Prices and receipts for the Baltimore market had been appearing in the New York Market News Report.

1981

January, began the Japanese Weekly Frozen Fish Report, a 1 year project.

Commenced Quarterly European Frozen Fish Market.

11 February, commenced publishing the European Weekly Frozen Fish Report as a supplement to the Boston and New York Fishery Market News Reports.

Chicago Market News office was closed 1 October. Reductions forced a reassessment of program priorities. NMFS was to focus its development activities on marine species of fish and to de-emphasize freshwater species.

1983

Telephone message center at Boston was expanded to two-line service to meet demand.

1984

An automatic telephone message center was established 5 July in Rockland, Maine, providing the daily Boston landings and ex-vessel auction prices and New Bedford ex-vessel scallop auction prices.

2) Eliminate the merchandise trade and travel deficits by 1990.

3) Increase the number of exporters by 10 percent per year through 1985.

4) Provide accurate and timely information and services to U.S. exporters.

5) Produce economic forecasts and industry analyses that are useful to business and government.

6) Provide technological information, products, and services to meet the major long-term needs of U.S. industry.

7) Promote new commercial uses of marine resources by U.S. industry.

8) Increase by 40 percent the domestic fisheries contribution to GNP by 1990.

9) Manage Departmental services to minimize competition with the private sector and generate cost recovery from users.

Who Uses the Market News Reports?

Current fishery market data are of great importance to many businessmen as well as to fishermen, producers, and vessel owners. Sales departments of hundreds of firms can use the data to help forecast sales. Bankers use them in determining how their loans are performing, financing inventories of fish, and providing new plants and facilities. Since the data aid businesses in avoiding loss and in utilizing their facilities most efficiently, they doubtless serve the consumer through the lower costs which result from such knowledge.

Price trends tell the businessman, researcher, and Government official something about the future, provided they have data on prices regularly and they learn how to interpret them. Price trends follow demand and do show what the demand is for any particular product. Is the demand starting to decline? Is it holding steady? Is it beginning to increase? The answers to those questions are found in the information on price trends and other market data.

Market News plays an important part in facilitating international trade in fishery products. An example of

Table 1.—Users of Market News Reports

User	How Data is Used	Data Needs
Private industry	Day-to-day business decisions by importer, brokers, processors, wholesalers, etc., throughout the marketing chain.	Landings, imports, exports, cold storage holdings, consumption, vessel, wholesale and retail price export trade leads, news items ¹
	Research and consulting firms	Same
	Newsletters/Market Reports	Same
	Media	
	Radio, land and marine Newspapers	Landings and vessel prices Same
	Western Union	Auction and wholesale prices
NOAA/NMFS policy makers	Policy decisions, USDA purchase programs, special aid to industry	Catch, imports, stocks, exports, consumption prices
	Status of fisheries reports	Same
Fishery Management Councils	Fishery Management Plans	Landings, prices
	Environmental Impact Statements	Special studies ²
	Implementing regulations	
	FMP amendments	
	Joint Venture approvals/disapprovals	
State fisheries agencies	Fishery management	Landings
Sea Grant universities	Biological studies	Landings
	Economic studies	Supplies, prices, consumption

¹For example: Management Council agendas and reports of meetings, convention and trade show announcements, availability of reports on foreign fisheries, opening and closing of seasons by states, *Federal Register* announcements, announcements by other agencies such as USDS, FDA, ITC, Interior, etc.

²A wide variety of studies are used in the preparation of FMP's. Market News provides data for many of the studies, particularly economic and industry studies.

how Market News comes into play is as follows. Suppose a U.S. shrimp importer wishes to contract with a supplier of shrimp in another country. The contract may be for 3-12 months, or even longer. The problem is how can a contract be written now to specify exact prices to be paid for the shrimp months from now when everyone knows of the day-to-day volatility in shrimp prices. To get around this problem, the buyer and seller must agree on an independent source of data. It must be a source where prices cannot be determined or influenced by either the buyer or seller, and it must reflect current market conditions. All around the world, forward contracts for shrimp are based on the the New York Market News Greensheet. Contracts will be written for prices being based on the published prices for a certain size of shrimp from a particular country at a given date. This means the U.S. and the international industry has confidence in the integrity, and the objectivity, and the thorough reporting of the Market News Service. Lobster tails are traded in much the

same manner. The Boston Market News Bluesheet is used for forward contracts for fish blocks and fillets.

