

HOOKED ON HADDOCK

Situated right next to prime fishing grounds with excellent transport connections, Leirvík's Hvilvtenni delivers fresh fillets straight from the ocean.

WHETHER YOUR NEXT meal is fish and chips or a delicious monkfish dish, chances are you'll be sinking your teeth into a piece of whitefish caught in Faro-

ese waters only a few hours steaming from the industrious village of Leirvík. Highly skilled in fishing and fish processing, the people of Leirvík are keen on making the best of the

constant influx of freshly caught fish to their harbor. One of the main players there, Hvilvtenni, operates a fish landing station together with a fish trading and processing facility.

In addition to haddock, Hvilvtenni handles cod and coley, as well as a few other more expensive species such as monkfish and, occasionally catfish and redfish. Since 1996 the company has exported its fish products to the UK and other European countries, processing up to 2000 tonnes annually.

"Haddock is our number one specialty," said Hvilvtenni's owner and Managing Director, Kjartan Joensen. "We deliver both fresh iced and frozen fillets in several different forms, such as skin-on or off, pin bone in or removed. There is also the option of having the frozen products glazed."

Situated on the eastern coast of Eysturoy, about half-way between the southern and northern ends of the island, Leirvík is close to the main fishing port of Klaksvík as well as to the central parts of the Faroes, including the capital of Tórshavn. As such, Leirvík is in perfect proximity to the prime inshore fishing grounds north of the islands.

"The obvious advantage of this location," continued Mr Joensen, "is

Employee Mirjam Hansen with colleagues at the fillet processing line.

that a great number of boats catch their fish just a few hours away from here and so we're able to offer a product that has a very high degree of freshness and quality. We're simply right next to where the fish is caught, which gives us maximum access to the freshest fish."

A BALANCE IN THE MIX: Exclusively purchasing from longline vessels when dealing with fresh fish, Hvilvtenni has, according to Mr Joensen, a strong position in both fresh and frozen fish products.

"We're able to sell the fish before it's even caught," Mr Joensen added, half-joking, half-serious. "What we deliver on a Friday is often what comes in on a Thursday. But apart from the fresh fish business, we're also very strong in frozen fillets, thanks to our cold storage facility and working capacity."

In other words, fresh fish from the wild is in fact a rather special commodity which defies too much detailed planning. The very idea of fishing in the middle of the North Atlantic is bound to imply some degree of natural uncertainty: the sea, the weather, the currents—all of which can be tricky, especially in the winter.

Although Faroese fishermen know the waters around the islands intimately, and they are extremely skilled at navigating under almost any conditions, the seas are sometimes

just too rough and ships and boats simply have to stay berthed until the weather eases.

Mr Joensen, who himself used to captain a large fishing vessel, noted: "Leirvík's harbor is both safe and well fitted to our needs and luckily fresh fish is never too far away. But it's the people that make up our business, and the great thing about Hvilvtenni is our excellent staff who really know how to do their job. While some of them have a whole lifetime of experience in fish handling and processing, others are quite young; but I think the mix strikes the right balance."

As to logistics, Hvilvtenni's facilities, including its sea landing station, are strategically located at the harbor; the company's forklift trucks make movements of cases and pallets back and forth across the quayside between fishing vessels and the company's spacious fish terminal an easy and convenient process. And with road transport readily available and regular shipments from the Faroes likely to improve within the near future, the prospects for further

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Suppliers of fish and seafood products, fresh and frozen.

Groundfish species:

Haddock, cod, coley (saithe) haddock, ocean perch (redfish), monkfish, and other popular North Atlantic groundfish species.

Seafood products:

Fillets and portions — fresh or frozen, skin-on or off, pin bone in or removed.

developing fish exports from Leirvík look bright.

"We have shipments to the UK every Monday and hopefully soon on Tuesdays too," Mr Joensen said. "Every Thursday there are shipments to Denmark and on Fridays there are shipments to the UK and Denmark. In my opinion the connections are quite good but we are looking forward to seeing further improvements in the near future."



MARIA OLSEN



Kjartan Joensen, owner and managing director of Hvilvtenni.