

aisle could easily be located and then the best deal could be made with one of the many separate companies displaying there. Conversely, to find B.C. farmed salmon, a potential buyer had to search the entire area equal to three football fields of booths on two floors to find the five individual booths promoting B.C. salmon. As a result, B.C. farmed salmon received little attention.

Competing countries displaying cultured salmon for sale emphasized two principal messages — pristine natural rearing environment and high-quality product. The BCSFA booth, while having attractive glossy pictures as a backdrop, presented a different message — technology and biology. It was felt that this message was misdirected for the purpose of selling fish.

Value-added products were displayed in a wide variety of forms beside fresh whole salmon in the BCSFA booth. Products ranged from simple cuts of steaks and fillets and individual portion packs of fresh fish to smoked, seasoned and packaged products in a variety of forms. The pictures in Appendix F show a selection of products available. One member of the delegation suggested the variety of value-added products available was fairly standard and that there should be more creative products.

Several companies displayed the packaging technologies available. One company, Trygon, had a machine operating to package fish at the show. It created quite a stir when steaks and fillets from some B.C. farmed salmon brought to the show for display, were packaged on-site. The deep red colour of the flesh attracted considerable interest. The colour is not evident in a whole fish (even by belly inspection) until it is cut. When the packaged products were placed on display in the booth beside the whole fish, buyer attention immediately increased. The picture below shows the B.C. fish display.



The rich flesh colour can easily be compared with the products shown in the photos of international competitors in Appendix E. In markets where “redder is better,” B.C. salmon easily surpasses Atlantic salmon.

Price was the first consideration of all the buyers surveyed. Salmon, which is in oversupply, is trading as a commodity and is subject to “the market.” The “market” is a mind-set of the people in the seafood distribution system which responds, not to what is necessarily actual, but to what is perceived. It is a business which is rife with rumours, a great deal of misinformation, a lot of second-hand information and a little accurate information. This all works together towards “talking the price down.” The B.C. group are farmers and “hands-on” managers who take great pride in producing quality fish and are voluntary members of the B.C. Salmon Farmers Association Quality Assurance Program. It was difficult for them to accept that quality did not obtain premium prices as expected in the marketplace. Further, another hallmark of aquafarming, reliable supply, was seriously discounted because there are now so many farmed salmon suppliers. The bottom line is that quality and reliable supply are, at most, worth only \$0.05 in the marketplace for fresh farmed salmon and if the price drops any further it will be necessary to renegotiate or lose a customer.

New England Area



After the Seafood Show ended, there was a brief opportunity to explore retail supermarkets and delicatessens in the area surrounding Boston. In the supermarkets (e.g. Stop and Shop), there appeared to be a general lack of salmon available, especially Pacific salmon, indicating some market potential. Delicatessens sold smoked salmon of various types (for bagels and lox) and the price, usually, was very expensive ranging from US\$13.00 to \$18.00 per lb. (450 g). Deli owners surveyed were happy with the salmon products they had and were not generally open to suggestions about smoked Pacific salmon.

On two occasions we observed Atlantic salmon being sold as Atlantic Kings. This was a definite misnomer but it turned out that the company selling Atlantic salmon was called Atlantic King.