

John Delrosario: There will be no more commercial harvesting of abalones. Anybody that wanted to get them for sport, I'm a sport fisherman, for example, had to not only follow a very strict set of rules and guidelines on how many and how to obtain them, but you have to go north of the Golden Gate Bridge to the Oregon border. It's only where it's allowed to sport dive for wild abalones. Then even that, it's April through November, skipping them up to June.

Abalones are very important in historical resource in California. But around the world, abalones are a much more popular food source. People in Asia have been eating abalones for thousands of years. As you can expect, Americans only being in this kind of zone for three hundred or so years, we didn't really ever have abalones to eat and it was never really a big part of our tradition or our dining tradition, so to speak. The main basis of all of our customers are Asians that live domestically in North America. We used to ship a lot to Japan, but there we get a better price and it's easier for us to ship to the different markets, whether it be anywhere from the East Coast to Canada to the Pacific Northwest to the south. So, we have a lot of customers we ship a lot of abalone off to. Why do we grow red abalones? We grow red abalones because of all the seven species in California that exist, red abalones are the biggest. Therefore, in a time sensitive process like we have here, which takes us about three years, three and a half years to get a marketable product, it helps us by starting with the abalone that gets the largest, the fastest. Out of all the sixty or so species of abalone in the world, red abalones are still the largest. The world record is twelve and five sixteen inches and that was harvested by actually one of my boss's old dive buddies, John Pepper. Our whole system here is land-based. Other than let's say the farm down in Monterey where they perform something called cage culture, where their abalones are actually in the ocean but contained in cages or a suitable environment where they can grow and be fed and harvested. But basically, they're submerged in the water so they don't utilize a pumping kind of technology like we do. We grow every stage of abalone here on the farm. We're all self-sufficient, which means we spawn the abalones here. We rear the babies. We take them through their different stages, and then we sell them off to market. Other facilities are more of a culture facility where they buy seed from another entity and they will culture their abalones up to a certain marketable size. A lot of people will do this because it's easier. It's very difficult to raise an abalone from day one to year one. It's a lot of work and it's a very careful process. So, that's why a lot of other people don't have the resources. They don't have the intelligence. They don't have the technology to do so. But we do it all here on site. We raise the abalones through different stages and it's kind of interesting because I have a set of high school kids in front of me and it's almost like the levels that you go through in high school. Be it that our nursery level is kind of the freshman class moving through the different stages till you get to the senior class and/or which would be the market size. When they're marketable and they're sellable, it's like when you guys graduate and move on in the world. So, when the abalones get harvested and sent to market, everybody ideally moves up the ladder a little bit and it frees up room down in the nursery. Therefore, I do a couple more spawning and fill up and create the new freshman class. We have different ways of growing the different ages of abalones because just as a freshman, you probably wouldn't be taking advanced to calculus. You'd have to go through a couple of different math classes to get there. I can't take my baby abalones right out of the laboratory, put them into the raceway system where we grow the bigger abalones. That method just doesn't work. It's not set up for them. So, there are different ways to grow the different ages of abalones and that's what we have. I'll try to walk you guys around that. Usually, I talk about the water first, but we're going to talk about the water last. Before we start walking through any of the tanks, just real quick, are there any questions you guys have for me

or for basic questions?

Female Speaker: You said, you supply them here. Do you also supply some of the other farms with the...

JD: No. Maybe somewhere down the road I could but be it that it is kind of difficult. Everything that I can produce is just allotted for. It's anything we can produce, we can sell. It's a blessed business where there's always going to be more supply than demand. So, it's kind of up to me and the farm to produce that because it's not really an issue to be able to sell it. Yes.

FS: So, these are just better of how they would on water or both?

JD: There are benefits to both. One of the benefits to them doing a cage culture is they don't suffer the large electric bill that we do. You're going to hear noises like an air blow running behind you guys. There's other machines that are going all the time. That basically creates the environment that the abalones need to live in. I'm going to be biased because I think my way of growing abalones is better than anybody else anyways. [laughter]

But I do and we do have much more control over all the stages in the growing environments here on land than they would in the ocean. One of the main differences you could see on a Monterey Abalone and ours is a lot of the bioactivity or the barnacle growth that grows on the backs of their shells just because basically they're in the water all the time. We don't really get that. So, our shells are much more beautiful and without any kind of stuff on the backside. I think personally we grow our abalones a little faster. When you do that, different things happen. You have a thinner shell and more meat. So, you're selling the same weight product. You have a hundred-gram abalone and if you have a really thick shell, well most of the weights in the shell, it's not in the meat. But if you ask me, I think my way. Any other questions? Alright, so we're going to go cruise into the nursery and I'm going to...

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