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**Introduction**

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**Background**

Allen's Fisheries of Benoit's Cove is one of the largest live holding (sea-based holding system) and lobster processing operations in Newfoundland and Labrador, with the Roberts' Group of Companies being the largest land-based operation.

The Provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, contracted the Centre for Aquaculture and Seafood Development, to conduct this project. A major concern to live holding operations, both today and in the past, has been loss of lobster and revenues due to mortalities. The C-ASD’s task was to determine the cause of the lobster loss and how to achieve cost recovery before they die.

**Methodology**

The C-ASD technologists visited Allen's Fisheries Ltd. of Benoit's Cove, Dorman Roberts Ltd, Triton and Harbour Seafoods Ltd., Rocky Harbour. One technologist spent the day with the collector vessel and crew, while the other technologist spent the day developing products in Allen's Fisheries Ltd.'s fully equipped laboratory facilities.
Results

In this study, C-ASD found that the reasons for lobster mortalities, included fresh water runoff, inconsistent oxygen levels throughout the floats, insufficient culling practices, generally poor husbandry techniques and vandalism.

The C-ASD compared the benefits of moving to a land-based system, which offers better control of the various parameters affecting mortalities amongst the live-held lobster populations.

The remainder of the report focused on scheduled culling of the lobster in the holding systems yielding weak, but not yet dead, lobster which were produced into attractive products that could be marketed in cooked forms (i.e., cooked whole lobster; cooked heads, sections and meat; raw tails). Any combination of these products could achieve cost recovery, rather than total loss resulting from the discarding of dead lobster. The bonus here is that these new products are of the traditional form and large investments are not necessary for production, as most of the infrastructure currently exists.

Conclusions

The companies involved in this project feel that this option of dealing with weak lobster would improve the economic stability of their operations and thus, are considering constructing land-based facilities and processing products similar to those developed, such as green tails, cooked meat and sections and extracted meat products.