



UNITED FISHING AGENCY, LTD.



COVID-19 Impacts to Hawaii Longline Fishery and Association Seafood Industry

Situation Summary: March 28, 2020

Introduction

The Hawaii longline fishery, comprised of 140 locally owned vessels, is the largest food producing industry in the State of Hawaii (32 million pounds produced in 2019).

The dockside landed value of the fishery is around \$105 million annually, ranking Honolulu Harbor in the Nation's top ten ports in terms of fisheries economic value (6th in 2018). The longline fishery represents approximately 90% of commercial fishing landings and revenue in Hawaii.

The Hawaii longline fishery supplies ice-chilled, high quality fish (ahi, swordfish, mahimahi, opah, etc.) to Hawaii and US mainland foodservice and retail seafood markets; products are principally marketed as fresh fish and not sold frozen.

COVID-19 Impacts

Fish prices at the Honolulu auction (United Fishing Agency) suffered extreme reductions on Saturday March 14, 2020. Over the last two weeks, there has been an 80% decline in the dockside value landings, representing lost revenue of over \$3 million to Hawaii longline vessels.

This lost revenue reverberates within seafood distribution channels, representing an additional loss of nearly \$ 8 million through wholesale, retail and foodservice industries within the last two weeks. The primary reason for the decline is the rapid elimination of foodservice (restaurant, hotel, catering) orders.

Several Hawaii wholesale distribution companies have each laid off large percentages of their employees.

There are around 100 Hawaii-based longline tied up in Honolulu today, with 35 still on the fishing grounds and expected home next week. Due to the market collapse, most of the 140-vessel fleet will tie-up (fishing costs exceed revenue). Major gaps (i.e. several no fish days at the Honolulu auction) in fish supply landed by Hawaii longline vessels is anticipated by April 7.

Substantial reductions in fresh fish supply landed by Hawaii longline vessels impacts Hawaii food security amidst the COVID-19 situation.

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