



July 17, 2014

Canadian certified organic kelps hit market

BLACKS HARBOUR, NB – Cultivated kelps raised on a farm in the Bay of Fundy have been certified to the Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard and will soon be making their way into the marketplace.

The organic kelps are produced by Cooke Aquaculture at its Charlie Cove farm site near Back Bay, New Brunswick, and are being marketed under its True North Salmon brand. The company is producing two species of kelps at the site - *Alaria esculenta* and *Saccharina latissima*, also called winged and sugar kelps, which are known for their superior sweetness and flavour. These seaweeds can be eaten fresh or cooked.

“Seaweeds, like kelps, are popular around the world and in North America we are discovering how easy they are to prepare and how delicious and healthy they are,” said Andrew Lively, Marketing Director with True North Salmon, the processing and sales arm of Cooke Aquaculture. “Our sales team has been identifying a wide range of potential customers, such as chefs, restaurants and non-food sectors like the cosmetic and feed industries. We look forward to providing our first customers with organic kelps in the next few weeks.”

The certification to the Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard comes following third-party audits by SAI Global, an internationally accredited certification company.

The Charlie Cove site is an Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) farm, which means that it raises species from different trophic levels and is designed to mimic the natural ocean eco-system where many seaweeds and animals co-exist. The farm raises fish that are fed along with seaweeds and shellfish that are extractive - which means that they absorb nutrients from their environment. In this case, the Charlie Cove farm produces the kelps along with blue mussels and Atlantic salmon. This IMTA venture is a collaborative project between Cooke Aquaculture, the University of New Brunswick and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The UNB team, led by Dr. Thierry Chopin, assists in managing the kelp portion of the IMTA farm by collecting mature kelps in the summer and using them to cultivate stock for the next grow-out cycle. By late fall, the kelps are transferred from the UNB team to the Cooke IMTA ocean site, where the farm crew cares for the kelps as part of the farm’s operation. The kelps are ready for harvest in late spring/early summer. The finished products can be delivered to customers either wet or dry.

Grown as part of the IMTA system, the kelps receive essential nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which are by-products of the natural metabolic processes of salmon and mussels. No growth enhancers are required.

Once harvested, the kelps are rinsed with seawater and dried with no additional manufacturing aids. Any cleaning and disinfection of harvest vessels and equipment destined for the organic production site is done with products that are listed and approved by the Organic Aquaculture Standard.

“Kelps are versatile products that local chefs have been experimenting with for years and we’re pleased to be able to now bring organic kelps to our customers,” Lively said.

As the sales and marketing division of Cooke Aquaculture, the True North Salmon Company has been providing fresh, naturally-raised, farmed Atlantic salmon to the U.S. and Canada for over 30 years. It is the largest producer of fresh Atlantic salmon in North America, and a premier supplier of certified sustainable Atlantic salmon to leading supermarkets and restaurants across North America.

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