

The Japan Marine Products Importers Association (JMPIA) has established guidelines for their member countries (See Table 8). Members of the association providing direct input included Kyokoyu Co. Ltd., Nomura Trading Co. Ltd., Schooner Trading Corp., Nichirei Corp., Tokyo Seafoods Ltd., Nippon Suisan Kaisha Ltd., Hanwa Co. Ltd., Mitsubishi Corp. and Taiyo Fisheries Co. Ltd. The criteria for the standards relate to fish and roe size, per cent roe yield, maturity and freshness. The association recommended that the trade agreement established between a Canadian herring roe packer and a Japanese importer should set the grading and packaging specifications and recommend the desired freezing process.

Table 8

Japan Marine Products Importers Association Guidelines for Minimal Quality Standards of Atlantic Canadian Roe

Criteria	Standard
Average Fish Weight	200 g
Roe Weight	10 g per section
% Roe Yield	Minimum of 7% roe yield by weight at catch point
Maturity	Remove immature roe
Freshness	Process fish within same day as catch

JMPIA stressed the need for Canadian industry to respond, whether positively or negatively, to this proposed method of controlling the quality of the raw material.

Many individual processors (some of whom are also traders) recommended guidelines for standards of Atlantic Canadian roe. Virtually all of the processors commented on the meaningless grades that are currently being used in Atlantic Canada. The grade system must remain simple to be effective. Accordingly, the strict standards now utilized in the higher value shio kazunoko industry on Pacific roe would not be a valid approach in the ajitsuke kazunoko industry.

The Hokkaido Processing Fishing Products Co-operative Federation perceived that the importers, JMPIA, had recommended standards too basic for the needs of the Japanese processors. This federation consists of all the Hokkaido herring roe processors.

Following discussions with Canadian industry representatives it was possible to merge the requirements of Japanese industry with a practical Canadian perspective on minimum quality standards for herring roe. Table 9 depicts recommended minimum quality standards for Grade 2 and 3 herring roe from Atlantic Canada. The acceptability of these proposed standards remains to be gauged by both Canadian and Japanese industry.

Table 9

Recommended Minimum Quality Standards for Grade 2 and Grade 3 Atlantic Canadian Herring Roe

Criteria	Minimum Quality Standard
Shape	50% full shape
Maturity	Fully mature
Minimum Weight	10 g
Bloodstaining	Not excessive

Grading Discussions During Fall Mission

A mission to Japan in the fall of 1988 established a dialogue between Atlantic Canadian processors and Japanese industry representatives. Discussions targeted at developing industry standards were held with Japanese processing representatives and members of JMPIA. The processing representatives indicated a need for improving existing quality standards; however, they hesitated to commit themselves because of pricing concerns and their reluctance to interfere with traditional Japanese trade links.

The meetings with JMPIA provided a method of approach for Canadian and Japanese industry to discuss grading concerns. From these meetings the following points emerged:

- JMPIA will identify and report on quality concerns to the Atlantic Canadian industry. The association recommends that plant processors implement immediate low-cost steps to ensure that concerns regarding handling and product freshness are met.
- The Canadian industry representatives expressed a preparedness to examine minimum quality standards and to continue dialogue regarding these standards with Japanese industry.