Uses For Fish Parts You Never Imagined

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Researchers at the University of Alaska's Fishery Industrial Technology Center on Near Island have been hard at work for the last 12 years developing different products and markets for parts of fish that are usually discarded. KMXT's Brianna Gibbs has more.

Dr. Scott Smiley, a professor at the Fish Tech Center who works in collaboration with researchers at the Oceanic Institute in Hawaii and the University of Idaho, said that often 60 to 65 percent of a fish, depending on the species, can be discarded as waste.

-- (Fish Byproduct 1: :15 sec "We started out by ... processing into human food.")

He said the highest value of a seafood product comes if it can be marketed as human food. But some parts of a fish aren't very appealing to consumers in the United States.

When this happens, Smiley said the next best thing is to study the products usefulness in agriculture or aquaculture. Recently, Smiley worked in collaboration with other researchers to determine the potential of fish testes as an aquacultural feed ingredient in the rainbow trout industry.

-- (Fish Byproduct 2: :31 sec "We have taken ...adding a bit of this material.")

Smiley said the high cost of standard fish meal means that farmed trout are typically raised on less expensive soy meal. He acknowledges that rainbow trout are carnivorous do not normally eat soy beans, but rather small bugs or krill, but by adding the fish testes meal to the soy meal the trout are getting necessary nutrients that the soy alone cannot provide.

-- (Fish Byproduct 3: :19 sec "And by adding small ... on the part of the fish.")

Smiley said the work that he and his team of researchers does provides needed background information so that seafood processors and feed companies can determine if the product from such studies could be made marketable.

-- (Fish Byproduct 4: :26 sec "We're investigating ... is turned into fishmeal.")

Smiley said they are still refining this research and designing economic analyses of the meal as a viable product. It isn't currently being made in Kodiak, but could be, based on the research he has done.

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