

Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association

Trip Report for the 2019 Seafood Expo North America



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Lawrence Anderson and Geoff Krause attended the 2019 Seafood Expo North America (SENA) in Boston in mid March. There are usually have more than just a couple of representatives attending this show on behalf of the Pacific Sea Urchin Harvesters Association (PUHA) but circumstances meant everyone else was busy. Having Lawrence along was much appreciated and important if only for the simple reason that it's always good to have some who are active in the fishery present. That in itself lends a certain credibility that visitors looking to establish a business relationship with BC fishermen appreciate.

One person can handle these shows on their own, but that pretty much means they are chained to the booth throughout and don't get much chance to check out other parts of the show. The SENA has a number of different seminars every year in the conference room section of the centre, and there were a few this year that were looking very interesting. That would hardly be surprising given the turmoil the world trading system is seeing with the China-US trade war, Brexit and general effects of market de-stabilization seen around the world. A report from one such seminar this year indicated that the US is going to try to eliminate all seafood imports in the very near future. Tickets for these seminars can be arranged through the booth organizer usually for an extra fee of about \$150 US to get one access to any they want to see.

The Sea Expo North America (SENA) show has been held in the Boston trade and Convention Centre for many years and while it might have grown a little bit, it still pretty much fills the hall. PUHA exhibits as part of the BC booth along with about 12-15 other companies/associations including the UHA, Pacific Rim Shellfish (Lobsterman) French Creek Seafood, Grand Hale, North Delta - and others. In previous years the BC booth has been located some distance away from the rest of the Canadian Pavilion, but another company declined to exhibit this year and the BC booth relocated right next to the Canadian Pavilion. It may not have been all that big a deal, but it felt better. We were much closer to the entrance to the show so traffic seemed to build more quickly on opening.





Participating in the show as part of the BC booth provides a major cost advantage, probably in the neighbourhood of \$8,000 to 10,000 USD, over having our own booth. About the only pitfall we have been able to identify is we seem to have difficulty getting into the show directory. We provided the BC representatives with our contact information, an online profile, website details and the like but were again not registered in the show directory. On enquiring I did discover that the BC booth is allowed a limited number of co-exhibitors that will be listed in the directory and then an additional number that are considered members of the primary team. That was the reasoning last year for why Mike Featherstone was listed as the President of the BC Government and why Geoff was Executive Director of the same both last year and this.

Another advantage of being part of the BC booth is the shorter setup required. We checked into the booth, got our badges, set up our information counter and got other things sorted out the day before the show actually started in a matter of about an hour. That way when we arrived it was simply a matter of getting stuff up and out and we were ready to go. Nathan Fong was again back in charge of preparing the samples for distribution, but we also were subjected to the shipping restrictions we ran into last year and could not get finished product to the show. This was due again to a rule that was being applied at the border related to US. Legislation introduced in 2006 federally to restrict the import and/or export of sea life to/from the United States as a measure to fight IUU product and the continuing illegal trade in seafood. Commercially fished products were given exemptions in the legislation but the government did not recognize sea urchins, or sea cucumbers for that matter, as fish or shellfish which meant they are not included on the exempt species list. This was not an issue until about 2012 when someone noticed the rule on the books and started making a big deal of it and harassing shippers.

So the upshot is that a permit from Fish and Wildlife is still required to ship sea urchins and sea cucumbers across the border either way. The permit costs \$96 US per shipment, no matter what its size, but paying that and having all the paperwork in order eases the inspectors concerns. This year Grand Hale had the product ready to ship but this little gremlin again reared up and threatened to mess everything up so the uni was pulled.

At any rate, after attending to that immediate requirement to set the information counter up, we attended a dinner at a local Chinese restaurant put on by the Global Aquaculture Alliance and the China Aquatic Products Processing and Marketing Alliance. It was a freindly, informal event and we did not actually collect any cards from the folks there. It is worth noting though that our sales to China increased last year by more than 20%, exceeding \$1 M CAD for the first time so it does no harm to maintain a presence at these sorts of events even though it might seem a bit peripheral to our normal business.



