PUHA AGM 2024

September 26, 2024
Zoom

Quick recap

The team discussed financial reports, industry challenges, marketing activities, and operational matters including budget outlooks, the board of directors and best practices. They explored potential collaborations and projects, such as kelp restoration and ecosystem-based management initiatives. The meeting also covered regulatory updates, marketing initiatives and future plans for surveys and research in the sea urchin fishery.

Next steps

- Mike to send an official request to DFO regarding reducing the size limit for red and green urchins by 5mm.
- PUHA to discuss combining the green and red urchin IFMPs with DFO, including potentially moving the green urchin fishery start date to August 1st.
- PUHA to encourage members to participate in DFO's fisheries modernization consultations.
- PUHA to follow up with Oceanwise on collaborating on kelp restoration projects.
- PUHA to work with Lynn Lee and Parks Canada on potential surveys of closed fishing areas in Gwaii Haanas.
- Lawrence and Ron to form a committee to work on the Buy BC program application for domestic marketing initiatives.
- Ron to create a kelp restoration sub-page on the PUHA website to compile information from various projects.
- PUHA to explore sending a representative to the Oceanwise kelp summit on October 25th.
- Lawrence to follow up on details of the "divers catch seafood gala" event planned for September 20th 2025 in Steveston.
- PUHA to continue discussions with DFO on potential red sea urchin surveys.
- Lynn Lee to follow up with DFO re: accommodating PUHA/Haida in benthic habitat surveys.
- Chloe/CFIA to share results of urchin PSP toxicity studies when available.

Attendance

Full meeting

Mike Featherstone, Karolyn Mufford, Geoff Krause, Tim Joys, David McRae, Darin Macy, Conor Lindsay, John Lindsay, Bob Hegedus, Alfa Wong, Bonnie Dennis, George Sdennis, Grayson Russel, Kyle Davies, Ron Ross, Michael (Boyd?),

Afternoon Only

Erin Wylie, Lyanne Curtis, Christina Burridge, Grant Dovey, Lindsay Gardiner, Thom Liptrot, Carolyn Bateman, Maximillion Wolfe (Oceanwise), Chloe Shamash-McLauglin, Lynn Lee, Eric Baron (Parks Canada- Strategic Mgr for Ecosystem-based Mngt)

Minutes

Geoff shared the agenda, which included afternoon presentations. The team briefly discussed an earthquake before Mike officially started the meeting reminding everyone to mute themselves when not speaking.

2023 AGM Minutes

Minutes from the 2023 AGM were included for review as part of the notification package this year.

Motion to Adopt the 2023 AGM Minutes: 1°: Bob Hegedus. 2°: John Lindsay. AIF. Carried

2023 Financial Report

Mike led the discussion on the 2023 financial report, which showed an increase in expenditures but overall stability.

Karolyn summarized the organization's financial situation, including term deposits and assets.

George asked about having financials audited but advice from various accountants has been against that as it is expensive and not necessary thus far as the accounts are all pretty straight forward.

Motion to Adopt the Financial Report: 1°: John Lindsay. 2°: Lawrence Anderson. AIF. Carried

Presidents Report

The 2023/24 season had a slow start, for both red and green sea urchin fisheries, largely due to the depressed value of the Yen, which decreased demand in our largest market, Japan. As well, increased competition from Mexico, Peru, Chile and Tasmania impacted other international sea urchin markets. In recent years, demand has been highest in the spring and summer, when the other fisheries are not active, whereas in the past December was the time of highest demand. The US market basically shuts everyone, including US producers, out when Mexico comes on stream in July-August. That market is however wide open for Canada though in the spring.

Despite the slow start for the red fishery, overall landings beat out the previous 3 seasons. In the south coast 80% of the TAC was achieved, whereas the north coast only 33% of the TAC was achieved. This is a reversal in trends between south and north. Regarding prices, I would say generally prices have been slowly trending higher, in spite of the market challenges.

For the green fishery, after the slow start in September, there was a big bounce in landings in October. Overall, though, the season was quite challenging and at year end, only 94% of the TAC was achieved. Increased sales to China offset the drop in demand from Japan.
Financially, PUHA is on solid ground, even with the current challenges we have faced. Balancing Revenues with Expenditures, while trying to meet commitments to Science, Marketing and Government consultations can at times be challenging. Nevertheless, PUHA has consistently averaged small Surplus's over many years, while supporting these programs.

