



THE UPDATE

Captain's Blog



Calling time on a challenging year

While many in the seafood industry remain busy all through the festive season, the last Update of the year is a good time to reflect on the achievements and challenges of this most remarkable year.

As we celebrated the arrival of 2020 in January, we had little idea that in a short few months our world would be a different place. Our businesses disrupted, our families locked away for safety, our travel cancelled and the unfolding horror as the COVID-19 virus caused devastation around the world.

New Zealand's response was exemplary, and it is only by looking at death tolls in the hundreds of thousands in other countries that we can see what might have been.

As an industry, being deemed essential by the government was a lifeline. Continuing to provide seafood to New Zealanders and the world kept many people in jobs.

It wasn't easy and was anything but business as usual.

Full PPE in factories and on vessels, social distancing requirements in small spaces, disrupted supply chains, a sharp decline in air freight capacity, and workers stranded by closed borders were just some of the challenges.

The nimble adaptation to online supply of seafood was impressive.

Companies that hadn't offered an online option before quickly had systems up and running. For

many, it was a revelation and there will be no returning to the status quo.

For the public as well, the ability to have their seafood delivered was something that they will continue to do. The connection with their food and its supplier an attractive option.

We must also acknowledge those companies, and there were many, who not only continued to operate in difficult circumstances, but went over and above to help those in need.

The donations to foodbanks, to marae, to communities, and even to starving penguins went quietly on with no thought of being thanked.

It would be naïve to expect 2021 to become miraculously better at the stroke of midnight on the 31st of this month but there is plenty to be optimistic about.

Markets are reopening and as countries get on top of the pandemic restaurants will again be looking for our premium product. Vaccines are being developed and expected to roll out within months and with that will come the ability for countries to once again open borders.

Domestically, the industry will face other challenges next year. We are thankful that our new Minister is quickly coming to grips with what is an extremely complex portfolio and giving those issues measured thought.

So, thank you for what you did this year. Celebrate with your families and have a break if you can.

Seafood New Zealand wishes you all a very happy Christmas and will return with this publication in the new year.



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