

Specialty Seafood Products, Ready Meals: The Future for Fish?
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- 7.5 per cent of the world catch is in Europe, 75 per cent of that for human consumption. The five year forecast is for a 35 per cent growth in the market - 2 million tonnes - mostly in aquaculture products and imports - 1.1 million tonnes. The F.R.G. and U.K. are the strongest and are recovering from the nematode-induced collapse.
- There are three markets for ready-meal products, the frozen, chilled and shelf-stable products: The chilled market accounts for 22 per cent of sales and is showing the fastest growth. The shelf-stable market is strong in the FRG, but not in other countries, while the frozen market is still dominant overall.
- Main factors in the growth of the ready-meal market that have resulted in significant growth:
 - consumer convenience.
 - product development and availability.
 - packaging developments - flat pack technique.
 - retailer influence.
 - microwave penetration - very fast growth.
- Fish ready-made meals are dominating the ready-made market in France and 50 per cent of this is sophisticated recipes.
- FRG fish are 25 per cent of the ready-meal market, but they are at a lower level of production.
- In the chilled market, France is the source of the "sous-vide" technique (cooking in a bag, raw meat and sauce). Hotels and restaurants are using a lot of these meals. In the UK, Marks & Spencer is the main retailer, consuming a 15% share of the market.
- FRG is still only a test market.
- Shelf-stable previously used canning technology, traditionally very bad for fish and seafood meals. The new hemi-pac and sterilization techniques have resulted in quick sterilization of the product, allowing for the potential of new possibilities in marketing and consumption.
- Consumer trends in the FRG;
 - smaller households.
 - increase in working women.
 - increases in average income.
 - changing of traditional eating habits.