The expectations for the new season seem slightly more positive, although the market is still weak overall. I think the biggest challenge for the red fishery is how to increase landings and effort in the north coast. For the green fishery, the Yen has strengthened from the lows, and hopefully this will reflect in stronger demand.

At the end of the day, good quality urchins will sell in the market and return the best prices.

The past season saw a big increase in other stakeholder groups inquiring about Kelp Reforestation, and we will have some presentations on Kelp Reforestation/Restoration efforts and projects this afternoon. It crossed my mind that we should consider renaming our Association the "KPS" the Kelp Protection Society.

This afternoon, we will also have a presentation from the DFO Fisheries Modernization group, this group is looking at licence changes, such as owner operator and corporate ownership, following the Atlantic Canada structure. PUHA reps are attending these consultation meetings, and I thought having the group present here at our AGM would help our understanding of the problems they are trying to address

PUHA reps are also participating in the Kitkatla Inlet AOI Advisory Committee, this is an offshoot of the Northern Shelf Bio Region MPA consultations. I will say that so far there is no meat on the bones in any of these consultation processes, so little to report at this point.

PUHA supported the development of the Best Practices Manual, which is now completed and being reviewed, Lawrence will give us an update on that and the further proposed initiatives to support and promote safety.

I have just returned from the Seafood Expo Asia I Singapore and Geoff will provide our marketing updates later this afternoon.

Motion to Accept the President's Report: 1°: Dave McRae. 2°: Lawrence Anderson. AIF. Carried

D&D Report

Red Sea Urchin Fishery

The sea urchin industry faced challenges in the 2023-2024 season due to decreased demand and increased competition. Production from February through April was better than the past few years but fell off a cliff in May.

Only 33% of the NC TAC was landed with weather and fleet dynamics both causing issues. The NC protocol initiated 2 years seems to be working and the Kelp Restoration Project went as planned.

More than 80% of the SC TAC was landed with lots of variability between months, December being the most disappointing. The live market in Steveston is active with landings almost every Friday. Port McNeil is showing first major signs of sea otter predation on urchins. Landings in Campbell River South (Cape Mudge) were low because of quality issues from low feed ration (no kelp). GSU are taking over shallows and forcing RSU deeper. Kelsey Bay areas were steady while comments suggest Victoria and Sooke abundance is healthy.

Landings overall were better than the past 4 seasons despite weather being an issue coast-wide. A lack of divers and declining recruitment of new guys remain problematical.

Fleet comprising 8 vessels has again started up on NC around Banks Island while the SC coast harvest started August 1 around Victoria, Sidney and Nanaimo. That fleet is now working out of Campbell River and working north towards Kelsey Bay.

Geen Sea Urchin Fishery

93% of the TAC was landed by the end off February despite a slow September because of competition from other suppliers and a nascent recession in Japan. Fishing picked up again in October and carried on through February. Operations tarted again in August as vessels worked to finish off tabs and 94% of the TAC was taken overall. Biomass appears to be increasing in all QMA's though Sidnet to Sooke has issues with quality this year, possibly because of declining ration

Slow start agin this year as vessels workign out of Campbell River are testing the market.

Mike Boyd was not available to give GSU fishery report so it was just included as part of the D&D report.

Motion to accept D&D Report: 1°: Lawrence Anderson. 2°: Bob Hegedus. AIF. Carried.

South Coast Report

David McRae reported on the mixed quality of green sea urchins in the South Coast fishery.

The team discussed the potential for extending the live market and scheduling fishing in certain areas, but no specific decisions were made.

There has been a good start so far this year though quality is mixed. Numbers are up in Sidney-Victoria so a quota increase is advised. This is in contrast to Campbewll River where numbers are down so we might want to look elsewhere for more quota- maybe the WCVI?

There are lots of sublegals (GSU or RSU?) on the Sunshine Coast, they may be suffering from arrested growth.

There was some discussion about shifting more effort to the North Coast post Christmas. One problem with that is thathere are limited options available when the North is weathered out.

Motion to accept South Coast Report: 1°: John Lindsay. 2°: Kyle Davies. AIF. Carried.

North Coast Report

Bob Hegedus reported on the NC results, basically reflecting what was included in theD&D Report for the area. The weather up north was real bad, most especially in December while sea otters have extended their range up to Aristazebel and the Moore Islets etc. There was some thought that kelp might be down a bit as well. The overall effect of this has been the areas actually being fished have become more concentrated leading to local depletion.

