



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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COMMITTEE URGES CONTINUING FISHERY RESEARCH AS AID TO HUMAN WELL-BEING

A jar full of enticing cookies made of fish flour and a laboratory report on the depressant effects of fish oil on the cholesterol level of the blood stream may be entirely foreign to each other but they both "add up to the same thing"--

Or so believes the American Fisheries Advisory Committee (Department of the Interior) which recently (October 7-9) held its semiannual meeting at Old Point Comfort, Virginia.

The consensus at that meeting was that there was scarcely any limit to the values the American home could get from fish and fishery products if the Nation had a broad program of fundamental and applied research on these products. Add the possibilities of new industrial products to this, the Committee reasoned, and the importance of the program can readily be seen.

Comments on the properties of fish and its by-products showed that research has proved that fish protein contains all the amino acids essential to the human body but that little is known about the other properties of fish protein; that research has measured the growth factor in fish meal used as feed for farm animals but knows little about the growth factors in fishery products used as human food; that such things as the cholesterol discovery, if clinical tests prove present indicated values, will be of incalculable benefit to human happiness and the cost of research will seem infinitesimal.

It was also pointed out at the meeting that in the days when fish liver oils were the main source of some vitamins researchers did not continue to probe for other values. The result was that when synthetic vitamins crowded the fish livers off the market the human being got his vitamins but lost other values now known to be in the oil.

Because of these facts and numerous others which were discussed the Advisory Committee recommended to the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, that a continuous research program be carried out for new secrets, new products, and new uses--that research learn everything possible about the protein, oil, and ash content of each of the 240 commercially

important fish and shellfish and the thousand or more fishery products which are used by man; it urged that the fatty acids be given more study, that the quantity and types of vitamins, minerals and growth factors be studied thoroughly; that basic research no longer be content with one phase but that it keep compiling data which might have future values.

The Committee noted that a fishery should be managed in such a way that it can yield the required amounts of fish year after year but to do this there must be adequate biological knowledge. The biological report on Atlantic menhaden, which showed that the present rate of catch was all that the resource could stand was especially significant in view of the potentials which are opening up for fish oils.

It agreed that more biological information was necessary on all species. For menhaden it was agreed that there should be more knowledge about the characteristics and geographic boundaries of each subgroup which contributes to the Atlantic stock; that there should be greater studies on just how the development of estuarine areas into homesites or industrial areas will affect the future supplies of menhaden; more information on the factors in the ocean environment which affects the behavior, distribution and abundance of Atlantic menhaden.

Some of the recent biological findings which the Bureau passed on to the Committee included the report of a new chemical barrier which the Bureau developed to protect oysters from predators. Considerable interest was evidenced in the summaries given on oyster mortality in Delaware Bay and the mortality from the starfish invasion of Long Island Sound.

The Committee also expressed approval of the announcement that biological research on the blue crab would be accelerated and an effort made to determine the reason for the wide fluctuations in blue crab populations from year to year.

The Committee declared itself in favor of programs which would open up future sales opportunities, not only for products now in general use but for new or underutilized materials.

It listed as a major problem the disparity of the regulations which a producer of domestic fishery products must follow compared with those followed by some foreign fisheries which ship their products to the American market.

It urged that the Bureau keep the disposal of atomic wastes at sea under close scrutiny.

It indicated its support of the suggestion of the Association of Food and Drug Officials of the United States to the States that fishery products be kept at zero degrees temperature but urged the Bureau to work with the various States in realistic application of such laws or regulations.

Other topics which came in for discussion included rough fish in the Great Lakes, the national oceanographic program now in the advanced planning stage, the rising tide of imports, effects of pollution and pesticides upon fisheries and the

threat to those fisheries dependent upon estuarine habitat which is now being otherwise utilized or changed.

One feature of the meeting was the area analyses given by seven members of the Committee. Each of these seven, with an intimate knowledge of the difficulties and the potentials of the fishery resources in his area, relayed this information to members of the Bureau staff and to fellow Committee members.

These area reports were given by James S. Carlson, Boston, Mass.—New England; David H. Hart, Cape May, New Jersey—Middle Atlantic; William P. Ballard, Norfolk Va.—Chesapeake Bay; Lawrence W. Strasburger, Metairie, La.—Gulf of Mexico; Lawrence Calvert, Seattle, Wash.—Pacific Northwest; Arthur S. Sivertson, Duluth Minn.—Great Lakes; Ralph E. Carr, Kansas City, Mo.—Inland fisheries.

Matters presented by Bureau personnel dealt with Middle Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay fisheries, various phases of the oyster problem, various phases of the menhaden fishery, starfish research, research on blue crab, utilization of blue crab meat and fish oil research and possibilities.

The American Fisheries Advisory Committee was created by the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act to provide for the enhancement of the domestic fishing industry through various research programs, market reporting, and market development.

Members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to advise the Department on matters pertaining to the American fisheries. The authorized membership of the Committee at present is 20; there is one vacancy and one member in the process of being appointed. Members of the Committee are:

William Ballard, President, Ballard Fish and Oyster Company, Inc., Norfolk Virginia; Lawrence Calvert, President, San Juan Fishing and Packing Company, Seattle, Washington; James S. Carlson, Treasurer, Baker, Boies and Watson Company Boston, Massachusetts; Ralph E. Carr, President, Mid-Central Fish Company, Kansas City, Missouri; Harold F. Cary, Van Camp Seafood, Inc., Long Beach, California; Chris Dahl, Kayler-Dahl Fish Company, Petersburg, Alaska; Ray H. Full, Treasurer Kishman Fish Company, Vermilion, Ohio; David H. Hart, Cape May, New Jersey; H. R. Humphreys, Jr., President, Standard Products Company, White Stone, Virginia; Leon S. Kenney, President, Pinellas Seafood Company, St. Petersburg, Florida; John Lewis, President, Twin City Fishermen's Coop. Ass'n., Inc., Morgan City, Louisiana; Donald P. Loker, Vice President, Star-Kist Foods, Inc., Terminal Island California; James McPhillips, President, McPhillips Packing Corporation, Mobile Alabama; Arthur H. Mendonca, President, F. E. Booth, Inc., San Francisco, California; J. Richards Nelson, Madison, Connecticut; Moses B. Pike, General Manager, Holmes Packing Corporation, Eastport, Maine; Harry F. Sahlman, Sahlman Sea Food, Fernandina Beach, Florida; Arthur S. Sivertson, Sivertson Brothers Fisheries, Duluth, Minnesota; Lawrence W. Strasburger, Metairie, Louisiana.

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