**Video Title:** Get Hooked on Sustainable Seafood: Tactics to Avoid Wasting Your Sustainable Seafood (video #4)

**Video Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mS1Ix2bZpNA>

**Transcript:**

Barton Seaver: In this video, I'll talk about some of the challenges faced in modern restaurant operations and some of the strategies to identify sustainable usage tactics that will lowers your costs, keep your guests happy, and increase the sustainability metrics of your seafood program.

There are a number of different tactics that we as operators can use to diminish seafood waste. Seafood, by its nature is a highly perishable food item and the clock is always ticking. One of the great ways to reduce seafood waste through spoilage is to utilize frozen seafood.

Frozen seafood, sometimes referred to as fresh frozen or frozen fresh seafood can help reduce the spoilage simply by allowing you to take the seafood out of the freezer as needed. Now frozen seafood has in the past earned a bad reputation. Sometimes it was used as a means to stop fish from spoiling. However, may of today's costal processing facilities as well as even vessels at sea have the ability to freeze fish just hours after its out of the water and freeze it very quickly.

When seafood is frozen very quickly, it ruptures the cell walls less and so ends up having a better quality filet or product afterward. This helps not only get pristine quality seafood but also delivered to you in a great quality form.

Another one of the ways in which chefs have a direct impact on the sustainability of the product that they're serving is in the portion of that product that we serve. Too much of anything is just that, too much. While many health experts and leading organizations recommend that we eat seafood at least two times a week, recommendations are for portions of about four ounces. Anything more than that is simply not needed for good nutrition. So reducing portion size of seafood automatically increases its sustainability simply because we're using less.

However, this comes at the risk of not meeting customer expectations for value and presentation. There are a couple of techniques that chefs can use in order to meet customer expectations but also deliver on value and achieve sustainability. One of them is slicing the seafood so that its portion covers more of the plate. The other is simply to serve it with a greater array and volume of accompanying ingredients such as grains, greens, and other vegetables.

There's a lot of fish in the sea, you've heard that before, but there's not always a lot of fish on the menu, at least in terms of variety. And looking to diversity of seafood as a foundation of sustainability is a big opportunity. Research has recently shown us that as much as 44% of all the edible seafood in the United States is thrown out every year. That's enough seafood to feed 10 to 12 million people. Diversity is a key foundation to any sustainable seafood program.

Sometimes our menus get in the way of purchasing sustainable seafood. Say we have a customer favorite of cod baked in spiced tomato sauce but we're having trouble finding sustainable cod at a price point we can afford. Well, maybe we should make the dish sustainable, not the fish necessarily. Let me explain. That cod baked in a spicy marinara sauce? Well, maybe it could be sustainable haddock or Marine Stewardship Council certified dogfish or sustainable pollock from Alaska. There's so many different options that cook virtually the same and when we think about seafood in terms of culinary categories, we allow diversity to become one of the best tools we have to achieve sustainable seafood sourcing. When we sell the dish and not the fish, all of a sudden, we open ourselves up to using the best quality, most sustainable, and bet priced seafood that we can find.

Sustainable seafood has to be your mission, it's your cause, and it must fit your restaurant because (laughs) I mean, ultimately, the first thing we have to sustain is our business, right? Well, that's great because sustainable seafood is delicious, it's profitable, it helps us create story and narrative, and that helps us create loyalty and customer satisfaction. Is that what we're all about?

To learn more about sustainable seafood and how it can impact you and your operations, visit restaurants.org. And always, a big thank you to US Foods for sponsoring these videos on sustainable seafood.