The South Coast and North Coast fishery reports both highlighted the impact of weather conditions and otters on the fishery.

Motion to accept North Coast Report: 1°: Lawrence Anderson. 2°: Dave McRae. AIF. Carried.

Social Media and Website Update

Ron provided an update on the website and social media activities, including the translation/subtitling of videos into Japanese and Chinese. Most of the clips have also been shortened so they are more in line with today's preferrences. He also showcased our Instagram and Facebook profiles, which feature a mix of videos and images. Mike and Ron discussed recent marketing activities, including using Instagram to share content with influencers and engage with followers, and the process of sharing user-generated content on social media.

The idea of forming a committee to explore funding opportunities through the Buy BC Partnership program was proposed, with Mike agreeing and suggesting that Lawrence could further discuss this during the marketing session later in the day. The next application window comes up on January 25, 2025. The team expressed some enthusiasm for the proposal, with Mike looking forward to the application process in January.

Bonnie Dennis is on the ball when it comes to social media and could probably add some value to the exercise.

Motion to accept Social Media and Website Update: 1°: L Anderson. 2°: T. Joys. AIF. Carried.

Dive Industry Best Practices

Lawrence presented a best practices manual for the dive industry, which was approved by Worksafe and is expected to be implemented through Fish Safe. Bob Hegedus requested a copy of the manual as soon as it is available. It might be a good idea to pdf the thing so it can be distributed electronically.

Motion to accept industry Best Practices Report: 1°: Kyle Davies. 2°: T. Joys. AIF. Carried.

Processors Rreport

Alfa outlined challenges faced by their product most especially in Japan due to a difficult market outlook again because of the cheap yen but also increased competition from South America and a shift towards higher quality products. This shift along with their low costs is giving them a competitive advantage.

Sales of Canadian product in Japan and Hong Kong are running at about 25% of previous years. Japan is moving away from lower grade bulk purchases which gives some advantage to South Coast fisheries as they have a quicker response to variable orders. Sales to Hong Kong are suffering in part because of the ongoing exodus of middle class residents but also because there is now more cross border shopping happening on the mainland where prices are cheaper. Of course the CIFER issues in China are still not resolved meaning China remains closed to processed RSU. The new tariffs on the Electric vehicles and solar panels from China are not going to help. Health certs do not, and will not, help until China Customs corrects the latin name they are using.

He agreed things are off to a slow start this year with Paladin maxing out at about 30,000 lbs per week without discounting. The US is still being dominated by Mexican production but he is expecting their quality to fall off dramatically by Christmas.

The focus this year should be on higher quality product(s) as the lower grades are simply not moving so are going straight to freezing. He did confirm that they are segregating product at plants by boat and by holding time so Day 2 product is processed before Day 1 product. The load(s) from each boat are graded which can then be catalogued and tracked.

Motion to accept Processors Report: 1°: Bob Hegedus. 2°: George Dennis. AIF. Carried.

Budget 2024-25

Mike presented and discussed the proposed budgets for the Red and Green urchin fisheries with the Red side showing a surplus of $3,500 and the Green side a surplus of $950.
(Mike- could you forward copis of the RSU and GSU budgets so I can plug them in?)

Motion to accept Budget(s): 1°: Lawrence Anderson. 2°: Kyle Davies. AIF. Carried.

Election of Board of Directors

Mike presented the board of directors and their responsibilities. The current board: Mike Featherstone, David McRae, Alfa Wong, John Lindsay, Bob Hegedus, Cory Jackson, Mike Boyd and Kyle Davies, agreed to stand for re-election, Lawrence. Anderson agreed to join the Board.

Motion to accept slate of Directors. 1°: George Dennis. 2°: Lawrence Anderson . AIF. Carried.

End of Morning Session

Fisheries Discussion

Lyanne provided an update on the surveys, mentioning some issues with the collaborative agreement. Erin Wylie proposed combining the IFMP for the Green and Red Sea Urchin fisheries as a way to reduce the paper involved to streamline the management process of the two fisheries starting August 1st 2025, but Mike raised concerns about market quality and suggested adjusting the start date.

There was also some discussion on decreasing the size limit for both species.

