

SINGAPORE

SUPPLY & CONSUMPTION

Total imports of crustaceans to the Singapore market in 1991 were 3342 metric tons, of which it is estimated that 5-8 tons were lobsters. Lobsters are considered a delicacy in Singapore and are generally consumed during festive occasions or celebrations. Lobster is usually not consumed in individual households, but rather are available in restaurants, hotels and catering establishments. The most preferred form for import are live lobsters, which are then cooked fresh for the customer. To a lesser extent, frozen lobsters are also popular with hotels which frequently prepare various seafood buffets. The main competition in the market comes from lobsters and crayfish that are caught in and around the region, from countries like Malaysia, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and also rock lobsters from Australia. Some local importers have recently began to import lobsters from Boston and Maine, however, it is unknown whether these lobsters are of Canadian origin.

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

Lobsters are distributed mainly through seafood wholesalers and importers who service the institutional market which includes the hotels, restaurants and catering establishments. Lobsters are not generally popular in the retail sectors, and only a handful of retail stores actually carry lobster products. As live lobsters are the most popular, most of the major seafood distributors have facilities available to store the live seafood products they import.

PHYTOSANITARY REGULATIONS

The usual requirements apply for all seafood imports into Singapore, a certificate of origin and a copy of the invoice together with a standard health certificate are required by the Singapore authorities. Random checks on seafood items are conducted by the local health authorities.

TARIFFS/NTB'S

There are no applicable tariffs or quotas for all seafood imports into Singapore, and lobsters are allowed entry duty free.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

There is not enough knowledge of the availability of Canadian lobsters in the Singapore marketplace, and the market currently still prefers the local species of lobster. Ideally, Canadian lobster exporters should work with local importers to organize lobster promotion events in the market, and try to create an increased awareness of the product. Coordinating focused promotions in the key institutional outlets, highlighting Canadian lobsters, would be an effective method of gradually creating a wider acceptance for the use of Canadian lobster products.

POST COMMENTS

Canadian strengths lie mainly in the image and reputation of Canadian products. Generally, Canadian lobsters are perceived to be of higher quality than the other sources. The main weaknesses of Canadian lobsters lie in the higher prices which makes it more difficult to compete in the local market. There also appears to be a lack of commitment and flexibility on the part of Canadian exporters to dedicate and invest the time and resources required to penetrate this market. With the proper promotional strategy, the Embassy is confident that awareness and demand for Canadian lobsters can be further increased in the near future.