

Halibut PEI Completes Expansion

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Land-based facility in Victoria, Prince Edward Island, grows by 20,000 square feet

VICTORIA — Halibut have a new home to grow in Prince Edward Island.

Halibut P.E.I. has just completed a 20,000-square-foot expansion of its current land-based facility in Victoria.

The expansion will help the company increase its production of land-based halibut and meet a growing market demand for their product. The company has also purchased new state-of-the-art equipment to help grow market-sized halibut.

The expansion will increase the annual production capacity from 30 metric tonnes to 70 metric tonnes, says company president Jim Dunphy.

“One thing I would like to point out is proven concept is behind us,” Dunphy told The Guardian Thursday.

“We’ve been growing halibut for five years so we know that we can grow halibut to market size.”

He adds that simply adding more tanks can increase capacity.

A second facility, he says, could open at another location on P.E.I. in the not-too-distant future.

“There’s been a number of test wells driven in various places in Prince Edward Island and we know that there is good salt water there,” he says.

“In terms of putting another building up, it’s going to be a case of finding some people that want to invest in halibut . . . these (facilities) can go anywhere in Prince



Jim Dunphy, president of Halibut P.E.I. Inc., stands next to a large fish tank in the company's recently expanded facility in Victoria. The expansion will increase the annual production capacity of the operation from 30 metric tonnes to 70 metric tonnes.

Edward Island if the water is available. Then what falls out of that is if you had three or four of these facilities around, you would need to establish a processing plant.”

He notes a processing plant would operate 12 months a year since farming land-based halibut isn’t governed by quotas or weather.

The current facility will employ 11 employees at peak operation.

Federal Fisheries Minister Gail Shea calls Halibut P.E.I. a real success story.

“And these are the types of businesses that can bring jobs to rural P.E.I. and they’re year-round jobs,” she says.

The federal government and the P.E.I. government have made a combined investment of more than \$1.2 million to assist with the expansion and purchase of new specialized equipment.

Ottawa’s contribution is a \$500,000 repayable investment made through ACOA’s Business Development Program.

Halibut P.E.I. currently sells its fish to restaurants in the province as well as to markets in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary and Vancouver.