We hung around with them and engaged in what chit chat we could for a few hours and then headed over to another dinner that was celebrating Nathan's 60th birthday. Most of the other folks from the booth descended on this scene and the crowd included the Honourable Lana Popham, the BC Minister of Agriculture and her Deputy Minister, Mr, Les Shoemaker, who we last met in about 2013 at the Seafood Expo Asia in Hong Kong.



We are getting to know the other companies and associations taking part in the BC booth and generally get to bond a bit as a group each year as we generally have at least a dinner or two together. The main event this year was set up at a very nice restaurant featuring a

number of BC sourced foods by Marilyn Wright after the opening day of the show. The dinner included the BC Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Lana Popham, as our host and all the participants in the booth from BC and a number of buyers and media people from the US.



Minister Popham also participated in a cooking demonstration with Nathan on Day 2 of the show at the BC booth and it came through loud and clear that she really is a good sport with a good sense of humour. The dish being prepared was geoduck and some of the comments were a bit risqué but totally entertaining and authentic. It was one of the high points of the day.



The show went off much as it has for the past few years. The SENA opens on a Sunday, unlike other shows we attend which tend to start on either a Tuesday or Wednesday, and then run through 3 days to close in the early afternoon on Day 3. Traffic was again highest on Day 1 and the scores attributed to our visitors also peaked that day. As can be seen in the following table, overall traffic, at 56, was down about 12% from the 64 recorded last year. The scores attributed to the visitors were in the same ballpark as last few years.

	2019			2018			2017			2016		
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
# of visitors qualified	28	23	5	27	27	10	23	11	10	31	14	9
% for show	50%	41%	9%	42%	42%	16%	52%	25%	23%	57%	26%	17%
average score	5.2	4.4	3.8	4.8	4.2	5.1	5.35	4.35	4.8	6.39	4.86	5.78
non N. American	21.4%	26.1%	20.0%	29.6%	29.6%	10.0%	30.4%	36.4%	20.0%	9.7%	28.6%	55.6%
USA	35.7%	43.5%	20.0%	33.3%	55.6%	60.0%	43.5%	18.2%	50.0%	54.8%	50.0%	22.2%
Canada	42.9%	30.4%	60.0%	37.0%	14.8%	30.0%	21.7%	45.5%	30.0%	22.6%	21.4%	22.2%
Brochures												
- traditional	3	5	0	6	17	5	5	20	13	0	0	0
- simplified	4	19	5	20	15	5	10	5	5	0	0	0
- English	62	50	10	47	33	8	85	50	50	110	65	48
- Japanese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total- all languages	69	74	15	73	65	18	100	75	68	110	65	48
% for show	44%	47%	9%	47%	42%	12%	41%	31%	28%	49%	29%	21%
# brochures/# visitors	2.46	3.22	3.00	2.70	2.41	1.80	4.35	6.82	6.80	3.55	4.64	5.33

The tables on the next page provide more detail on the traffic and visitors who stopped by.



There were, as always, a number of visitors who came by who did not have business cards left so we did not capture all the traffic. We also concluded that providing easier links to the website and parts thereof so people could simply scan a QR code with their phone and immediately get to the information they are looking for would be advantageous for them- and as we know the customer is always right. These can be set up to link to contact information for companies, and once they are there they further link into the company websites etc, Similarly having the general www.PUHA.org QR code under the logo would facilitate more visits to the website from the show. We could, as Chelsea is highlighting, use placards with that and/or the other more specific links as part of our counter top display. Lawrence suggested we might even consider using a model urchin with the QR code built into the

face as a kind of flag stand for the Canadian, BC, host country and maybe even a PUHA flag. It is kind of cheesy- but that kind of stuff can be effective.

