

All airfreight shipments of lobster require a health certificate issued by a competent authority from the exporting country certifying that the product is packed under hygienic conditions and is fit for human consumption. Failure to provide proper documentation may delay customs clearance upon arrival. Canada's phytosanitary and other quality standards satisfy Hong Kong authorities.

The quality of Canadian lobster is recognised as being superior, when compared to other suppliers. The current means of shipping the product has been to fly from the East Coast to the west Coast, and then put in a tank for a few days, then re-packed and air-freighted to Hong Kong. Therefore, buyers are paying for double airfreight and handling charges. However, if Canadian suppliers could handle the shipments more carefully and efficiently, and could guarantee the mortality rate, shipments could be made directly from the East Coast to Hong Kong, with more competitive prices. Current prices are favourable and are able to compete with lobsters from Australia and New Zealand. It would be preferable if supplies could be made available all year round, to enable importers to place orders on a more regular basis.

To establish a successful local presence for lobster and lobster products depends on many factors, including nutritional value, seasonality, suitability to local palates and successful sales and marketing strategies. Hong Kong is extremely competitive and Canadian suppliers must be flexible in response to market needs. Packaging may have to be slightly modified, or prices discounted, to respond to consumer preferences. Canadian exporters should contact Hong Kong importers with offers quoting C.I.F., or cost and freight Hong Kong prices in either Canadian or U.S. currency. Offers should be accompanied by specimen labels, and illustrated catalogues or samples for all packaged items.

ROCH OYSTERS

Roch Oysters were introduced to the Hong Kong market in the late 1980's. Sales have steadily increased over the years, and today Canada is the third largest supplier to the market behind New Zealand and South Korea. Demand is expected to increase as the product is gaining popularity in buffets and through sales to hotels.

GEODUCK

Geoduck was introduced to the Hong Kong market in the early 1980's as sales have continued to increase consistently over the period. Geoduck is very popular in Chinese restaurants and in Japanese department stores, and exporters can expect sales to expand as other institutions increase demand.

SHRIMP

Hong Kong is an important market for Canadian cold-water shrimp exporters as the country acts as a major re-processing centre for the Asian market. Shrimp is extremely popular among the ethnic Chinese community in Hong Kong, and other major suppliers to the market include China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Macau.

SEA CUCUMBER

Hong Kong is a major market for dried sea cucumber with domestic consumption equal to approximately 1000 tonnes annually. Hong Kong also processes and re-exports large quantities of sea cucumber. Sea cucumber is largely consumed outside the home and is a preferred delicacy at Chinese parties, weddings, and during Chinese New Year. July and August represent high demand months because of increased consumption during the Holy Ghost Festival.