

Currently, almost all lobster available in the Hong Kong market is in live form. According to trade contacts, annual consumption is be approximately 1,000-1,500 metric tonnes of lobster. Sizes 1-1½ pound are preferable for Hong Kong hotels and western style restaurants, but, for Chinese restaurants, larger sizes are preferred. Lobster imports are supplied by Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada, with minimal production emanating from local waters and neighbouring countries.

Demand for lobster products is growing steadily in Hong Kong at approximately 10-15 percent annually. In addition, demand for lobster tails exists in the Hong Kong market, at approximately 500 MT per year, with Australia, New Zealand, China and Cuba as the primary suppliers. Hotels and restaurants in Hong Kong provide most of the demand for lobster tails; with limited potential for quick frozen, frozen in brine, and canned lobster.

Live lobster is normally shipped by air to the Hong Kong market. Domestic importers may take delivery upon arrival and distribute the product to customers immediately. Other Hong Kong buyers store the lobsters in tanks and deliver product to buyers on a daily basis. Imported food products enter Hong kong as follows: importers {70 percent}; wholesalers and distributors {10 percent}; retailers and supermarkets {10 percent}; and end-users, hotels and restaurants {5 percent}. Wholesalers will occasionally purchase for their own accounts.

The majority of wholesalers, because of the tight financial situation, draw supplies for stock from Hong Kong importers who provide special terms and credit facilities. Hotels, restaurants and other seafood establishments do not usually purchase direct from the international suppliers, but rather from Hong Kong importers or wholesalers on a contractual basis. Prices are controlled by the Hong Kong importers who distribute lobster products to wholesalers and retailers at the same price level, with a discount or commission to wholesalers.

The quality of North American lobster is recognised in Hong Kong as superior. Prices for *Homarus spp.* are favourable and able to compete with lobster products from Australia and New Zealand. However, supplies must be available year round to enable Hong Kong importers to place orders on a regular basis.

Establishing a successful Hong Kong presence for lobster and lobster products rests on many factors, including: nutritional value; seasonal delicacies; suitability to local palates; and successful sales and marketing strategies. The Hong Kong market is extremely competitive and international lobster suppliers must be flexible in response to market requirements. Packaging may be slightly modified, or prices discounted, in response to Hong Kong consumer preferences. International lobster exporters should contact Hong Kong importers with offers quoting c.i.f., Hong Kong prices, preferably in U.S. currency. Offers should be accompanied by specimen labels, and illustrated catalogues or samples for all packaged items.

### **INDIA**

India is a net exporter of fish and seafood products, however, small quantities of preferred species are imported by bonded stores which cater to the diplomatic community resident in India. According to Indian Government statistics, the country's total imports of all fish and seafood in 1992-93 were 27.8 tonnes of fish, fresh or frozen. The sources of supply for these imports were Japan {26.0 tonnes}, and the United States {1.8 tonnes}.

According to the Government of India Marine Products Export Development Authority {MPEDA}, India has significant levels of lobster production with approximate landings of 24,000 MT per annum. Consumer prices in the Bombay market in late 1994 ranged from Rs\$200-Rs\$250 per kilogram. India does not import lobster, but frozen lobster exports are at significant levels and are based on a fiscal year of April to March.

#### **India Frozen Lobster Exports**

	<b>1990-91</b>	<b>1991-92</b>	<b>1992-93</b>
Quantity {MT}	1600.0	1628.0	1613.0
Value {Rs. million}	335.8	552.0	432.4

Source: MPEDA--Marine Products Export Development Authority