Users of Market News data and information can be classified into two broad groups: 1) Private industry and 2) Federal and state government officials. The latter, in turn are primarily concerned with both the development of the industry and the management of fishery stocks. Who uses the data and how it is used are briefly summarized in Table 1.

What Do the Market Reports Accomplish?

A progressive fisherman, producer, vessel owner, processor, wholesaler, or importer uses the reports for many purposes. Perhaps the most important is for information on the seasonal aspects of the market for a specific type of seafood product. A vessel owner is able to determine whether it may be more desirable to fish for the fresh fish market or for the processors of frozen fish.

The reports can give an indication as to whether fishing in a particular area is beginning to drop below nor-

mal. This aids in deciding whether a shift to different grounds is warranted without a costly trip.

Not the least of the purposes is to keep all those in the industry chain generally informed on the overall condition of the fishery industry and market, thus making each individual in the industry a more intelligent businessman.

The reports are especially valuable when the industry is in trouble, for the recorded current information is invaluable to those who have to make plans and devise policies at the Federal and state levels on how to help the industry. The data also may show why the sector is in trouble.

Full disclosure of market conditions, landings, receipts, and prices is needed to preserve a climate of fair dealing. This is also essential to maintain investor confidence in the fishing industry. Market information concentrates the buying power of the market in the proper channels and avoids disruptions of prices and demand based on rumors. It stimulates active and unrestricted bidding based on accurate data. This exerts a stabilizing influence on the market to the benefit of both buyer and seller, the latter securing as high a price as market conditions warrant. This also results in fair returns on consignment shipments.

One important by-product of the exchange of market information is that it generally leads to increased knowledge of trading opportunities and eventually to increased trade. A buyer or seller never knows when a bit of market information might spark a new sale or outlet for a product.

The current publication and availability of prices serves as a guide for private transactions. The dissemination of prices to all segments of the fishery industry provides for a certain amount of stability. There are narrower fluctuations with proper and current market information because buyers and sellers can handle large or small supplies better if they have some advance notice. If sharp fluctuations can be reduced to only moderate or small fluctuations, the entire fishing industry will be

operating under more stable conditions. Some of the guesswork will have been removed.

How Market News Differs From Other Reports

When you look at the variety of information published in Market News reports, and for much of it Market News is the sole vehicle of publication, the reports could easily be considered as the seafood industry's daily newspaper, its "eyes and ears." NMFS Regional Directors use the reports as a primary means of communicating their regional activities. The Fishery Management Councils and the Fisheries Development Foundations make use of the reports to report on their activities. *Federal Register* announcements are usually run giving the industry access to the relatively unknown *Federal Register*. States use the reports to announce openings and closings of fishing seasons. Export opportunities are regularly published. The availability of reports on foreign fishing activities is routinely announced. Items such as these would not fit into the regular statistical publications and the official scientific publications of the Agency. Thus Market News is the natural medium to get widespread distribution quickly to the industry within 2-3 days.

Limitations

Market News reporting has limitations peculiar to the various products covered. Extent of coverage is also guided by marketing practices which differ among products. For example, New York reporters must maintain the simplest records feasible because of the large number of species reported and because they interview many individuals handling numerous products. Time limitations, commodities covered, and the needs of the industry determine the degree of detailed information reported.

Most Fishery Market News Reports indicate at what level trading has taken place for different sizes, qualities, and other factors that affect prices. Reporters usually cannot obtain weighted average prices for all

pertinent transactions. Available time and manpower limit the extent to which complete coverage can be attained on many products. However, within these limitations, judgment is exercised so reporters weight prices on the basis of reported or observed volume of sales at the different prices.

When Market News Reports are used for supporting claims for statistical purposes, the general practice is to use the midpoint of the price range. Such a derived figure may or may not be an accurate estimate of the true weighted average price, although in many instances it is acceptable as the best available approximation.

The value of the Market News Service is seriously limited in any case where only a small amount of production or sales is reported. When this happens, the Market News Service must (and frequently does) indicate that there were not enough quotes to establish a market price.

