

The Grocer

Focus On: Fish

By Grace Duncan (grace.duncan@thegrocer.co.uk)

Publishing: 16 November 2024

Advertising deadline: 1 November 2024

Submissions deadline: 25 October 2024

UK fishing has been in troubled waters lately. In February, UK Fisheries CEO Jane Sandell said Humberside (home to the UK's second largest fishing industry after Scotland) had been "devastated" by Brexit and called for a change of government at the general election. Now, under Labour, has anything changed? Several investments have been announced by retailers including Morrisons and Aldi in recent months and Grimsby – home to 70% of England's fish processing infrastructure – has received £11m in support; how is it being spent? What are suppliers, retailers and the government doing to secure a brighter future for UK fishing?

Grimsby: The Grocer is heading to Grimsby, home of UK fishing and many of the country's biggest processors, to find out what's being done to secure a brighter future for the industry. How is investment being spent? How is the local fishing industry, which employs more than 10k people, recovering? And what's going on in other UK fishing hot spots like Scotland and the Southwest?

Imports, exports and the UK's picky fish tastes: Calls for processors to handle more domestically caught fish such as herring and mackerel – most of which ends up exported to markets like Norway and the Netherlands where they are more popular – to make the UK less reliant on imports of species like cod stepped up during the protracted Brexit negotiations. Has there been any change?

The battered fish boom: Battered fish is booming, with volumes jumping by 64.6% in the past two years [Kantar]. Why is this? What products have been launched? And what species are processors battering? Does cod still rule supreme (if so, where's it coming from)? What about haddock, basa and other species?

How much Russian-caught fish are UK retailers and chippies selling? UK Fisheries say roughly one in 12 fish portions sold in UK chippies were caught by UK trawlers before 2020; by February, that figure was one in 25, with Norway, Iceland and even Russia (overtly or covertly) exporting more to the UK. Has there been any change since then? What is the government doing about this?

Sustainability and certification schemes: This feature will also explore the importance of sustainability and accreditation schemes such as MSC to consumers, retailers, processors and the UK fishing fleet. How important is sustainability to consumers? What does MSC accreditation mean? How can sustainability be improved?

Farmed v wild: This feature will explore the debate around farmed and wild fish products (particularly salmon), with boxes exploring the steps the Alaskan wild salmon industry is taking to become more sustainable and adapt to climate change (and justify wild-caught salmon's higher price); and the legal action several farmed salmon producers face over alleged "cartel behaviour".