

REDFISH REVIVAL ADDS TO FAROE ORIGIN EXPORTS

Leading saithe specialist Faroe Origin is a fishing company, primary processor and seafood exporter with a widening supply of species and products—with redfish on the rise lately, new products and species are added slowly but surely.

Faroe Origin
Fiskivinnuhavnin,
FO-620 Runavík

www.origin.fo
origin@origin.fo
Tel.: +298 200 600
Fax: +298 200 601

CEO: Jens Pauli Petersen
Sales, Marketing: Agnar Jensen
MSC certified fishing company,
primary processor, seafood
exporter. Number of employees:
220 (70 at sea, 150 on land).

Main species: Saithe —
• Fresh Fillets • Fresh Loins
• Frozen Interleaved Fillets
• IQF Frozen Loin Portions
• IQF Frozen Center Portions
• IQF Frozen Tail Portions
Cod and ling —
• Salted Fillets • Salted Splits
Other species —
• Redfish • Black halibut

2 fully owned land based
processing plants. 6 fully owned
trawlers (3 pair teams):
Bakur FD 1201 (464 GT)
Stelkur FD 1202 (464 GT)
Heykur FD 1203 (665 GT)
Falkur FD 1204 (665 GT)
Rókur FD 1205 (610 GT)
Lerkur FD 1206 (610 GT)

Left to right: Fresh iced redfish;
Landing to Runavík facility;
Faroe Origin's trawler fleet;
Stelkur hauling catch up ramp.



SHUTTERSTOCK



MARIA OLSEN



FAROE ORIGIN



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WITH its six pair trawlers fishing all year round to keep its two processing facilities busy, Runavík-based seafood exporter Faroe Origin has long been a force to be reckoned with in the saithe business, and increasingly beyond. Originally focusing squarely on frozen fillets, loins and other portions, the company has steadily expanded its product range both in terms species and process, today offering fresh, frozen and salted seafood.

Two major developments within the last few years include the launch of fresh fillets and loins of saithe for markets in Europe from the company's processing plant at Runavík, and the launch of salted fillets and splits of cod and other whitefish from its facility at nearby Toftir.

More recently, fresh whole redfish has seen a revival. After a dull period of a couple of decades, the high-value species has re-emerged in domestic fisheries offshore west of the Faroe Islands, amounting to just under 2,800 tonnes in 2017 and a similar tonnage expected this year (2018).

"We're delighted Our vessels have caught the lion's share of the redfish brought in lately and our share of the exports are just about half of the total tonnage," according to Faroe Origin sales and marketing manager Agnar Jensen. "We've seen this spike since early 2017 and overall this is clearly not juvenile but mature fish of a very good size. Clients in Germany and France are eager to get their hands on it."

Meanwhile, according to CEO Jens Pauli Petersen, the traditionally strong Faro-

ese market position on saithe in Germany and France, has been boosted in relevant segments over the past three years or so, since Faroe Origin initiated weekly shipments of fresh fillets and portions.

As for Origin's frozen produce, most of it is saithe processed as fillets or loin/center/tail portions, individual quick frozen (IQF) or interleaved. The markets are mostly France and Germany but also increasingly Poland. While frozen products generally fetch a lower price than fresh, key advantages with the frozen category include lower sensitivity to the time factor.

As Mr. Petersen pointed out in previous interview: "Of course, most food including frozen seafood is sensitive to exposures of various kinds and accordingly must be handled with great care; yet compared with fresh seafood, which is extremely sensitive, it can be stored and shipped in much larger quantities and has a shelf life that is considerably longer. So with frozen products, you are generally dealing with lower unit prices but larger quantities—the opposite of fresh products. Both categories have their advantages and disadvantages and prices fluctuate in different ways."

'UNCOMPROMISING COMMITMENT'

Expanding the product range sometimes entails requires entry into uncharted territory, which to an extent was the case when Origin launched its saltfish division some five years ago.

"It was a deliberate slow motion launch," Mr. Petersen said. "While some of our em-



JENS KRISTIAN VANG

ployees already had experience in the wet salted segment, we decided to enter that market carefully for various reasons. We wanted to consolidate our new processing unit for this purpose both with regard to production and with regard to supply of raw fish—after all, this was new territory for us a company. Now I'm pleased to say that things have moved forward according to plan and we're regularly supplying our Mediterranean clients with wet salted whitefish, filleted or split. The saltfish business has always been part of our overall plan; we wanted to be absolutely sure to manage it properly and build it slowly in incremental steps."

The raw fish supplies for the Toftir facility—cod and ling, are to an extent by-catch Origin's trawlers, alongside purchased catch from the open market.

As part of the company's effort to secure the highest possible product quality, Origin

continually seeks to optimize its value chain integration, Mr. Jensen noted.

"We're a fairly diversified operation with a high degree of value chain integration," he said.

"That's an advantage for our clients because, first of all, it enables us to guarantee the highest level of product quality. By keeping constant and meaningful contacts between the catch side, the processing units and the sales and marketing department, we're able to optimize for product quality as well as delivery reliability. Our standard routines and methods for quality assurance are regularly reviewed and adjusted wherever necessary, because our commitment to product quality is uncompromising."

Since 2013, Faroe Origin's saithe fisheries, processing and logistics are certified as sustainable and responsible according to the MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) label.

CEO Jens Pauli Petersen on the factory floor in Runavík, holding up a fillet of saithe; Fresh caught saithe (below).



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