

# Quality Sonar Equals Quality Fish

## WESMAR Sonar Paid for Itself First Trip Out

Says Veteran New Zealand Skipper

Timing is everything according to veteran Captain Allan Dillon, skipper of the 43-meter New Zealand Factory Trawler Independent 1. It takes impressive talent to Skipper a high tech factory trawler. With Captain Dillon this includes a keen eye on the bottom line. Dillon uses his WESMAR HD800 sonar when shooting the net. His timing is perfect.

“With the WESMAR we can be more consistent and better regulate the size of the catch ensuring better quality,” said Dillon.

Independent 1, owned by Independent Fisheries based in Lyttleton, New Zealand, provides a consistent supply of at-sea frozen Hoki fillets. Hoki is the predominant fishery in New Zealand.

“The sonar paid for itself the first trip out. We had shorter tows, fresher fish, less processing times and the result was a higher quality product,” said Dillon.

“In certain months of the year, Hoki is dispersed making it difficult to catch. Other times of the year, Hoki schools up in abundance. The challenge is catching the right amount so the production crew can fillet at a rate that maintains the best quality of fish. This is where the sonar comes in.”

Advance Trident, Ltd. (ATL) introduced the WESMAR HD800, 27 Khz sonar to Dillon early this year. They knew Dillon as a leading Captain on a world class vessel and as an advocate for using technology to ensure a better product reaches the market.

“The HD800 Sonar has been a great help. It allows us to keep track of the Hoki school. First part of the season we were using the sonar to find and target whatever schools were around and there were not many, so it was a great piece of equipment to have,” said Captain Dillon.

### More Detail with the Sonar

“When there is a dense layer of feed and plankton right through the water column, the sounder will only show a big yellow mass, the



Sonar displays the denser section of the layer quite clearly on the 90 degree vertical split sonar screen and that is what we pull fish out of.”

“Now that we are further into the season we have a different use for the Sonar. We use it to find and target the smaller, less dense schools so we are not running into a solid wall of fish. With 60-meters headline heights, this tends to turn to custard rather quickly.

“An optimum size shot, to maintain quality through the factory, is 15-ton greenweight and this is what we target. One of those blobs the size of your thumbnail on the sonar screen can and has produced well over 40-ton greenweight in a very short time if hit dead center with the trawl. So we target the weaker smaller targets.”

According to Dillon, any tool that assists them in maintaining quality is an asset to the company including the crew’s bonus payments.

Dillon said WESMAR and ATL’s service have been second to none and the long range tutorials via phone and E-Mail were invaluable in the fine tuning and operation of the Sonar.

