**Week ending 4/25/2015**

My sixth week consisted of working in Seafood

Each morning began with us checking the dates on all of our cases for Ready To Cook and packaged seafood to ensure we were pulling any product that was out of date for freshness. We would shrink any product we needed to pull that was past date. Then we would begin filling the front case with all of the different fresh seafood we would sell for the day. Monday through Wednesday our case was not completely full. However, starting on Thursday we would fill the case as our sales typically would pick up later in the week through the weekend. We also brought in whole perch and whole bass for display starting on Thursday. Starting Thursday, we also brought in perch, calamari, and Chesapeake oysters that we typically do not sell Monday through Wednesday. Orders for each day would need to be submitted by 9 am. The only day we did not receive any product was on Wednesday. Once we finished filling the case each morning, we would go through the production guide to figure out what needed to be made for Ready to Cook each day. I learned that each store has different options for “Ready to Cook” based on their top selling items. We used the job aids to guide us in making the “Ready to Cook” items. A lot of the products we sold used food from Olde World Cheese that consisted of different cheeses as well as some items from the olive bar. We would use PICS to purchase these items to our department. We always labeled all of the products we opened for “Ready to Cook” with the date we opened it and any of the stuffing we made for toppings on the products. When we labeled “Ready to Cook”, we would have to date the product according to the date on the box that the fish came in. Once we finished Ready To Cook we would stock frozen to make sure our case was full. Every three hours we would do temp checks on the display we had in prepared foods. However, on Thursday and Friday we had two more cases we needed to add for temp checks for the whole perch and bass we were selling for those days. On Tuesday our case up front was not working. All of our temps were coming out to be 52 degrees and we needed them to be less than 41. It turns out there was an issue with the case that needed to be fixed. We were able to pull the product and save it from becoming shrink. Throughout the day we would periodically check “Ready to Cook” to see if we needed to make more to get us through the day. I also learned a lot about each fish we were selling. For instance, cod always comes in skinned since it is highly likely to have parasites in it. It goes through a special process under light to look for parasites and removing them before they get shipped. We also date the tags of all of the oysters we sell with the date we put the oysters out and the date we sold the last oyster. These records are kept for a year in case there is an issue with oysters we sold, and we need to reference it. I also learned how to skin a salmon fillet and I was able to get pan seared certified with Chef Ryan with a salmon fillet! The store would like all employees in meat and seafood to become certified in pan searing. I learned that farm raised fish we sell doesn’t mean that the fish was raised in a tank on a farm. A lot of the farm-raised fish will live in a lake, but we will feed it the food it needs so we can control what the fish is actually eating. In the wild we do not know what the fish is eating or what its living conditions are like. Friday was a pretty busy day and it was filled with customers who were very particular on how they wanted their seafood. It helped me appreciate the expertise this department needs in order to serve our customers and make them happy. Filleting a whole fish or taking the skin off of haddock is not an easy job and takes training to perfect. Also, the knowledge that you need on seafood takes years of experience. Customers asked me how to make salmon burgers (skin off or on). They wanted to know the difference between farm raised and wild. They had questions on cooking techniques as well. There is so much knowledge that goes into working in this area.

**Technology Opportunities**

Going back to taking product from other departments that I mentioned in week five, I believe we could create a technology which departments could notify other areas like Olde World Cheese on what they will need for each week to make their “Ready to Cook” items. Based on the production guides we used in Seafood they should have a good idea on what they will need to make each week. Using this they should be able to predict what products and the quantity they will need each week. This would ensure that OWC is not short and product and they will be able to order the extra product Seafood would need (or other departments) each week.

I also thought with all of the question’s customers have on cooking seafood it might be cool if we had a kiosk or something that customers could use to research questions they have about seafood located in the seafood department. We could host the videos for seafood on recipes or techniques to use so that customers can have a reference at their fingertips as well in the store. A lot of questions customers had been on cooking techniques or just questions in general on how to cook what they were buying because they have not cooked it before.