

# Albus provide solutions for prawn tailing

How many skippers have stared from wheelhouses at their crew tailing prawns, wondering why a machine has not been developed for such a back-breaking task?

Finally a solution has arrived that automatically does the job! Inventor Erik Andersen explained that it was not an easy task. "We were originally approached by BIM in 2004 asking whether such technology could be developed and I knew it was a big challenge. Prawns are not easy to work with. Firstly, before tailing the prawns, we had to figure out how to get the prawns to move tail first in the same direction in a single row.

"We tried many different options in our workshop in Denmark, but finally a shaker system proved most effective. After solving this we focussed on how to remove the tail. Having tried initially to mimic the twisting action used in hand tailing the clever engineer worked out a much more rapid way of pinching the head off the prawns."

Erik Andersen explained, "We fitted sensors that detect the correct tailing location and a blunt blade pops the head off which is done in a split second. Having developed the basic machine in the workshop it was important to try it out in the real world. Several sea trials were carried out onboard the MV Syracuse, in the Irish Sea in 2006 and 2007.

Ivan Wilde, owner of the Syracuse explained that "Initially when I saw the machine arrive I was sceptical that it would work or that it would be reliable. However, once some adjustments were made after a few sea trips the test machine worked very well. We had the machine onboard our boat for over six months in 2007



working under ALL weather conditions and it was very reliable."

He was also very happy with the quality of prawns. He added, "The yield from the machine tailed prawns was very good as it identifies the right tailing location on each prawn. When crew tire, they will often start leaving legs and bits of head on prawns". This can cause problem for buyers. But we did not encounter this problem when we were using the machine. This technology is a very important breakthrough for prawn fishermen and I can see it will be an essential piece of equipment on many prawn fishing boats. I have already ordered mine."

And Erik also added that a specific prawn sorting table has also been built that further helps crew sort the catch rapidly. "The stainless steel sorting table has a series of chutes that allows crew to rapidly sort the catch and allow prawns be transported through water hoses to the machine. This allows the prawns to be washed before being tailed and helps to automate the whole process".

Steve Frith, Albus Solutions managing director, now responsible for

He also explained that "We are of course mindful of the 'credit crunch' and have focussed very much in recent months on pushing the price of the technology down as much as possible through careful selection of our manufacturers. We managed to reduce the starting price to €58,000 and with the potential of 40% funding support in Ireland and the UK this leaves the overall cost of €38,600 to fishermen.

Steve pointed out that the machine will quickly pay for itself and commented, "Although the sorting table is optional, it very much complements the machine, as it reduces the need to be lugging baskets around the deck as prawns are directly transferred to the machine". A stand alone prawn sorting table start will cost €14,800. If you have any questions on this technology we would be delighted to talk to you.

You can contact Steve at: [albusolutions@live.com](mailto:albusolutions@live.com) or 00447874688986.

	Manual De-headed	Automated De-headed *
Number of Norway Lobster per minute	37	130 - 135
Weight per hour for size grade of 80 tails per pound	2 stone / 12kg per hour	7 stone / 45kg per hr
Weight per hour for size grade of 60 tails per pound	2.6 stone / 17kg	9.4 stone / 65kg per hr

Represents the capacity of the double shaker de-heading machine

## ALBUS SOLUTIONS LTD



MV Syracuse during trials of the new prawn tailing machine



### How it works

Norway Lobster are selected manually on sorting tables as per normal and placed in the hoppers of the de-heading machine. A conveyor and patented shakers orientate and guide them singly through one of four de-heading units, using state of the art technology to detect the exact de-heading location on each Norway Lobster.

Albus Solutions Ltd, 2 Carlisle Terrace, Derry, BT48 6JX, Northern Ireland  
+44 7874 688 986 Email: [albusolutions@live.com](mailto:albusolutions@live.com)