



Russia's Kamchatka sockeye salmon fishery is the sole salmon fishery on the site so far.

Photo: WSC - Mihael Blikshteyn

FIP tracking website exceeds expectations, shifts focus toward Europe

Nine months in, FisheryProgress.org has more than half of the world's fisheries improvement projects on board, organizers say.

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If anyone wants to sell fish in this global market, sourcing from a fishery is, like traceability, a key requirement -- and FisheryProgress.org is hoping to help bridge the gap between fishery improvement projects (FIPs), suppliers and retailers.

Less than a year in, the group is already exceeding its own expectations.

Since the site's launch this past October, 57 of the 100 or so FIPs around the globe have begun reporting on it, a milestone FishChoice Director of Strategic Partnerships Kristin Sherwood said they weren't expecting to reach for several more months.



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The goal is to have all FIPs reporting to the site by 2018.

Sherwood acknowledged it can be cumbersome at first, when the FIP has to enter all of the necessary information into the database.

"We require them to have a lot of information, because the purpose of the site is to really comprehensively track progress and it really takes time to sit down and input all of the information," Sherwood told IntraFish. "But once that work is done, it's just a matter of reporting. The heavy lift takes place in

the beginning."

All of the data is reviewed by Fisheries Scientist Albert Arthur, who helps FIPs collect

and input information and reviews the information thoroughly before the public can view it.

The site has more than 600 registered users -- those who want to take a detailed look at the FIPs have to register -- and Sherwood said about 40 percent are suppliers, processors and retailers.

Easing the burden

One of those is Seattle-area-based Orca Bay Seafoods. John Steinmetz, vice president of business development at the company, told IntraFish the site has already saved him the time and energy of constantly checking several sites to report progress to retail customers.

Before, Steinmetz would have to check several websites, such as Sustainability Fisheries Partnership, WWF and FishChoice to garner detailed updates about certain FIPs.

"It's hard to keep track when your retailer wants updates," he said. "There was either no information available or you had to go to multiple websites."



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Now, WWF has shut down its reporting site and SFP is in the process of shutting its down, directing everyone to Fisheryprogress.org.

The site "is pretty technical, but as someone in the fishing industry, and not a fisheries scientist, you can understand it," Steinmetz said. "We're here to process and sell fish and it's good to have a resource that is doing the scientific work behind it and it's all in one place."

While he's often "kind of the middle person" between retailers and Fisheryprogress.org, collecting the information and showing the retailers, he said he's getting fewer and fewer requests for fishery updates as more retailers are going directly to the site.

"For me, it's another report that I have to generate, so it's a big time saver and it's good information," he said.

Focusing on Europe

The site is doing swimmingly in the Americas and Asia, Sherwood said, both with registered users and FIPs. There are a number of FIPs from South America, including the Peruvian anchovy FIP, one of the largest fisheries in the world.

There are also an abundance of tuna FIPs reporting -- about 12 -- but just one salmon FIP. The group has been working with the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) Crab Council, which is urging all of its FIPs in Asia to begin reporting by year's end.

Now, the group is turning its focus toward Europe.

Fisheryprogress.org has begun working with UK-based non-profits, who are helping connect the site with British seafood companies.

The group is hoping to garner more interest from EU FIPs, as well.

"We're working really hard on increasing the number of [reporting] FIPs in Europe," she said.

Currently, only one or two Irish FIPs are reporting on the continent and "that's a gap we'd like to fill."

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