

WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED FISHING OPERATION

An integrated traceability and quality system that links fishing and processing data with logistics and sales, together with an unmatched design for full utilization of catch, may help explain Norðborg's compelling success story.

SINCE HER arrival in late 2009, the Norðborg has continued to impress every observer of Klaksvík's queen-of-the-seas trawler. The advantage of the ship, the world's most highly developed pelagic processing vessel, lies in a series of features that include a meticulously thought-out design along with some less visible elements. With a gross 237 million DKK (32m EUR) worth of sales made in 2010, Norðborg is expected to deliver a similar level of performance this year.

The fact that almost one-fourth of the value of last year's catch originated from fish meal and marine oil made of factory offcuts might be seen as one, but certainly not the only, symbol of the Norðborg concept of full utilization of all catches.

Behind the remarkably smooth operations of fishing, processing, storage, marketing, logistics, and sales, lies a whole philosophy of sustainability, effectiveness, and transparency — reflected in an integrated, computerized quality and traceability system. Linking activities at sea with those at the office ashore, the system organizes data related to every

fishing trip and every catch with a wealth of details attached, making every end product unit backtrackable through a unique identifying code.

Said Eyðun Rasmussen, managing director of Hvalnes (a.k.a. Christian í Grótinum), the Norðborg's owner and operator: "This system is based on standard quality and traceability software however customized to meet our particular needs and requirements. The idea is full utilization of data in an integrated, transparent system that makes our operations more effective, both on board the vessel and here at the office."

"Having full traceability for every catch makes a tremendous difference for effective and efficient operations throughout the entire business," said Pól Huus Sólstein, managing partner of Atlantic Pelagic Faroe, the company that takes care of sales on behalf of Norðborg.

"This provides us with an incredible level of control with the result that product complaints are virtually non-existent, as we now have full overview of potential issues and are able to communicate much more effectively with our clients as well as our fishermen. It also makes logistics much easier and quicker as we know exactly what we are dealing with even before the ship arrives here."

FATTY MACKEREL: Considering the Norðborg's capability to process all of its catch on board while turning offcuts into high quality fishmeal and marine oil, the vessel can be seen as a prototype em-



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bodying the ultimate in fishing and processing versatility, operational independence, and time efficiency.

"We have a high degree of flexibility with regard to fishing and processing as well as marketing and sales," Mr. Rasmussen noted.

Much has been said in praise of the Norðborg's deck layout for trawling and purse seining, the processing plant, and the refrigerated fish room which can hold 1,400 tonnes of frozen products, in addition to the 1,230m³ RSW (refrigerated sea water) tank capacity for fresh fish. Then there's the fish meal and

marine oil factory along with storage facilities for those products.

"Our meal and oil is a product category that has a high potential for upward movement," Mr. Sólstein said. "The raw material is kept absolutely fresh throughout the process and the end product we offer is therefore of a higher quality than can be obtained from onshore factories."

Fish for human consumption, however, remains by far the most valuable part of the business with herring, mackerel, blue whiting, and capelin generating sales of some 180m DKK (24m EUR) alongside the 57m DKK (8m EUR) or so

brought in by meal and oil. Herring fillets, single or butterfly, skinless or skinned, represent a major product category, along with headed and gutted mackerel. Other categories include whole frozen herring, mackerel, blue whiting, and capelin.

"The factory allows for quite a number of options," Mr. Rasmussen added. "Not counting meal and oil, we basically offer some 20 different products with the species we catch and the current configuration of equipment."

That helps keep the 3-strong sales-force busy year round.

Christian í Grótinum

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Fishing vessel owner and operator, exporter of seafood and fish meal.
Species: herring, mackerel, horse mackerel, capelin, blue whiting.

Combined purse seiners/pelagic trawlers:
Norðborg KG 689 (2,351 GT)
Christian í Grótinum KG 690 (1,920 GT)

Managing director Eyðun Rasmussen; catching blue whiting (opposite bottom); Norðborg trawling (below).

"Mackerel caught in Faroese waters came up as a new product last year," said Mr. Sólstein. "Everybody used to catch it off Norway and land it there during winter; but all of a sudden thousands of tonnes of Faroese mackerel caught in May hit the markets."

Mr. Rasmussen said: "At first we worried over the fact that the Faroese mackerel is more fatty; but that didn't turn out to be the big issue we'd expected."

