

Vónin's international reach increases as the company focuses on fuel economy and environmentally friendly fishing gear—with successful purse seine nets and pelagic trawls attracting vessel owners from across the world.

FAROESE FISHING gear major Vónin has maintained a pool of knowledge and skill around pelagic fishing that the company is now seeing an increasing demand for. According to Jógvan S. Jacobsen, head of pelagic sales, the nature of the pelagic business is one of steady change—not surprisingly in a sector that bases its activities on migratory species.

“For a number of years there was a lot of focus on blue whiting and pelagic trawl gear to catch it,” Mr. Jacobsen said. “Now that blue whiting quotas have been cut to their lowest ever levels, there is less demand for such gear; instead we see a growing demand for gear for horse mackerel, while gear for herring and mackerel fishing has been in constant demand for years.”

As herring, mackerel, blue whiting, and capelin are caught in northern European waters, Vónin’s market for the purse seine and trawl gear used in such fisheries is largely domestic and regional. With horse mackerel, however, one of the challenges is the fact that the fishing operations take place in a very different part of the world.

“Herring, mackerel, blue whiting, capelin—all this fishing is right on our



VÓNIN ADVANCES IN PELAGIC FISHING GEAR

doorstep, and much of the catch is landed here and in neighboring countries,” said sales manager Søren Havmand.

“Horse mackerel is an entirely different story, with many factory vessels fishing in the Southern Pacific; at that kind of distance, that calls for a whole new approach to service and supplying spare parts.”

Owing to high fuel prices, there has been a renewed interest in purse seining for catching herring, mackerel, and capelin close to the surface.

“Compared to pelagic trawling, purse seining is a highly fuel-efficient method, and an added advantage is that quality is also better,” Mr. Havmand said. “Norwegian processors are pre-

pared to pay a premium for purse-caught mackerel in particular.”

According to reports (early 2010), the Norwegian fleet was catching 50,000 to 100,000 tonnes of herring a week—much of which comes from vessels that rely on purse seining for most of their year’s fishing.

INNOVATION: As most of the Faroese fleet’s newest and finest vessels fish with Vónin pelagic trawls and purse seine gear, the company is now working on taking its expertise in this field to other markets as well.

“This is gear that works well and we have a strong track record,” said Mr. Havmand.

Delivering purse seine gear at Fuglafjørður; Søren Havmand, left, with Jógvan S. Jacobsen (below); pumping in blue whiting from pelagic trawl (bottom left).

Mr. Jacobsen said, explaining that the materials used are top-quality nylon for the body of the net, with production carried out under strict supervision of Vónin’s own technicians.

“The gear is inspected when it arrives in the Faroes at our Fuglafjørður net loft and final assembly is completed here. With the cooperation we have with our partners, we’re able to maintain the traditional Vónin quality, while at the same time we can offer highly competitive prices.”

Mr. Jacobsen said that there are opportunities for vessel owners in the UK, Iceland, Denmark, and elsewhere to take advantage of the experience Vónin has at its disposal, with the gear custom-designed and built to suit each skipper’s requirements and the vessel’s dimensions.

“The skippers of Norðborg, Fagraberg, Jupiter, and Finnur Fríði have all expressed their satisfaction with the gear we have supplied for them and now the new Tróndur í Gøtu has also been fitted out with a full package of purse seine and pelagic trawl gear from us.”

Mr. Jacobsen added: “We have been supplying the Faroese fleet with both purse seine and trawl gear for many years.”

This is nonetheless a highly competitive market and purse seine gear is labor-intensive to produce with a great deal of precision handwork involved.

“For a number of years we have had a successful working relationship with manufacturers that produce the netting,”

Vónin has grown into a fully international operation that reaches far beyond the Faroe Islands, with subsidiaries and partner companies across the Atlantic.

Innovation has always been an integral part of the business and over the

Vónin

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Developer and manufacturer of fishing gear for the international markets.
Reseller of related products.

Advice, international service, repairs.
Own net lofts with sea terminals at Fuglafjørður, Tórshavn, Nuuk, Sisimiut.

Offices: Faroe Islands, Greenland, Canada.

- Bottom trawls
- Shrimp trawls
- Midwater trawls
- Semi-pelagic trawls
- Purse seine nets
- Nets for fish farming
- Sorting grids, nets
- Trawl doors
- Ropes, wires, twines
- Chains, shackles
- Spare parts
- Accessories

years a growing number of research and development projects have been undertaken in cooperation with marine research institutes.

“It is expected that the use of environmentally friendly bottom trawls will become increasingly mandatory,” said Vónin’s managing director Hjalmar Petersen. “As trawlmakers we have a responsibility to continually come up with new designs and solutions.”



MARIA OLSEN