

Southampton Island Caribou Harvest Executive Summary 2003

The Southampton Island caribou harvest has occurred in each year since 1995. The harvest was initially introduced as a herd management initiative to assist in the control of the caribou population on the island. In light of the tremendous economic benefits realized by the harvest, it has since grown into a viable and sustainable venture for the community. It provides local employment for numerous individual within the community promotes local purchasing and is viewed as an economic success for Coral Harbour. Over the life of the harvest, the project has also gained valuable credibility with Federal and Territorial agencies.

In the first years of operation, the Government of the Northwest Territories was heavily involved in the acquisition of equipment and the set-up of the entity tasked with managing the harvest. The Aiviit HTO, through Tunnuq Harvest, successfully managed the project until 1998 when privatization was negotiated with Leonard Netser of Southampton Meat Co. Leonard has been involved with the harvest since its inception both as Manager of Tunnuq Harvest and then as President of SMC.

The Harvest has grown tremendously over the last several years due in part to Kivalliq Arctic Foods' marketing strategies in North America and also in Europe. The goal is to increase and improve the harvest to become a truly self sustained project. Current levels of government assistance have declined consistently over the years and it is hoped that, in the very near future, government subsidies will not be required to ensure the existence of the annual harvest.

Since its inception, the annual harvest has proven crucial in implementing herd management strategies for the Southampton Caribou population; it has also created much needed seasonal employment to the community of Coral Harbour. Kivalliq Arctic Foods, through its aggressive marketing scheme has managed to gain international recognition for its unique line of products. The harvest currently employs approximately 40 individuals seasonally during the hunt and another 17 full time employees during the processing stages, these incredible employment statistics cannot be ignored considering our fragile economy.

Although the harvest is yet to become a big money maker, through time, experience and cautious investment towards improvements, it has the capability to produce long term sustainability. The inclusion of value added projects such as the local traditional meat plant and the caribou fur/felt projects will surely fuel the need and desire to enhance the existing productivity which will result in increased employment and local benefits to our community.

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