Lyanne shared the Green Sea Urchin stock status report. The data set on the Stephenson Islets off Port McNeil and Fulford Reef off Victoria dates back to 1995 for monitoring population trends. She provided details on the dive survey findings, including - notably- finding a large residual population of large Sunflower Seastar (*Pycnopodia helianthoides*) population in Knight Inlet. She also discussed the use of new digital calipers for measurements.

BC Seafood Alliance update

Christina discussed Worksafe BC's new requirements on the registration requirements of fishing enterprises and the lack of clarity that follows on from that.

The NDP government also supports the owner-operator transition so we are more like the Maritimes but apparently are not fully aware fo the implications for BC fisheries. She will work with Lindsay Gardiner to check with fisheries on the risk and benefit profiles each fishery has.

Christina also mentioned there is an update coming for the CIFER situation as the Canadian Embassy in Beijing is going to try a new approach.

She also suggested an update on the urchin PSP testing requirement could be coming soon. She is having a meeting with some officials in Ottawa and working with Global Affairs to amend the 2004 Agreement on Shellfish Testing between Canada and the EU, an agreement which mistakenly included Echinoderms in the general shellfish category along with bivalves so they require the testing.

Fisheries Modernization

Lindsay Gardiner introduced Mark Quintenro and outlined five topics: advisory boards, licensing transparency, socioeconomic data, foreign ownership, and owner-operator policies. They seek feedback on engagement, priorities, and optimal outcomes. Mike discussed the fishery's unique quota system and D&D's role. He addressed foreign ownership concerns and opposed an Atlantic-style fishery. John (Lindsay) raised access issues for new entrants. Lindsay Gardiner acknowledged considering owner-operator clauses and loan boards.

Bonnie Dennis emphasized the need to consider multi-generational families in a different context than corporate concentration.

Lindsay Gardiner announced a Kelp Summit workshop on October 25 at which she will be presenting on dive fisheries and another virtual one (TEAMS) on Fisheries Modernization tentatively scheduled for the 10 of February.

Lindsay Gardiner will send Geoff a summary document and engage wider audiences.

PSP Toxicity

Chloe presented a summary of her study on PSP toxicity in sea urchins, with Carolyn Bateman from the Candian Food Inspection Agency Burnaby lab also contributing. She discussed the challenges in the certification process and the need for faster results, highlighting the importance of the green urchin as an economically important species in BC waters and a traditional food source for coastal 1st nations.

Chloe presented her work on validating testing for more matrices, such as urchin tissue, to ensure the safety of consuming ocean vertebrates. She also discussed her research on segregating the uni from the rest fo the viscera so they can be individually assessed, examining the feeding methods for the green urchin, the tendency of urchins to become opportunistic feeders when starved, so various scenarios can be included in the upcoming PSP trials. The results of the study could inform the program to modify their surveillance requirements to support export certification.

She is to include a link to a recent Tasmainian Study that examines the state of knowledge on it.

Kelp Restoration and Biochar Deployment

Bruce Bradley discussed using Biochar to improve kelp restoration scalability and sustainability. He proposed leveraging the urchin fleet's reach to identify restoration sites and deploy Biochar-attached kelp. The team plans to conduct kelp surveys, catalog suitable locations, and trial Biochar-based kelp cultivation with the Vancouver Island Salt Company. PUHA is wiling to collaborate with Bruse and the First nation he is working with to help things along.

Kelp Restoration Projects, Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management and Collaboration Opportunities

Mike introduced the topic of kelp restoration projects,

Max Wolfe from Ocean Wise discussed his role as a sea forestation coordinator and outlined his team's main goals. Max highlighted the challenges faced in maintaining kelp forests, particularly in the Salish Sea, and shared their experience with a restoration project on Mistaken Island.

He also discussed the PSAC Kelp nursery, the process of kelp cultivation, and the team's main project this year, a Capstan Island *Macrocystis* Restoration project. Max expressed interest in combining ocean harvesting with kelp restoration and mentioned several ongoing projects. The possibility of collaboration with Mike's team was also discussed. There is a Kelp Summit scheduled in Vancouver on October 25 at which PUHA representatives will be welcome.

The conversation ended with a presentation “Nurturing Seafood to Grow” by Lynn Lee and her group, with Eric Barron from Parks Canada joining to discuss potential collaboration on ecosystem-based management. The meeting discussed Lynn Lee's ecosystem-based fisheries management project in Haida Gwaii, involving urchin removal and kelp recovery. After the initial treatment, kelp abundance increased , then declined and then increased dramatically. It has again now declined right back to pre-treatment levels, possibly because GSU abundance has increased dramatically. Challenges with funding and climate change impacts were highlighted and it was noted that increasing acidification and warming both increase urchin feeding rates.

