

Newfoundland Sealers Down On Industry Prospects

Feeling the US Boycott of Canadian Seafood Products

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Montreal, QC - Newly-released research conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of Humane Society International amongst Newfoundlanders licensed to participate in the annual seal hunt finds that there is a general sense that the local fishing and seafood export industry is in a state of decline.

Thinking about the last five years, eight in ten (83%) of those polled who expressed an opinion believe the industry has 'declined' (50.3% significantly/32.4% moderately), while just 6% believe it has 'improved' moderately. One in ten (12%) believe the state of the Newfoundland fishing and seafood export industry has remained the same over the last five years.

Focusing specifically on the seal hunt, which has witnessed both a decline in the past five years - with the 2009 hunt in Newfoundland valued at less than \$1 million - and the decision by the European Union to prohibit trade in seal products, one half (49%) of those with an opinion believes the landed value of the seal hunt is likely to 'decline' (38% significantly/11% a little) in the years ahead, while another two in ten (18%) sees no improvement and believes things will remain the same as they are today. In contrast, one in three believe that the landed value of the seal hunt is likely to 'improve' (12% significantly/21% somewhat).

At the same time, a large majority (79%) of respondents describe themselves as being aware of the US boycott of Canadian seafood products launched by the Humane Society of the

United States in 2005, in an effort to convince Canada to end the commercial seal hunt, and over half (56%) of these individuals with an opinion on the matter believe that they have personally felt the impact of the boycott, either through lost business or lower prices for their products.

Given a 51% decline in Newfoundland seafood exports to the US and a decline of over \$900 million in the value of Canadian snow crab exports to the US since it commenced, a large majority (81%) of licensed sealers with an opinion on the subject are 'concerned' (48% highly/20% somewhat/13% a little) about the impact of the boycott, and a similarly large majority (79%) believe it will hurt (29% significantly/32% somewhat/18% a little) Newfoundland's fishing and seafood industry in the coming months and years. In contrast, one in five (21%) believe it will not hurt the industry at all.

Sealing license holders with an opinion on the subject were divided down the middle in terms of a proposed federal buyout of the commercial sealing industry, which would "involve fishermen and vessel owners being compensated for their sealing licenses, and money being invested in economic alternatives for affected communities", with 50% in favour of the proposed buyout and 50% opposed to it.

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Humane Society International from December 7th 2009 to January 24th 2010 (with a break over the holiday period) via telephone. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 181 vessel owners and individual fishers with sealing licenses residing within the province of Newfoundland were interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 7.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.



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- 3 -

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