



## SEAWELL ACTIVE PACKAGING SYSTEMS FOR SEAFOOD SEEK TO SOLVE LONG-HELD PROCESSOR PROBLEMS

By Madelyn Kearns

ATLANTA, Georgia-based Aptar Food + Beverage spent over two decades developing food protection solutions and propriety active packaging systems for fresh produce before it turned its attentions to seafood a few years back.

An announcement made by the firm in July indicates that the decision to venture into the new protein market has already started paying off. As of this summer, Aptar Food + Beverage's SeaWell Protective Packaging System – a “first-of-its-kind active packaging solution,” designed specifically to preserve seafood freshness and quality from sea to table – has been launched into more than 3,800 U.S. retail store locations.

Featuring integrated technology capable of absorbing excess fluids that would otherwise accumulate around seafood proteins, the SeaWell system works to stave off product breakdown and improve shelf life, effectively solving some of processors' longest-held problems, according to Aptar Food + Beverage Food Protection Vice President and General Manager Neal Watson.

“For years, the industry has sought measures to improve the freshness and shelf life of shipped seafood, as well as ways to improve consumers' experiences,” Watson said. “SeaWell helps solve the challenges seafood distributors face. We are excited to be

partnering with major industry players to expand the use of SeaWell packaging to provide a safer, more reliable option for increasing seafood consumption across the globe.”

Within the SeaWell suite are its patented trays, which integrate wells within the design that house “a proprietary blend of direct food-contact-safe absorbent materials.” SeaWell pouches, meanwhile, are the newest entrant to the range, and are featured on SeafoodSource's Digital Product Showcase. Like the trays, the SeaWell pouches work to extend seafood shelf life and enable expanded distribution, according to Aptar. Shellfish and other hard-shell offerings such as whole crabs, claws, legs, and crawfish are ideal for SeaWell pouch packaging, the company added.

Both SeaWell solutions are available in a variety of sizes, and can be used with fresh and frozen seafood, Aptar confirmed.

Inspiration for the complete SeaWell Protective Packaging System came from Aptar's extensive past honing its craft in other markets, the company recently told SeafoodSource.

**“SEAWELL TECHNOLOGY IS ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE WITH FROZEN-TO-FRESH SEAFOOD.”**

– CHRISTA BIGGS, APTAR FOOD + BEVERAGE

“Aptar has been providing absorbent tray technology for fresh cut fruits and vegetables for over 20 years, serving the largest names in the produce industry,” Christa Biggs, business development manager for Aptar Food + Beverage – Food Protection, said. “In recent years, we have had new technologies in the pipeline looking to solve protein challenges. Seafood, like fresh-cut produce, has high liquid content which creates unique food safety and shelf-life hurdles. We went to work leveraging our designs and technologies to find a new packaging solution for this market.”

When developing SeaWell, the company set out to create a system to offer seafood consumers a more effective and attractive alternative to the protein's traditional packaging configurations.

“With SeaWell, our customers can manage/eliminate high amounts of liquid more effectively than with traditional diaper pads. The SeaWell technology, in combination with the tray design, allow for cleaner handling, better presentation, shelf life extension, and expanded distribution reach for our customers. SeaWell technology is especially effective with frozen-to-fresh seafood, allowing seafood to be packed, frozen, and thawed in the same package because the excess liquid from thaw/purge is locked into the wells and separated from the product,” Biggs explained.

The firm was also mindful of sustainability and curbing food waste when creating its current SeaWell solutions – two themes it will continue to heed heading into 2021.

“We are committed to sustainability and the reduction of food waste,” Biggs said. “We are targeting the development of products that will address these items throughout the supply chain and are continually seeking feedback from our customers and the seafood market, in general, to guide our development efforts where they are needed most. New product launches at major retailers have provided the confidence that we are indeed accomplishing our mission of both reduced waste and reduced mark-downs on key high value items. This is the foundation for our research efforts and we look forward more sustainability focused developments in the future.”

Aptar Food + Beverage is part of AptarGroup, Inc., a designer and manufacturer of a broad range of drug delivery, consumer product dispensing, and active packaging solutions. Headquartered in Crystal Lake, Illinois, AptarGroup has 14,000 dedicated employees in 20 countries. ■