Day 1: March 17, 2019

Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Website	Comment(s)
USA	Houston TX	imp/distr	Thao	Cao		4		no company name, sole proprietorship?
Canada	Ottawa	int'l facilitator	Evan	Dudley	Western Union	4	www.business.westernunion.ca	int'l payments and business facilitation
USA	San Diego	trader	Dmitry	Gorodnitsky	DSN Trading	5	www.dsntrading.com	no locale info on website, conflicting area codes (ON and CA), trust low
USA	Jamaica NY	exporter/trader	Chris	Hu	Foodie Co. LLC	4	www.foodiecompanyllc.com	appears focused on lobster, crab, cherries, apples etc
USA	Medley FL	trader	Cesar	Alceste	Tarpon Bay Corp	3		just looking for info on urchin
Canada	Markam ON	import	Kevin	Cheng	Parlantic Trading (Canada) Co. Ltd.	5	www.parlantic.ca	import into Toronto, mainly lobster, spot prawn
Canada	Markam ON	import	Jun	Li	Parlantic Trading (Canada) Co. Ltd.	5	www.parlantic.ca	as above
USA	Portland (OR)	restaurant	Brandon	Hill	Sustainable Restaurant Group	7	www.sustainablerestaurantgroup.com	fairly new forward looking group- looks worth supporting
Canada	Vancouver	certification	Tania	Leon	Oceanwise	5	https://ocean.org	supposed to be getting an invoice - for about \$500- to join
Morocco	Agadir	producer/exporter	Ignacio Pauner	Corbeto	Nuova Ondamar	6	www.nuovaondamar.com	produces mainly squid and cuttlefish products
USA	New York	distributor	Gennady	Berkman	Love Caviar Club	5	www.lovecaviarclub.com	caviar e-sales as well, apparently looking for uni trays into NY
Canada	Toronto	exporter/trader	Ethan	Dong	DL Honesty Int'l Group Inc.	4		looking for product to move into Shanghai
South Korea	Seoul	restaurant	Mr. J.J.	Park	Viking Group	8	www.10tviking.com	substantial restaurant group, hs tried to get Cndn RSU, no luck
South Korea	Seoul	restaurant	Tai Sung	Song	Viking Group	8	www.10tviking.com	cannot access thru processors, discouraged but
South Korea	Seoul	restaurant	Hye Su	Jo	Viking Group	8	www.10tviking.com	very interested in large volume(s). South Korean prices are the best we get.
USA	Newton Center (MA)	distributor	Joan	Li	Wings Trade	3		looking for SC -prob. for China as she chatted re: SC mort last year
Canada	Markam ON	exporter/trader	Brandon	Wong	Supreme Seafood	5	www.fyihua.cn	perhaps an agent in Canada for YIHUA Seafood China, seeking RSU
Canada	Victoria	distrib/trader	Kary	Guo	Arbutus Cove Enterprises Inc.	4		has many clients in Canada (ON and QE) & Asia looking for RSU
USA	San Diego	producer	Andrew	Nagle	Catalina Offshore Products Ltd.	6	www.catalinaop.com	Dave Rhudy could not make it this year. Andrew holding fort.
USA	New York	restaurant	Peter	Molinari	Eatly alti cibi	7	www.eatly.com	hi end restaurants in NY, LA, Boston, Chicago, Toronto. Also- e-commerce
Canada	Shag harbour (NS)	producer/exporter	Bowen	Lu	Captain Atlantic Fisheries	5	www.captainatlantic.ca	looking for more products to export to China
USA	Flushing (NY)	trader	Rex	Lin	AB Seafood trading Inc.	5		imports into NY and eastern US seaboard
Canada	Ottawa	gov't	Sean	Casey	MP for Charlottetown, Parl Secr. DFO	4		travelling with RDG for Gulf St Lawrence, mentioned BCSRIF
Russia	Vladivostok	producer	Vladimir	Touloupov	Primcrab LLC	4		sells Ru. SU to Japan, wet packs increasingly popular in Japan, labor shortages
Indonesia	Jakarta	import/distrib	Lie nam	Tung	CV Libra Food Service	6	www.libra-food.com	wants lower grade for sauces, also frozen hi grade for sashimi- refer to GHMP
Canada	Brossard (QC)	proc/exporter	Sarah	Gao	Arctica Food Group Canada Ltd.	5	www.arcticafood.com	sourcing and exporting N. Am seafood to China, incl SC
Canada	Victoria	gov't	Wes	Shoemaker	BC Gov't, DM of Agriculture	5		
Canada	Vancouver	gov't	Jessica	Smith	BC Gov't, Ass't to Minister of Agriculture	5		

