

Fishing gear manufacturer Vónin has designed a range of pelagic trawls of all sizes to meet growing demand from the new summer mackerel fishery in the Faroese exclusive economic zone.

INCREASED CATCH quotas for mackerel in the Faroese EEZ have, together with good fishing off North Africa and in the Pacific region, triggered demand for specially designed mackerel gear from fishing gear major Vónin. To meet the need for pelagic gear as fisheries get underway in the summer, Vónin has adapted its mackerel trawl designs for vessels across the range from 500 hp all the way up to 10,000 hp.

According to Jógvan S. Jacobsen, in charge of Vónin's pelagic sales, there has been an upswing in pelagic activity in the Faroe Islands with more than just the established operators now getting a share of the mackerel fishery, and this extends to smaller inshore trawlers.

On the quayside at Fuglafjørður, home to Vónin's pelagic division, the fishmeal plant and the cold store ensure a constant traffic of pelagic fishing vessels in and out of the bustling port. Expanded production elsewhere, at Kollafjørður, is likewise expected to become a strong incentive for vessels to land in the Faroe Islands, which in turn could bring Vónin more business from foreign vessels.

"We have been working more than ever on mackerel trawls," Mr. Jacobsen



MAREK OLSEN

Jógvan S. Jacobsen, pelagic sales, with Sámal Olsen, left, pelagic trawls production foreman; flume tank tests (bottom left); pelagic trawler/purse seiner Jupiter taking a purse seine net (bottom right).

NEW GEAR DESIGNS FOR NEW MACKEREL FISHERY

said. "In fact it's practically a new line of business. If you go back a few years, only those fishing horse mackerel in the Pacific were using this specialized gear. Then last year every Faroese trawler was on mackerel, using herring gear. Well, now things have changed."

Meanwhile Vónin scored a coup last year by taking on a new head of research and development in the shape of Kristian Zachariassen, who was persuaded to leave the Faroe Marine Research Institute to bring his expertise to Vónin.

The Faroese mackerel fishery is cen-

tered around pelagic trawling rather than purse seining, unlike mackerel fishing in Norway which exclusively uses purse seines.

Mr. Jacobsen said: "This is a new fishery as mackerel has always been winter fishing before, with tight marks that can be taken with a purse seine, or with trawl gear if the marks sit deeper. But over the summer the mackerel are close to the surface and too widely dispersed for purse seining to be an option. Instead, a trawl method developed, and this is specifically a mode of pair trawling that

to the different noise signatures of pair teams that aren't fishing directly in line with the shoals they are targeting.

"The pair trawling method here makes it easier to keep the gear high in the water and tends to edge fish into the net, instead of having the marks running scared ahead of single trawler and its gear spread with a pair of doors. Although the fish are abundant and those who have been working solo have done well, there is a remarkable difference. Pair gear catches five to six times more than a trawl of the same size towed by a single trawler."

As far as concerns the Faroese fishing fleet, purse seining is limited to capelin and an occasional mackerel shot. Accordingly, Fuglafjørður pelagic vessel Jupiter took delivery of a new Vónin purse seine ahead of this year's capelin season and was quickly able to take its full quota.

"The fishing took place through some bad weather and we had no gear damage, even with shots of 1100 tonnes, and we didn't have to worry about busting the net or losing it under the surface," skipper Finnbjørn Mikkelsen reported.

Jupiter's purse seine is in fact a particularly robust set of gear designed in cooperation with skipper Mikkelsen, with a corkline double-rigged with 10-liter floats and the body of the gear constructed in twine sizes two grades heavier than normal.

Although Vónin's technicians have decades of purse seine experience, this

Vónin

Head Office:
Bakkavegur 22, FO-530 Fuglafjørður

www.vonin.com

E-Mail: info@vonin.com

Tel.: +298 474200

Fax: +298 474201

Managing Director: Hjalmar Petersen

Developer and manufacturer of fishing gear and aquaculture equipment 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, mackerel trawls, semi-pelagic trawls, purse seine nets, sorting grids and nets, trawl doors, ropes, wires, twines, chains, shackles, spare parts, accessories

Nets for fish farming, float frames, drum net washers, mooring systems

method is becoming increasingly used for only specific applications such as capelin, with developments in trawl technology replacing some purse seining activity.

"For years there has been a tradition of purse-caught fish fetching higher prices at auction in Norway and Denmark," Mr. Jacobsen said. "But there have been major improvements in codend and pumping technology and today there is hardly any quality difference between trawl and purse caught fish — which makes trawling even more interesting."

