
Freshwater fishery

Canada's freshwater fisheries are concentrated mainly around the Great Lakes and in central Canada. Aquatic resources in this part of the country support a vibrant freshwater fishery sector that employs almost 8 000 fishermen. In 1985, landings in the freshwater fishery totalled 44 000 tonnes with a total value of \$62 million. The United States represents the major export market for Canada's freshwater species (\$36 million in 1985), followed by the European Economic Community and Japan.

Canadian fishing industry quality standards

The Canadian government, through the Inspection Branch of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, is responsible for administering the Fish Inspection Act and Regulations. It has the responsibility for assuring that fish and fish products produced in Canada, imported into Canada or exported from Canada, are safe and of good quality; were produced under sanitary conditions; and are properly packaged and labelled. These responsibilities are currently met through the operation of a Fish Inspection Program carried out by a staff of 488 full-time and seasonal inspectors located in all 10 provinces and the Northwest Territories. There are 130 field inspection centres across the country supported by 23 strategically located laboratories.

Fish processing plants

Federal registration is a requirement for all 990 plants that process fish for export (interprovincially or internationally). In order to qualify for registration, the construction, equipment and operating conditions in the plants must be in accordance with the Fish Inspection

Regulations. To ensure that these conditions are met and maintained at a satisfactory level, all plants are subject to periodic inspection by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Quality improvement initiatives

In 1980, following extensive consultations with the fishing industry, the federal government announced a comprehensive program to further improve the quality and consistency of Canadian fish products. Today the Quality Improvement Program influences each sector of the industry from harvesting through distribution, and the following elements have been introduced:

- **vessel certification**, requiring that all fishing vessels meet specified requirements for construction, equipment and operation;
- **construction, equipment and operation standards** for unloading, holding, handling and transportation;
- **dockside grading**, promoting the grading of raw material at point-of-sale to specified standards applied by government-licensed industry graders.

Exports

Over the past few years, a growing number of countries have enacted legislation that requires imported products to meet health, quality, identity, composition and labelling specifications. In order to facilitate the sale of Canadian fish products to these countries, the federal