

Commentary/Opinion: Seal = Food!

I am including the information because of our past communication and your expressed interest in the need for solid planning and real action on this critically important and longstanding fishing industry issue.

You did not likely hear much on the following information during the DFO organized “**Seal Summit**” but it is a vitally important concept to; 1. Reach full utilization objectives; 2. Develop use for carcass meat; 3. Provide needed food to starving world populations; 4. Create a positive image to combat misinformation, negativity and anti-seal campaigns.



Figure 1: Photo of numerous grey seals hauled out on a beach in Pictou, Nova Scotia (2021).

Background

11 years ago, I met with an industry delegation (several companies and practical all have since closed) and the Federal Minister at that time MP Gail Shea. The discussion revolved around challenges facing the sealing industry which are magnified today. I represented a sealing operation in Conception Bay North, and suggested the need to look at the opportunity to supply nutritional supplements to countries with undernourished populations. I suggested our company could provide bulk edible Omega-3 oil to the program and others could do the same, the end products processed and delivered through “**food assistance and international aid**” delivered by Ottawa. The concept did not receive much support around the table because it was not perceived

as a commercial opportunity “\$\$\$” and here we are today. Good deeds often deliver good results and we all know the sealing industry desperately needs a make over and a positive image.

Current Situation

More people are hungry today than any time in our history. Hundreds of millions are malnourished and 10’s of millions face starvation annually because of the lack of food. Today’s climate change, world conflicts, health pandemics and economic indifferences will only see these numbers increase in the future. There is and will continue to be a global food shortage. I have visited Iceland and witnessed their fishing industry by-product utilization. One process includes drying cod heads and back-bones for markets in Africa and other countries with high temperature climates and lack of refrigeration. The dried cod heads (not to be confused with stockfish) are bulk packaged, shipped by ocean container and distributed to poorer populations. Populations that are impoverished and lack food and nutrition. Iceland has developed and maintained a program which utilizes a low value by-product from its ground fish industry to provide a food product, so desperately needed. Is it profitable, at best break-even with support from the Icelandic government, world food banks and receiving partner countries.

We have a similar opportunity with the worlds largest unutilized protein resource “Seals”. With an estimated combined specie population of 10,000,000 on Canada’s east and arctic coastline there is an ample sustainable resource. ***((And I stress that by reducing the alpha-seal predator population, depleted fish stocks that have not recovered after 30 years of moratorium will have an opportunity to recover. In doing so provide more high-quality food to the worlds increasing population. At the same time our coastal economies will benefit from increased harvesting, processing and sale of fish products))***.



Figure 2: Cod heads air drying in Iceland for distribution to underdeveloped countries that desperately require food.

Inquiry to Federal Government

A few years back (2017) I reached out to Global Affairs regarding the possibility of Canada providing high quality, dry processed food powders to international food aid agencies. It took months of persistent calls and emails to get a response. I include an excerpt below from the extensive email exchange.

OCTOBER 16, 2017

Good afternoon, Bob

First, please allow me to apologize for the delay. I reached out to colleagues with Global Affairs and other departments to discuss the issues that you highlighted.

My colleagues that work with the World Food Program provided an explanation to me on how the food aid program works. Specifically:

Canada's food aid is untied, meaning that we are not required to ship Canadian food overseas as a form of food aid. Instead, Canada makes financial contributions to organizations such as the United Nations World Food Programme or the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. These organizations work around the world, and they are able to source food locally and regionally. This approach has proven to be more cost-effective, as it significantly reduces transport costs and increases the speed of delivery. In short, untied food aid has meant that more vulnerable can get the food they need as soon as possible.

WFP's policy is to buy food as close as possible to where it is needed, therefore it procures food locally, or regionally wherever possible. I strongly encourage you to read WFP's 'Doing Business with the United Nations World Food Programme', which is linked from their website: <http://www1.wfp.org/do-business-with-wfp>. WFP's site indicates that consideration of using new foods by WFP will depend on its suitability for use in WFP's operations taking into account the evidence-base, product acceptability, nutritional value, quality and safety, procurement and logistic considerations. For additional assistance for, please contact: NewSuppliers@wfp.org.

I also reached out the officials within the department that work with China on trade issues, as well as officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and they conveyed the same difficulties/challenges that you have highlighted below. I am truly sorry that I have not been able to help further at this time. Should you have any further questions that I can help to answer, please let me know.

Kind regards,

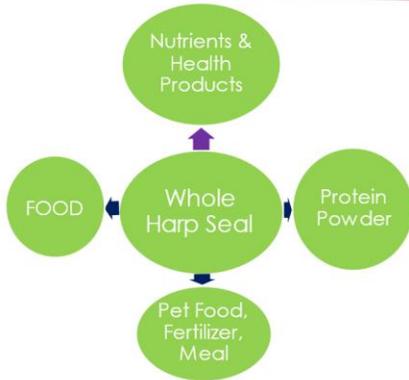
Global Affairs Canada | Affaires mondiales Canada Gouvernement du Canada | Government of Canada

So, Canada would rather provide money to governments and agencies because it is more practical, cost efficient and works better for the partner agencies. **Cash is King!** We have all heard the horror stories of mismanaged monetary donations, corruption within receiving organizations & the administration costs outweighing actual food delivered to families in need. I concur, cash is always better for administration purposes but is it better for those in need? I suggest that we “think outside the box” and facilitate opportunities to do better, to do good and

add to the monetary donations already being made. There is an opportunity to develop a well researched food program to utilize the nutrient rich seal resource in a form that would be acceptable to those in dire need. Other more lucrative product opportunities from the resource will undoubtedly occur simultaneously.

PowerPoint Slides from previous public presentations;

There are many uses for seal 64



Natural Wild Product	✓
Abundance (largest populations)	✓
Healthy-Nutritious Raw Material	✓
Low Saturated Fat, High Protein, Iron	✓
Zero Greenhouse/Carbon Emissions	✓
Humane Regulated Harvest	✓
Established-Unutilized Quota	✓
Balanced Ecosystem Benefits	✓

World populations require quality food 66



Seal Meat Nutrient Powder



Opportunities for development of domestic products

We must put our thinking caps on and see what we can be processed from seal meat. Current prices for all food commodities in Canada and elsewhere provide a real opportunity to produce commercially viable products.

Cost of meat products



This beef product is retail priced at \$48.48/kg.

More than the price of an entire seal??

Opportunity exists to utilize seal for food products locally and internationally. A healthier, more nutritious meat with options for secondary processing.

Next Action

Do not limit the ideas, the product concepts and pathways to utilize this abundant and sustainable coastal resource. Look further afield than the primary historical products. Seek new investors, new industry partners and expansion while working towards market accessibility where opportunities exist. We are not likely to change the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) anytime soon and the Europeans have long forgotten about their ties to this island in the Atlantic that was claimed as a colony, fought over, settled and subsequently developed because of its ocean riches, including seal. There is an opportunity, likely the only opportunity to improve chances of fish stock recovery, as past commercial moratoriums have not worked. The outcome can be positive, life giving and one of humanity.

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