

Popsicle pack tends to utilize the smaller lobster sizes and is designed primarily for retail trade. The product is graded into no less than eight size grades from 250 grams to 650 grams.

There are some 65 processing plants which process canned or frozen lobster products in Atlantic Canada. These are located mainly in New Brunswick, PEI and Quebec.

#### FROZEN LOBSTER MEAT

Frozen lobster meat accounts for about 15% of lobster production and refers to lobster which has been cooked, shelled and packed into cans and frozen without heat treatment. Freezing, instead of autoclaving or heat sterilizing the cans, retards bacteria growth without spoiling the texture of the meat.

Frozen lobster meat is commonly referred to as "cold pack". The product must remain frozen until consumed. Five different grades of meat are packed ranging from the highest grade and most expensive tail and claw pack to the lowest grade broken meat pack. Specialty orders are also packed. Such packs might include claw meat only or tail meat only depending upon end use.

The product is packed in three unit sizes, 11.3 oz., 2 lbs. and 5 lbs. The 11.3 oz. Pack is designed for the retail market while the larger sizes are catering packs.

In 1988, the US food and drug administration detected listeria in certain shipments of Canadian lobster meat. This resulted in the introduction of new enhanced sanitation procedures in all Canadian lobster processing plants. Since the introduction of these Good Manufacturing Practices, no trace of listeria has been detected in Canadian lobster meat. Our inspectors monitor the plants on a regular basis and the Food and Drug Administration has since removed the requirement for the compulsory inspection of Canadian product.

#### LOBSTER MARKETS

Canada is the only net exporter of *Homarus americanus* and over 90 per cent of our lobster is exported. The most important markets are the United States, Western Europe and Japan. While the US is the largest market, demand is increasing at a faster rate in both the Europe and Japan.

In the past the industry has been essentially supply driven with production and exports constrained for the most part by seasonality or by variations in resource availability, rather than by market conditions. Heavier than usual catches in 1988 and 1989 coupled with slower growth in all major markets has made suppliers more sensitive to market conditions and opportunities.