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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISHERY BY-PRODUCTS TO BE STUDIED

Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today the allocation of \$273,000 for a research program aimed at improving markets for fish meals and fish oils. These markets now handle approximately one-fourth of the total domestic commercial fish production each year.

The Fish and Wildlife Service will make the study under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act. The program calls for development of a quality index for fish meals; the devising of new industrial uses for fish oils; and biological studies of menhaden, chiefly used in meal and oil production.

An allocation of \$65,000 has been made for the remainder of fiscal year 1955. Fish meal is used as feed for poultry, swine, dairy animals, and domestic pets, and the quality index will be used to show the nutritive worth of the by-product. The index will be used at processing plants and distribution points.

Fishing-industry scientists, feed manufacturers, agricultural colleges, and consultant laboratories will participate with the Service on the project, with most of the laboratory work being done by Service laboratory staff workers. Testing by controlled feeding will be handled by universities and similar institutions on a contract basis. The project, which will supplement work being done by the Service under its annual appropriation for "investigation of resources," is expected to continue in fiscal years 1956 and 1957.

The program's fish-oil research, for which \$170,000 has been ear-marked for the balance of fiscal year 1955, is necessitated by a surplus of domestic fats and oils coupled with the fact that fish oils, though having special qualities, appear to be used interchangeably with other oils. Studies of potential uses peculiar to fish oils are expected to enable producers to seek new markets where competition is based on merit rather than price. The work of the Service will consist of outlining the studies, negotiating contracts, supervising contract work, evaluating results, and disseminating the findings to industry for commercial application. Major studies will be made by universities and other nonprofit institutions on a contract basis. The project supplements work being done by the Service under its annual appropriation for resource investigation. It is expected to continue into fiscal years 1956 and 1957.

The biological-research phase of the program, for which \$38,000 has been set aside for the remainder of fiscal year 1955, will feature life-history studies of menhaden. Most of the work will be done by the Service, operating from Beaufort, N. C., where a fully equipped laboratory is maintained. Intensive sampling will be

done to develop information on age and growth rates. This information will be used to determine whether the menhaden range is inhabited by separate groups of this species or one large, freely mixing population. Age analysis will furnish an insight into the success of yearly broods and reveal prospects for future abundance. As the project progresses, related studies on spawning areas, spawning periods, and nursery grounds will be made. The project is expected to continue in fiscal 1956.

The basic purpose of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act is "to promote the free flow of domestically produced fishery products in commerce." Designed to strengthen the American commercial fishing industry as a whole, the legislation provides that an amount equal to 30 percent of duties collected under the customs laws on fishery products shall be transferred annually for three years from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior. Expenditures for any one year may not exceed \$3,000,000.

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