

CARAPACE SIZE

I would like now to say a few words about carapace size regulations. You are perhaps aware that Canada is currently facing a trade dispute with the United States concerning minimum carapace size regulations which restrict the imports of Canadian live lobster, smaller than those in effect at the time in the United States.

The US has introduced a schedule of yearly incremental increases in the carapace size which will culminate in a 3 5/16 inch carapace length by January 1992. A number of states also have their own regulations which restrict the sale of Canadian lobsters smaller than those permitted under State Law.

Canadian lobster currently vary in carapace size from 2 1/2 inches around Prince Edward Island to 3 3/16 in much of Nova Scotia, the Bay of Fundy area of New Brunswick and in Newfoundland.

A binational panel has been established under the Canada/United States Free Trade Agreement at the request of Canada to examine the size regulations. The report of the panel is expected May 15. Canada will have 60 days to reply to its findings.

LOBSTER PRODUCTS

I would like now to talk about the kinds of lobster products produced in Canada and to discuss the markets for these products and how we might improve sales in the UK and Europe.

There are three principle products -live lobster, frozen lobster in brine and frozen canned lobster meat which together account for 95% of production. For production purposes there are three classes of lobster, canners (1/2 - 1 lb.), Markets (1 - 3 lb) and jumbos (over 3lb.). Canners are used primarily for frozen products while market and jumbos go to the live market.

LIVE LOBSTER

Live lobster accounts for about 50% of Canada's lobster production, representing some 19,000 tonnes in 1989. The large volume of Canadian landings means that a great variety of size ranges can be offered to customers. There are no less than eleven different size grades ranging from less than one pound to four pounds and up. Live lobster is destined primarily for catering where premium prices are obtained.

Increasing volumes have also necessitated the need for improved handling, storage and shipping to minimize mortality rates. Canadian fisheries regulations require that live lobster