

# Project Overview

The Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers and the School District of LaCrosse worked together to put more fish on their school menus. The district wanted to move past the Midwest stereotype of the Friday Night Fish Fry, and find new fish recipes that students really like.

The testing was designed with several components. Student classes were introduced to Alaska pollock and its nutritional benefits the day before the test. This ensured the students were aware of what was going on and had a sense of involvement. Learning about their food provided them the opportunity and the curiosity to try the food samples, especially when a student is weary of new foods.

For the tasting event, four recipes were tested in five classes with a total of 93 students. The recipes included: Vietnamese Turmeric Alaska Pollock with Chilled Noodles, Alaska Pollock Spring Rolls, Alaska Pollock Tacos and Alaska Pollock Surfer's Pizza.

In addition to scores and comments from the students, feedback from school nutrition staff were also gathered. The top two recipes were then added to the menu. The Winners: Alaska Pollock Surfer's Pizza and Alaska Pollock Tacos.

Student comments:

- “Way better than I thought it would be”
- “Tastes like real food.”
- “I like the fish - A LOT!”
- “Tastes like authentic Vietnamese food.”
- “This should be on the lunch menu.”

Best Practices and Take-a-ways:

- ▶ The students' favorites were based on two of the most loved recipe concepts (pizza and tacos) with Alaska pollock added. The key take -a-way here is to introduce new foods with familiar concepts.
- ▶ Listen to the students, they liked the fish even when adults thought they wouldn't. Menuing new food items can be challenging. When adults make the decisions for the students, the students are missing out on a new food. Trust your students, after all, they are the ones eating the food. The students were open to new ways of trying fish.