Day 2: March 18, 2019

Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Website	Comment(s)
China	Dalian	proc/trader	Tom	Sun	Dalian Haixing Food Co. Ltd.	5	www.dlhaixiang.cn	cuke dragging happens at 30-40' in Iceland and Maritimes
Canada	Vancouver	certifier	Catriona	Power	Vericatch	4	www.vericatch.com	traceability & Chain of custody- our guys want maybe 1 up, 1 down
Canada	Mississauga	trader	Mason	Park	Goodlife Group Inc.	4	www.goodlife-group.com	looking for product to export to Korea
Canada	Dorval (QC)	trader	Mei	Wu	Wu Hoo Foods.	4		
USA	New York	retailer	Oleg	Sanzyapov	Tsar Caviar	4	www.astraseafod.com	caviar sales, including e-tail site
USA	Corona (NY)	trader	Xuepo	Gao	Peak Holding Group Inc.	3		
Canada	Toronto	trader	Jun	Li	Haising International Trading Inc.	4		looking for prod both for Toronto & dev'g export business to China
USA	Flushing (NY)	trader	Sean		Qun Sheng Trading Inc	3		
USA	Mount Vernon (WA)	transport	Steve	McQueary	Brown Line	5	www.lynden.com	
Canada	Montreal (QC)	distributor	Zosia	Zukrowski	Norref	6	http://norref.colabor.com	substantial and respected distributor in Quebec (MSC, Ocean Wise)
Canada	Montreal (QC)	distributor	Hugues	Viau	Norref	6	http://norref.colabor.com	as above
USA	Shelby Township(MI)	retail mrkt	Dennis	Seely	Vince and Joe's Gourmet Market.	6	www.vinceandjoes.com	
China	Qingdao	trader	Joanna	Liu	Qingdao Great Fortune Foods Imp & Exp Co. L	4		looking for RSU into China
USA	Chicago (IL)	processor/exp	Gerardo	Arche	Sealoch	5	www.sealoch.net	smoked salm prod/proc. wants RSU for proc in Mex. - a bit strange but maybe
Sweden	Gothenburg	trader	Keo	Lee	Kwang Myung AB	4		looking for RSU to supply Korea (note: Korea mrkt opp widely recogn)
China	Yiwu City	trader	Nick	Luo	Oude Group Ltd.	4		
USA	Lauderhill (FL)	trader	Joyelle	Chuang	Q+ Food LLC	3	www.qplusfoods.com	website bogus, credibility issues
USA	Boston	distributor	Nam Ryul "Steve"	Kim	true World Foods Boston LLC	6	www.trueworldfoods.com	sushi supplies/distrib
Canada	Montreal (QC)	wholesale	Luciano	Gentile	ProFishionals	5	www.professionals.ca	mainly deals in shellfish in Montreal area
Iceland	Reykjanesbaer	producer	Ludvik Borkur	Jonsson	Royal Iceland	4	www.royaliceland.is	Iceland 2018:4.4KMT drag cukes, has 8 boats spec in roe incl GSU but recov v lo
Japan	Tokyo	trader	Alex	Saito	Gourmet Global	5	www.gourmetglobal.jp	import/export incl. Saltspring island mussels
USA	Atlanta (GA)	gov't	Cecile	Landgrebe	Gov't of Canada Trade Commissioner	5	www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca	
USA		media	Michael-Ann	Rowe	Fishinista	3		probably a social media type consultant

Day 3: March 19, 2019

Country	City	Business	First Name	Last Name	Company	Score	Website	Comment(s)
USA	Shrewsbury (MA)	beauty	Ron	Lowry	Seatech Bioproducts	5	www.seatechbioproducts.com	looking for lower grade for extraction. Also seeking dried kelp for same
Canada	Ottawa	distributor	Rabih	Bourji	Saltwater S.A.R.L.	4		principal in Lebanese co, live hold distribn, may contact processors
China	Shanghai	chef	Nate			2		works closely with Cdn consulate in Shanghai demo-g Cdn seafood
Canada	Toronto	int'l facilitator	Matthew	Kurlapski	Western Union	4	www.business.westernunion.ca	
Canada	Toronto	int'l facilitator	Michael A	Goshko	Western Union	4	www.business.westernunion.ca	

One notable group was a substantial South Korean restaurant chain that is, and has been, trying to access Canadian RSU for the past few years to no avail. They visited on the first day of the show and were quite forthright and talkative about how they have been trying. It is worth noting that South Korea paid an average price of \$67 CAD/kg. in 2017, just under our highest paying market (Hong Kong) which paid an average of \$70 CAD/kg that same year. Interestingly even with the good price, Canadian shipments to South Korea declined last year.

