

Alaska Groundfish Cost, Earnings and Employment Survey Questions and Answers

What is the principal purpose of the survey?

NMFS and the Council have recognized the increasing need to collect economic data on a regular basis. The survey will provide data that can be used to track the economic performance of the groundfish fisheries over time.

Who is conducting the survey?

The survey is being conducted by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), NMFS in cooperation with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

How is the survey connected with the Council's efforts to improve socioeconomic data?

The survey is part of a coordinated effort by NMFS and the Council to address deficiencies in socioeconomic data.

Who is being surveyed?

Catcher vessels, catcher-processors, motherships and shoreside plants involved in the BSAI pollock fishery will be surveyed first. Subsequent surveys are planned for catcher vessels, catcher-processors, and shoreside plants involved in other groundfish fisheries.

Is this a one time survey?

No, each fishery and industry sector will be surveyed periodically.

How will this information be collected?

We are using mail surveys with some in person follow-ups. In the future, other data collection procedures may be used if they are found to reduce the time and resources needed to collect the information.

What types of information will be collected?

The types of information to be collected include costs, earnings and employment data. The cost section of the questionnaires includes questions about your operating and capital costs. The earnings section consists of questions about your revenues by species, product and grade. The employment section includes questions about numbers of employees and their compensation.

How were the questionnaires developed?

The questionnaires were developed by AFSC staff in consultation with representatives from all sectors of the pollock industry.

What are the other expected uses of the survey data?

The information will provide an improved basis for evaluating the economic effects of past, present and future fishery management measures.

Will this information be used in allocation decisions?

This information will be available to NMFS and the Council staff for use in evaluating all types of management actions including allocations.

Why should my company participate? Is the survey voluntary?

While the survey is voluntary, it is important that you assist in this work. The lack of economic data has prevented NMFS and the Council from considering objective economic criteria in their decision making process. Your participation in this survey effort will enable NMFS and the Council to design policies to achieve economic as well as biological objectives.

How will NMFS verify the accuracy of the data collected?

NMFS and the Council are aware of the importance of having credible data. At the suggestion of industry representatives, NMFS has arranged to have data verified independently by a certified public accounting firm.

Is the information confidential?

It is NOAA's position that the requested information be treated as confidential and not be released to the public¹. Only survey results aggregated at a level that will not compromise individual confidentiality will be reported.

How will the survey results be distributed?

Survey results in summarized form, including measures of economic performance for the fisheries, will be published annually in the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) and in the Economic Status of the Groundfish Fisheries off Alaska.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

Please contact Dan Holland or Todd Lee of NMFS if you have any questions or concerns:

By phone: (206) 526-4114 or (206) 526-4252

By email: dan.holland@noaa.gov or todd.lee@noaa.gov

By mail: Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

¹Exemption 4 of FOIA states that information which is commercial or financial and privileged or confidential is generally exempt from disclosure. It is NOAA's position that the requested information be treated as confidential because its release would cause substantial competitive harm to the person submitting the information and NOAA would vigorously oppose releasing it.