Other limitations include: Lack of trading in some items with the result that they are not quoted consistently; distress sales; a tendency of some sellers to quote asking prices instead of actual selling prices; and special trades for quick delivery priced outside the normal market range. The reports generally do not include prices on all grades and sizes, advertising allowances, but confine coverage to those most widely traded; shrimp wholesale prices are a good example.

Future of Market News

This report has traced briefly the major developments in the Market News Service over five decades. It has shown that the original concept of supplying market data for the industry has expanded significantly. Now, Federal and State Governments make wide use of the data as do the Regional Fishery Management Councils and Fishery Development Foundations. Market News is just as necessary to Government as it is to private industry because it supplies much data that are available from no other source, and it is the quickest mode of supplying any fisheries data.

The modes of supplying data are

the area where we foresee the most changes in Market News in the future. The use of computers will bring drastic changes to Market News operations, and possibly its printed looks, for the remainder of the 1980's. By the early months of 1985, each Market News office had its own microcomputer. The word processing capabilities of these machines and their capability to transfer data from office to office has reduced typing to a minimum. Computers will enable changes in formats and the way data and information are presented.

For the first time, the price data collected by Market News—and used by a wide range of researchers—will be transferred regularly to an automated data base. This will allow users instant access to the latest prices and historical price trends. The first use of data transfer has been with the exchange of export trade leads. All leads are being put into a central computer file. Each Market News office is able to access the leads and publish them on a more timely basis than in the past.

The greatest potential for dollar savings and the greatest potential for program efficiencies lie in the delivery of market news. An expensive and relatively less efficient form of dissemination is the mailed report. Mailed reports can become financially burdensome.

The use of telephone answering devices for disseminating market news information has grown over the last decade. Devices are located primarily at eight ports in the Northeast area. Hundreds of calls are received daily from small businesses and others that would have to depend upon a slower means of dissemination. In addition, the devices are used to record market news information by radio stations for broadcast.

If electronic trading shows promise as it has with agricultural products, this can serve as a source of market news.

The industry can no longer depend on the mailed report for daily marketing decisions. The fast pace in trading and sharp fluctuations in prices for most commodities require

more up-to-date market information than can be provided by the mailed market news report. The movement away from mailed reports to more rapid and efficient means of market news dissemination is the wave of the future.

Conclusions

The majority of the seafood industry and others using current fishery data realize the value of having current, unbiased, and continuing information on fishery landings, stocks, prices, market conditions, and trends.

As the industry becomes more sophisticated, as more and more products are processed, and as the trade in those products becomes larger and more national and international in character, the need for unbiased market information on a current basis will be essential for the orderly marketing of all types of fishery products. The proper information, at the proper place, and at the proper time aids the movement of a greater variety and larger quantities of fishery products. Without adequate and current market data, the efficient marketing and smooth flow of fishery products from production to consumption will be handicapped. The market reporting system does not change the marketing structure—it merely reports market conditions as generated by the existing marketing structure.

The seafood industry is becoming more sophisticated. Before any buyer or seller, any investor, any banker, any government official, or any other individual in the industry can make a profitable and wise decision, he will need detailed and timely information about prices, market conditions, demand, and other factors which affect the marketing of fishery products and by-products. General information will no longer be sufficient, but he will need specific data which will be helpful in arriving at a sound and businesslike decision.

Under today's complex marketing conditions, lack of or inadequate market and price information hampers businessmen and govern-

ment officials from making proper and accurate day-to-day decisions or planning far enough ahead. This adversely affects the orderly marketing of products.

Current market information is effective and useful when it tells the businessman and government official the score on the fishing industry. Sometimes market difficulties can be avoided if the small as well as the large marketer or businessman has the information necessary to make the proper market decision.

Acknowledgment

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California Anglers Reap Largest Albacore Catch

Record numbers of albacore were reported caught in 1984 by southern California sportfishermen. Sportboats began making catches in late May off northern Baja California and shifted to off southern California in June, and excellent angling continued throughout the summer.

San Diego landings often exceeded 6,000 fish per day, with angler success sometimes exceeding more than 10 albacore per rod. In addition to the large catch, several albacore world line class records were broken late in the season. An unusually high number of 60- to 80-pound albacore were caught in 1984 inside the Channel Islands, notably about 10 miles off San Pedro.

