Matjes – The success and collapse of a high value market

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Danish Pelagic Producers Organisation (DPPO)

• Pelagic vessels fishing for herring, mackrel and industrial species such as sandeel.
• 50 % pct. of the Danish fishery by weight

Christian Olesen

• Chair of the board
• CEO from 1985-2012
• Part of the self-regulation of Matjes herring
DPPO vessels

Hirtshals

Skagen

HM379 Lingbank
HG365 Junior
E349 Cattleya
E532 Rockall
HG265 Asbjørn
HG62 Beinur
HG333 Isafold
HG264 Ruth
S349 Gitte Henning
S205 Ceton
S144 Themis
S264 Astrid
The Herring fishery

The Matjes fishery
Season: May - July
Matjes herring

A niche product

• Pickled herring made from young, female herring with silvery skin who haven't laid eggs yet

• High fat content

• Sold as street food during summer in the Netherlands
Self-regulation success

The Matjes committee 1992-1997

• Formed by the Danish fishermen’s association and the Association of Danish Fish Processing Industries and Exporters

• Regulated maximum weekly quota and regulated sales according to demand from Dutch buyers

• Held weekly coffee meetings to exchange information between the fishers and Dutch buyers on quality and market prospects for the coming week and to ensure full transparency
Self-regulation success

Surplus profit in the matjes fishery 1994-2000
End of a golden period

The exclusiveness of the market was lost

The Matjes Commitee could no longer control the market

Figure: Landings in Denmark vs. Norway
Lessons learned

Key elements in establishing a high value market for matjes herring

• Control over an exclusive market

• High value niche product - Maintaining a high quality

• Transparency in sales

• Strong incentives for all involved parties
Overview of todays market

• There are no longer special regulation for trading Matjes Herring
• Herring are sold at online auctions through Norges Sildesalgslag
• The prices at the auction set the standard for fixed trade agreements
Thank you for your attention