Mike raised concerns about overgrowth of urchin abundance and suggested reopening some closed areas for urchin harvesting. Geoff shared data on the Russian urchin fishery's apparent mitigation effect preventing the development of urchin barrens in the Kuriles. Lynn and Lyanne discussed planning benthic habitat surveys for MPA research. The rapid return of kelp and associated species post-restoration on the Murchison Island project was noted.

Marketing

Geoff outlined the marketing program and associated budget allocation(s). The budget includes about $ 45K each year for contractors as well as $50 K, $80K and $58 K for travel and $7 K, $10 K and $10K for booth expenses for each of the 3 years respectively. Once administration costs are included at about 10%, the all-in totals each year comes in at about $104 K, $153 K and $125 K of which the program covers 55% (-ish). Those numbers sound kind of scary I know but the way it is structured, PUHA is in for about $34 K/year with members and processors contributing about $ 31 k and $37 K respectively over the 3 years for part of their travel costs.

Travel	Japan	Hong Kong	Singapore	South Korea	USA	Barcelona	China
Yr 1	0 x 0	1.5 x 4	2.5 x 7	0 x 0	1.5 c 5	2 x 6	1 x 7
Yr 2	4 x 4	1.5 x 4	3.5 x 5	3.5 x 4	1.5 x 5	1.5 x 6	1.5 x 5
Yr 3	0 x 0	1.5 x 4	3.5 x 5	2.5 x 4	1.5 x 5	1.5 x 6	1.5 x 5

Budget Component	Contract	Travel	ODPC	Sum	Admin	Total
Yr 1	$37,600	$50,345	$7,125	$95,070	$9,507	$104,577
Yr 2	$49,030	$80,500	$10,125	$139,655	$13,966	$153,621
Yr 3	$46,050	$57,388	$10,125	$113,563	$11,356	$124,919
note: ODPC = Other Direct Project Costs						$383,116

Budget Sourcing	Budget	AMP	PUHA	Members	Processors		Sum industry
Yr 1	$95,070	$53,317	$27,761	$7,993	$6,000		$41,754
Yr 2	$139,655	$76,183	$35,843	$10,823	$16,808		$63,473
Yr 3	$113,563	$62,464	$31,229	$9,165	$10,705		$51,099
Totals	$348,288	$191,963	$94,832	$27,980	$33,513		$156,325
Admin (10%)	$34,829	$19,196	$9,483	$2,798	$3,351		$15,632
Total	$383,116	$211,159	$104,315	$30,778	$36,864		$171,957
Annual Avg		$70,386.34	$34,771.68	$10,259.48	$12,287.92		

Note: Members and Processors contributions estimated on basis of 50% reimbursement of travel costs.

Our program over the next few years includes trips to South Korea and Japan, multiple trips to Hong Kong, Singapore, China and Barcelona as well as possible side trips around the Singapore and China shows to Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia as potential markets of interest. These latter trips are provisional, depending on how the budget is looking when the actual costs are added up. The Seafood Expo Asia in Singapore remains our single largest commitment and we are working with the PSCHA and UHA to present our best possible face to this part of the world.

This program basically revolves around these trips. We have been working for years with PSCHA to set up a venue for business meetings at trade shows where members can engage with visitors and talk about the fishery while processors/exporters talk business with buyers looking to access the product(s) for sale and profit in their market(s). It has worked really well for us in the past and we look to be getting back to the same. Having industry reps, including fishermen, along is key to how effective we can be and it really helps to get good participation from all involved whenever we are doing these trade shows or outgoing missions.

We did pretty good last year - basically spending to plan by sending small delegations to the Barcelona, Singapore, Qingdao and Boston shows, but now we are into what are the more ambitious years. We have done the Barcelona and Singapore shows so far this year and are also signed up for Qingdao and Boston. We are also still hoping to get to Japan, Hong Kong and/or South Korea.

