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Intelligence

Alaska salmon processors trialing CQF's portable quality-measuring device

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Portable device instantly measures meat quality for a variety of proteins

Salmon processors in Bristol Bay, Alaska, are using a bioelectrical impedance analysis device to measure the quality of their catch as part of a wider commitment to improving product quality.

The Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Association (BBRSDA) is partnering with CQ Foods to reduce shrink and increase the value of seafood for fishermen and the industry's supply chain. Bristol Bay is home to the largest wild salmon fishery in the world.

CQ Foods' CQR 3.0 can instantly measure meat quality for a variety of proteins, like chicken and fish. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game projects landings greater than 36 million sockeye salmon this season, which runs from mid-June through mid-August.

Salmon fishermen and processors will be able to use the resulting product-quality data to refine harvest and handling practices. The CQR 3.0 also provides an alternative method for paying out "chilling bonuses." Most Bristol Bay processors pay extra for chilled fish below a certain temperature, but

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fishermen often must wait until freshly caught fish reaches the proper temperature to qualify for the bonus.

This means wasting time during a short, intense season where many boats will fish over 18 hours per day for three weeks. The additional time helps harvesters' bottom line and improves safety.

"This is another exciting evolution for the Bristol Bay salmon fishery," said BBRSDA Executive Director Andy Wink. "This fishery often provides over half of the world's supply of sockeye salmon, and the CQR holds outstanding potential as a way to further improve fish quality measurements. Bristol Bay is blessed to have an abundant surplus of wild salmon that can be enjoyed across the world, but it's up to us to make sure we're maximizing the freshness of each wild salmon. The fishery has made

tremendous improvements over the past 20 years, as it transitions away from a model where most fish was canned to one where most fish are eventually sold as fresh or frozen fillets but we see this as an opportunity to make the critical quality monitoring processes more efficient and improve overall pack quality."

CQ Foods co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer Keith Cox said Bristol Bay provides the ultimate challenge for this technology.

"This is a very remote fishery with high volume. Our devices have to perform reliably in a wet environment, often with rough seas. They also have to be able to function offline, as the internet is usually unreliable or not available. All of the challenges presented by Bristol Bay were factored into creating the new 3.0 version of the CQR device and analysis platform, all while reducing production costs."

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