

Already receiving well over 800 ship calls per year, the Port of Fuglafjørður is poised to see traffic continue to increase as businesses brace for a sharp rise in activities generated from a new freezing plant—being built at long last.

FUGLAFJØRÐUR's OLD dream of hosting a processing facility for pelagic food fish is finally coming true. Shortly after domestic investors joined forces to form the new company Pelagos early this year (2014), the building of a new 200 million DKK (27M EUR) freezing plant was commissioned, scheduled to start operations this summer with a capacity to process 600 tonnes per day.

This is good news for the Port of Fuglafjørður. The port authority, the Municipal Council of Fuglafjørður, has made no secret of its ambition to see the plan through. A few years ago a piece of land was designated for the purpose and a proposal presented to prospective investors, who nonetheless opted for an altogether different location, at Tvøroyri.

The people of Fuglafjørður, however, remained defiant and continued the effort to find investors willing to place money in a new freezing plant, the realization of which Mayor Sonni á Horni calls "an extremely important milestone."

Pelagos will join Kollafjørður's Faroe Pelagic and Tvøroyri's Varðin Pelagic to become the Faroe Islands' third major processing plant for pelagic fish

for human consumption; there is also a smaller facility at Vestmanna.

'TIRELESS WORK': In response to skepticism over perceived excess capacity, Pelagos shareholders point out that high processing capacity is needed to handle the large quantities of pelagic fish caught in Faroese waters.

The owners of Pelagos are aquaculture giant Bakkafrost (through its subsidiary fishmeal and feed factory Havsbrún), fishing majors Framherji and Christian í Grótinum/Norðborg (the latter through an entity named Palli hjá Mariannu), and a group of small shareholders from the local community.

Alongside Atlantic mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring, the large-volume blue whiting fishery, which takes place from January to May, is expected to contribute toward securing raw material for the plant.

"Most of the fishing [for mackerel and herring] takes place in the summer, so everything has to be produced then," Atli Simonsen, of Christian í Grótinum/Norðborg, told *Undercurrent News*. "So the capacity is not that big when you take that into account."

According to an estimate attributed to Havsbrún CEO Odd Eliassen, to make a profit Pelagos will need to process some 45,000 tonnes of pelagic fish on an annual basis, about two-thirds of which will be received from Framherji's Fagrabergr.

"Ideally, this processing plant should have been built decades ago," Mr. á Horni said. "But we are pleased to note that

the project has now reached this stage where construction has started. Also it is reassuring that Pelagos has the backing of investors that are capable of bringing forward the resources and expertise necessary to make it a success."

Mr. á Horni added: "Pelagos will represent an extremely important milestone for Fuglafjørður and there are quite a few people who should be credited for their tireless work in this context, including my predecessor Sigurð S. Simonsen. Now it's important to make sure all requirements are met for the work to progress according to plan."

MORE TRAFFIC: The Port of Fuglafjørður has been frequented by the pelagic fishing industry since the 1960s, when the Havsbrún fishmeal factory

NEW FREEZING PLANT FOR PELAGIC PORT



The new Pelagos facility is being built next to the Havsbrún fishmeal factory the Bergfrost cold store; Mayor Sonni á Horni (bottom opposite); Pelagos building site (bottom left); Fishing harbor (bottom right).

opened for business. A well sheltered, deep natural harbor, Fuglafjørður has developed a service infrastructure around this industry that has earned the port a leading position in its field.

Over the years, several vital links have been added to the mix, including, for example, the Faroe Islands' leading bunker station, as well as the country's

largest cold storage facility, the foremost manufacturer of fishing gear, and a filleting machinery repair and maintenance specialist.

But as the amounts of fish landed for reduction to meal and oil have been falling in recent years, emerging worries over the potential loss of ship calls related to pelagic fishing grew to the point of prompting the port authority to take action.

Now with the formation of Pelagos, the situation is being turned around with a much needed, and significant, competitive advantage coming Fuglafjørður's way.

Meanwhile, the number of ship calls at Fuglafjørður totaled 836 in 2013, compared to 766 in 2012, according to Port Director Rólant Højsted.

Port of Fuglafjørður

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Port Director: Rólant Højsted

One of Europe's leading pelagic fishing ports with a comprehensive range of facilities and services.

More than 1,200 meters of total quay length; quayside depths range from 10 m to 14 m.

Excellent natural harbor, accessible in all weather conditions.

Facilities and services include, for example: Processing plant for pelagic food fish (scheduled to open in July 2014); fish meal, fish oil and feed processing plant; cold storage; trawl and purse seine net manufacturing and repairs; electrical engineering; mechanical engineering inc. authorized Baader engineers (filleting machinery); hydraulics; provisioning; power supply; fresh water.

Bunkering: MGO, HFO, blends.

"Ship traffic is increasing," Mr. Højsted noted, "much thanks to the bunker station but also largely because of high catch quotas in the pelagic fisheries. Many thousands of tonnes are still landed to Havbrún on all annual basis; and now that a new freezing plant will begin operations, we can expect even more calls from pelagic fishing vessels."