We got off to a good start this year program in Barcelona at the world's biggest seafood show- the Seafood Expo Global. It may seem strange going there when about 84% of our product goes to Asia and the other 11% to the US, but diversifying our markets remains a good idea, particularly with geopolitical tensions between China and the West on the rise. BC's urchin industry is likely to remain a "price taker", rather than a "price setter" until more markets are competing for our products. There are very significant opportunities in Europe for high quality food products, and perhaps for sea urchin products in particular as an ingredient in the always competitive European gourmet sector.

Then came Singapore. Chinese is the dominant ethnic group in Singapore and the city-state is a rising star in the world of global finance. It is also a major destination for a lot of Chinese wealth as the perceived risks by companies domiciling in Hong Kong are rising because of a new Beijing-centric National Security regime. Singapore has one of the highest per capita GDP's in the world and boasts a highly developed and sophisticated food service sector that offers great opportunity to those providing high quality seafood. They, and we, are part of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and our government is providing extra support to encourage engagement and trade growth between members.

The Seafood Expo Asia moved to Singapore at the onset of the pandemic and though it didn't happen for a couple of years, this was our third appearance here. We are not getting a lot of sales there yet- but Air Canada just started a non-stop air service between Vancouver and Singapore a couple of months ago which will simplify the logistics of air cargo handling. Until recently, air shipments to Singapore were transhipped through other airports like SeaTac, Narita, Hong Kong and Incheon (South Korea), increasing handling costs and complicating logistics. This show is in early September and PSCHA and the UHA again both joined us this year and we continue to maintain a highly visible presence at that show. Again I really want to encourage exporters to join us as it changes the whole vibe of the booth and gives us an extra jolt of credibility that really helps build enthusiasm and hopefully sales.

Singapore is a small market by itself but the show offers access to other parts of SE Asia as it did to China when it was in Hong Kong. It has consistently been our best show as can be seen in the following table. The table below is a comparison of all the shows we have attended since 2014 that gives us an idea of how things are going. Each visitor is "scored" by yours truly using consistent criteria. After that - it is just the numbers adding up. Traffic was down this year - substantially- but it is still the best ranked show so far this year. We are hoping for improvement(s) next year.

Visitor Totals and Averages											
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
SEA	Number	126	93	105	84	83			101	83	47
	Score	5.5	5.38	5.52	5.09	5.35			5.04	5.1	5.35
	Show score	693	500	580	428	444			509	423	251
CFSE	Number	71	102	74	92	62	57	54		29	
	Score	4.84	5.2	4.49	4.6	4.53	4.48	4.67		4.59	
	Show score	344	530	332	423	281	255	252		133	
SENA	Number			53	45	64	56		42	38	42
	Score			5.89	5.00	4.58	4.69		4.57	4.66	5
	Show score			312	225	293	263		192	177	210
SEG	Number				55	38			19	25	31
	Score				4.68	4.47			4.7	4.84	4.61
	Show score				257	170			89	121	143

We also have the China show up again this year which both Lawrence and I are set up to attend - again with interested exporters. We have had in-country and secondary representation from members over the past few years but it just has not worked out as hoped. You can see the numbers on it and the others are kind of low though I suspect a lot of this has to do with the limited participation since the pandemic. This next edition in Qingdao will perhaps give us a better idea of where we stand with this show.

Trips to Japan, Hong Kong and South Korea are pencilled in as side-trips this year but it is looking like they will possibly have to come together as a single mission if they are to get done at all. These are basically our 3 biggest markets so we should make the effort, but the truth is we are not likely to get much out of them without having processors/exporters along. Business in Asia is based on relationships more than here so we need them on board because they are the ones who have the relationships. We will be able to shift some of that money around if need be - but it would still be an opportunity lost.

Other than that- opportunities to meet existing and hopefully new customers are pretty much the goal for the Seafood Expo North America (SENA) in Boston for the US and the Seafood Expo Global (SEG) in Barcelona for Europe. It is worth noting that sales of processed product to the US have historically been low, generally south of $500 K but that they are now registering closer to a couple million each year. I have noted as well that they are also apparently paying upwards of $200/kg for it. That compares with the $60-70/kg on the Stats Canada record from Asian buyers for the same product. At any rate, their purchases are increasing and it appears we are seeing some success in moving up the value chain there. We hope to see something similar in Europe and the UK, a couple of other attractive, high-value markets, as a result of our involvement at the SEG.

Lawrence introduced the upcoming Buy BC consumer program launch. Discussions involved event planning to promote urchins and employment opportunities.

Meeting adjourned at 1610 hours