NMFS Southwest Fisheries Center scientists believe that the large fish were part of a group of albacore that winter over near Guadalupe Island off southern Baja California. It appears, however, that the fish moved northward in 1984 in response to the lingering El Niño condition and were held near the coast in the Los Angeles Bight by ocean frontal conditions just outside the Channel Islands. (Source: Tuna Newsletter No. 83.)

Destruction of Coral and Coral Reefs Prohibited

The taking of coral in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic is prohibited, reports Jack T. Brawner, National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Director. Federal regulations, which implement the Fishery Management Plan for Coral and Coral Reefs, now protect over 400 species of coral and apply to the fishery conservation zone which extends from the outer boundary of state waters (9 n.mi. off Texas and the west coast of Florida, and 3 n.mi. off the east coast of Florida and the other states) seaward to a distance of 200 n.mi. from the coastline.

Protected corals include fire corals, hydrocorals, sea fans, sea whips, precious corals, sea pens, and stony

corals, as well as hard bottoms, deep-water banks, patch reefs, and outer bank reefs. Taking of coral is defined to include damaging, harming, or killing of the coral.

According to Brawner, there had been substantiated reports of wholesale destruction of coral reefs before the regulations went into effect. "Destruction of our coral reefs cannot be tolerated," said Brawner, adding "Harvesting corals must be for scientific or educational purposes." Corals are live but sedentary organisms, particularly vulnerable to physical and biological destruction. Because many species are slow growing, they would not recover for many years if damaged.

The regulations also establish habitat areas of particular concern for corals that are currently or potentially

threatened. These areas include the West and East Flower Garden Banks off Texas, the Florida Middle Grounds off the west coast of Florida, and the Oculina Bank off Ft. Pierce, Fla. Fishing with longlines, fish traps or pots, and bottom trawls in these threatened areas is prohibited. Any illegal taking of coral in the fishery conservation zone should be reported to Federal law enforcement officials. Violators may face penalties up to \$25,000 for each offense. Anyone taking corals must have a permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service. Information on permits and current regulations may be obtained from the Fishery Operations Branch, National Marine Fisheries Service, 9450 Koger Boulevard, St. Petersburg, FL 33702, (813) 893-3723.

Foreign Fishery Developments

New Peruvian Plant to Produce "Marine Beef"

A Japanese engineering company has built a "marine beef" plant in Peru which will produce a dehydrated protein concentrate that reportedly can be used in a variety of meat and poultry dishes. The pilot plant, for Peru's state-owned fishing company, Pescaperu, is located at the largely unused San Andres Fisheries Complex near Pisco, about 230 km south of Lima.

Marine beef is a new type of fish protein concentrate which can easily be rehydrated for home use. Its unique feature is that it reportedly has the texture of ground meat when prepared and can thus be used in a wide variety of foods. Construction of the plant was completed in 1984, but the plant had not yet begun operating.

The process consumes large quantities of ethanol alcohol which is very expensive in Peru. About 97 percent of the alcohol is recovered, but the 3 percent consumed still increases the cost of the final product to the point that it cannot yet be successfully marketed in Peru. Pescaperu officials hoped to begin production at the plant in early 1985.

Peru has only a small livestock and poultry industry. Feed grains have to be imported, making it costly to raise both livestock and poultry in Peru. As a result, fish is the only inexpensive animal protein available to feed the country's rapidly growing population. There is a great demand, however, for meat and poultry. Pescaperu officials decided that the marine beef technology would be a way of converting

the country's abundant fishery resources to a product that can be used in various meat and poultry dishes.

Home Preparation

Marine beef is a product that the average Peruvian consumer may find convenient and easy to use. It has a faint smell of alcohol and fish, but this disappears when the product is soaked in water before cooking. The consumer can easily rehydrate marine beef by soaking it in water for about 40 minutes. After rehydration it is rinsed in water a few times and then is ready to use. Marine beef expands to about 5 times its dry weight. It is flavorless and can be used either as a meat "extender" or by itself, usually in food that has sauces to provide the flavor. Bouillon can also be used to flavor it. Pescaperu officials report that the product has been tested in Lima restaurants and that no one detected the substitution of marine beef for the meat or poultry dish ordered.

Raw Material

Marine beef can be made from