Eataly alti cibi was another visitor of note on Day 1. They are apparently opening a store next month (April 2019) in Toronto and already have 3 shops in New York, Boston and on the west coast somewhere. They are looking to source RSU for use in Italian cuisine.

We had another visit from Catalina Offshore Products Inc. out of San Diego California. Dave Hrudey could not make it himself because of a family issue that arose on the way to the airport but a young fellow who works with him, Andrew Nagle, stopped by for a chat. It sounds like things down that way are improving but processors are still having a tough time sourcing RSU and are importing from wherever they can. There are lots of purple urchins around, but they are tougher to process, and there are possibly more abalone showing up. Water temperatures are coming down but the kelp took a hammering on the last round of hot water and full recovery is still some ways off. A representative from another company from Northern California, Azuma, although not entirely corroborated because he did not have a card and got away before we could get him to fill out his details, also stopped by looking for supply.

The evening of the second night of the show was topped off with dinner hosted at the Seaport Hotel by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. It was just short of amazing. They reserved a ballroom and adjacent corridors for the event at what is a very nice hotel within walking distance of the Convention Centre. There was a buffet that featured table after table stacked with crab, sablefish, salmon, rockfish, clams, sushi of every sort and it just did not seem to end. We got the invitation through Faye, Stephen and Cliff Liu from Arctic Pearl Ltd., a processing and cold storage firm in Richmond that does business with Alaskan fishermen.





One of the conversations at dinner that evening provided news that the urchin fishery in Maine sounds like it is coming back at least to some extent. Divers now account for about half of the catch even as each is limited to 49 totes per day and only get to fish something like 35 days out of 49 (weather days or by regulation? Unsure). Draggers account for the other 50% even though that kind of fishing is definitely not as clean or sustainable. A diver from the area, again one without a business card, described personally seeing piles of discards, all dead and comprising small and broken urchins, on multiple occasions.

One suggestion that came up after this dinner was that it be advantageous for the BC government to reserve a number of rooms, possibly even at that hotel, that could be used by the delegation. We generally get pretty much scattered around the city each year which makes it harder and more expensive to get together. The

rates in the city also seem to be going up for the show, including at the more economic options favoured by us. The show rate paid by some people at the very high quality Four Seasons Boston apparently came in at about \$40 US per night more than the rate we paid at what used to be the Chandler but is now the Stayinpineapple Inn. There are a number of new nicely appointed hotels just north of the venue location in the Seaport District and the transport savings may in essence justify paying a bit more. There may also be volume discounts available.

The last day of the show was, as expected, slow and we only managed to collect 5 contact cards, none of them really jumping out as exceptional leads. Rabin Bourji presented himself as an Ottawa-based representative for a Lebanese firm looking for live RSU or GSU, but again he did not have any business cards or other corroborating links he could share so he kind of graded out low.

The show was again considered a success and the US remains a market of considerable interest even though this is compromised by the continuing border “complications” for product shipped by air. In terms of how the success of this show ranks in comparison with the China, Hong Kong and Brussels shows, it is consistently lower than Hong Kong in terms of numbers and average scores, mixed in comparison to China and consistently higher than the Brussels show .

		Visitor Totals and Averages					
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SEA	Number	126	93	105	84	83	
	Score	5.5	5.38	5.52	5.09	5.35	
CFSE	Number	71	102	74	92	62	
	Score	4.84	5.2	4.49	4.6	4.53	
SENA	Number			53	45	64	56
	Score			5.89	5.00	4.58	4.69
SEG	Number				55	38	n/a
	Score				4.68	4.47	n/a