

# NANA seafood prospers



Kotzebue chums are lifted from Dick Norton's boat on their way to processing at NANA Seafoods.

By Bill Hess  
Tundra Times

During a summer when botulism scares and price strikes have created hardships for salmon fishermen and packing companies alike, it seems that NANA Seafoods Corporation has found a way to keep the local market producing.

Calvin Moto, a NANA stockholder and manager of the seafoods corporation, explains that the corporation was established by NANA Regional Corporation last year because stockholders who were commercial fishermen did not feel they were getting the right price for their fish.

NANA Seafoods was set up as a non-profit corporation, which allows it to offer fishermen a higher price for fish than it otherwise would, Moto noted. This year, NANA Seafoods has been paying 49 cents a pound for the chums which pour through Kotzebue Sound on their way into the streams which will take them into their Northwest Arctic spawning waters.

There are 176 commercial fishermen licensed to fish the Sound, a majority of whom are NANA stockholders. Of these, Moto and Norman Albert, an operations management specialist of Rainbow Fisheries, Inc., who is working with NANA, figure 60 percent are selling their fish to NANA.

In addition, Moto points out that by operating the plant, some 65-70 people are able to find jobs who otherwise would have probably remained unemployed. "Over 90 percent of them are stockholders," he adds.

Last year, 3.4 million pounds of salmon, more than the entire catch in the salmon fisheries of the Lower 48, were taken from Kotzebue Sound. Working around the clock, NANA Seafoods was able to pack up to 120,000 pounds in a single shift. The run this year is not expected to be

but the plant has improved its operations to allow it to handle fish more effectively.

Moto once worked in a tire factory, and with Albert's help, has set up a fish beheading, gutting and packing in ice process that incorporates the same type of production techniques that mass producing automobile tires does.

When fishermen pull their boats up to the dock, there are two cranes to help them unload their boats quickly. They can either be packed in ice for immediate shipment out on the spot, or be transported rapidly inside the plant where they follow the assembly-line type process until they are cleaned and frozen fish, headed for market.

The canning scare is not affecting the Kotzebue fish, as they are all being prepared for the frozen and fresh fish market. Most will go to Japan.

A Japanese transport ship is waiting in deep water out of sight from Kotzebue to load the already packed fish as they leave NANA.

According to Albert there is plenty of demand for Kotzebue chum. "This is a unique product. The Kotzebue chum is a completely different fish. It is large, bright, and has a high oil content."