

species are commonly purchased in frozen block and filleted forms and the majority of volume is realized through food service channels.

### Shellfish

The market for shellfish is moderate in comparison to freshwater fish. The primary reason for a weaker shellfish market is uncertain availability which ultimately discourages frequency of purchase. Moreover, restaurateurs are sometimes reluctant to feature these products on their menus because of the unpredictable fluctuations of supply and price. Most commonly found on the menu are scallops and oysters, which are used as appetizer items. Lobster, shrimp and crab are used as entrées, most often on the menus of fine dining establishments. The product group is evenly distributed to foodservice and retail users in both fresh and frozen formats.

For further general information about the region or specific information regarding agents, brokers and distributors please contact:

Mr. James Lyons  
Commercial Officer  
Canadian Consulate General  
600 Renaissance Center, Suite 1100  
Detroit, MI 48243-1704  
United States  
(313) 567-2340  
(313) 567-2164

## West Central (Upper Midwest)

### **Minneapolis**

The Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul) is the major grocery distribution hub for the west-central portion of the United States. As the headquarters of four major warehouse distributors, including three of the ten largest in the U.S., (Super Valu Stores, the Gateway division of Scribner and Nash Finch), it is a centre of food distribution that influences the

entire central plains region.

Almost all of the grocery chains in the Upper Midwest market are independents with buying offices in the territory. National chains such as Safeway or A&P have only a weak presence in the region. For this reason, the grocery market is highly competitive and standards are high. The Upper Midwest is also a centre of distribution for the food service industry and is the headquarters of several national restaurant chains. The presence of a large number of food processing manufacturers provides further opportunities for sales of ingredients.

The Upper Midwest market resembles adjacent Canadian markets in climate, attitudes and values of the population. Outside of the major metropolitan areas (Minneapolis/St. Paul: 2.5 million; Omaha: 325,000; Des Moines: 200,000), many residents live in rural areas and derive income from agricultural activities. The metropolitan areas have a diversified industrial base with very little heavy manufacturing. The population has a disposable income higher than the national average and the demographic profile of the market makes it a good test market for consumer food products.

The Twin Cities market is a good one in which to attempt initial penetration of the United States. It is friendly and manageable in size and new exporters can find their way around relatively easily.

Canadian products that have done well in the Upper Midwest market include specialty or gourmet foods, delicatessen items, fish (freshwater, ocean and aquaculture), seafood, pork, beef, lamb, frozen foods, cookies, snack foods, beer, spring water and ingredients. Canadian products are readily accepted and have a reputation for quality. Manufacturers who have been successful in the Upper Midwest market are those who have made a decisive commitment to the territory, have maintained strong communications with the U.S. market, and have modified their product, packaging and marketing strategies to suit the needs of this market.