

PFI to sell U.S. pollock

PETERSBURG--Three containers of frozen pollock fillets have been shipped from the Petersburg plant of Icicle Seafoods, Inc., it was announced by Robert M. Thorstenson, president.

The 100,000 pound shipment is the first part of a 4 million pound pollock fillet order to be filled over the next 12 months, according to Icicle Vice President for Sales E.A. Ruthford. The order is destined for a U.S. distributor.

Although pollock, a species of bottom fish similar to hake or flounder, is as common as salmon, tuna or halibut worldwide, it is comparatively new to U.S. markets. It was once heavily fished by Russian and Japanese fishermen operating just offshore before the 200 mile limit was established. "Demand for this new product is a direct result of increased production inside the new 200 mile limit," Thorstenson said. "The State of Alaska also deserves much credit for helping develop this new fishery," he added.

About 20 million pounds of unprocessed pollock will be needed to process the initial order, according to Icicle Executive V.P. for Production Thomas E. Thompson. About 100 people are involved in the filleting operation. "Our Petersburg plant will go to two shifts per day immediately to double our filleting capacity, and we have new filleting machinery on order that will further increase our processing capability," Thompson said.

In addition to serving the domestic U.S. market for pollock, Icicle is negotiating to export the fillets overseas from its Petersburg plant.