



Low supply, high demand: 'Interesting' year for wild salmon

News Russia could cut its salmon quota in half could see a shortage of pink in the market and high prices, sources say.

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Russia has said its wild salmon quota could be halved, leading to salmon business sources to predict an interesting year ahead for prices.

The recommended allowable catch limits for Russian Pacific salmon could be down by half compared to last year, said the Vladivostok-based Pacific Scientific Fisheries & Oceanographic Research Institute (TINRO).

TINRO is observing a significant decline in the stocks recommended for fishing in 2012, adding it was three years ago record salmon harvests started happening.

In 2009, Russia caught over 530,000 metric tons of salmon, the biggest catch on record since the beginning of the last century, TINRO said.

Around 500,000 metric tons of salmon were harvested last year.

The impact this will have on prices is yet to be seen.

"We are very confused about new season's wild salmon prices," said Frank Zhou, an executive with China-based salmon and whitefish processor Ocean One Enterprise.

"2012 is going to be an off year for Alaska pink. If the Russians further cut the quota to 50 percent, we feel that pink price might go up," he told **IntraFish**.

"But facing the pressure of farmed salmon, how much the increase will be still has a lot of uncertainty," said Zhou. "We will wait and see how the Alaskan companies are going to price their Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)-certified pink this season, which usually happens each year at the Brussels seafood show."

Demand from Europe is "very weak," he said. This is due to the low farmed salmon price and the weak euro.

Demand from the United States is better he said, adding it appears some retailers want to "lock in" MSC salmon, before the majority of the fishery opts out of MSC certification.

Dmitry Fedotov, the founder of Hong Kong-based Superocean, also sees an uncertain picture in the market this year.

"It is indeed an 'off year' for salmon," he told **IntraFish**, referring to the fluctuation in volumes year-on-year.

"It is going to be an interesting year due to potentially low supply and potentially high demand, combined with the fact

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consumption in Russia increasing,” he said.

Superocean represents Russian fishing companies in the market and has access to roughly 10,000 metric tons of pink salmon; 2,000 metric tons of chum salmon; around 80,000 metric tons of Alaska pollock and around 20,000 metric tons of Pacific cod.

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