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***Report On The Commercial Cariboo Hunt
Carried Out By The Labrador Inuit
Development Corporation
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I n t r o d u c t i o n

This is a report on the Commercial Caribou hunt carried out by the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation (LIDC) during the spring of 1989. The report will outline the actual hunt, the base camp operation the transportation of the caribou to the plant, the skinning operation, the processing line and the marketing of the product.

The 1989 Caribou Hunt

Four of the hunters from Nain went into the hunting area on April 7. They reported that while a few animals were seen there were not enough animals to start a full scale hunt. Later reports from a helicopter in the area showed larger herds of caribou moving into the area. The hunters moved back into the hunting grounds on April 10 and the first caribou were taken on April 11.

The weather created some problems for the hunters, the regular transportation route was changed costing the hunters *one* day of lost hunting time. On several other days the hunters could not leave the base camp because of severe weather conditions.

The hunt ended on April 29 with a total of ten hunting days for the Nain hunters and seven hunting days for the hunters from the Southern communities. A total of **675** animals had been taken of which 586 animals had been eviscerated in accordance with federal inspection standards.

The Base Camp Operations

The base camp was set up prior to the start-up of the hunt. Plywood floors and walls increased the comfort for hunters, base camp workers and the veterinarian. As in the past years the evisceration tent and racks were assembled to a low the gutting to take place away from the wind. The hunters wore! givenaquot

of six animals each per day so that the base camp workers were not over loaded with animals. After the animals were eviscerated they were tagged and placed outside overnight to cool down before being transported to the processing plant. A trail radio system was set up to advise the plant when animals were ready for shipment. This system was also used to order supplies and to check weather conditions at the base camp.

Transportation

As in the previous year the caribou were moved from the base camp to the plant at Nain by local people using snowmobiles. This method has proven to be the most efficient and cost effective to date. The mild weather, during the third week of April forced us to change our transportation route causing a one day delay in hunting time. Approximately fifty percent of the processed meat was flown from Nain to Montreal. The remainder was shipped via C.N. Marine to St. John's and then trucked to the various buyers.

Skinning Operation

The corporation employed eight people in this area of the plant. The operation was very smooth with a good product. Production peaked at twenty-five animals skinned, trimmed and washed in one hour. If more animals are to be taken, the receiving area needs to be enlarged and we need gambrel sticks. Eight (8) animals were rejected at the trimming station due to contamination and muscle worms. The total number of federally inspected animals taken was 578.

Processing Area

The processing area is the slowest part of the production line. A large part of the animal has to be de-boned, which is time consuming. The problem could be solved with more personnel, however, the cryovac machine cannot keep up with increased production. The processing line did manage to keep up with the skinning operation allowing production of seventy-eight animals per day. Nine people were employed in this workplace.

Marketing

Ninety percent of the federally inspected meat is packaged by the side and sold to a company in Quebec City, this has been our most consistent market. A Detroit based company also takes a small amount annually. Just recently the International marketplace has opened up. We are now selling caribou in Japan and discussions are ongoing with Sweden on another potential sale. The Provincial market has grown as well. We have sold all of our 1989 stock and larger repeat orders have been placed. In conclusion, the future looks very bright in the caribou meat processing business.