

must be sold in "live" form. However, for shipping purposes a tolerance of 5% mortality is tolerated. In recent years, mortality rates have been kept well below this level, averaging about 1%.

LOBSTER POUNDS

The bulk of live lobster landings occur during the spring and summer period. The seasonal landing period does not coincide exactly with peak market demand. Consequently Canadian producers have had to rely increasingly on lobster pounds to ensure that year round market requirements are met. The development of pounds has been a major factor in ensuring year round supply.

Pounds vary from wooden crates and large cages moored to the seabed to fenced off coves to sophisticated dryland enclosed filtration systems which one Canadian company has pioneered. In 1988, there were in excess of 150 licensed lobster pounds in Atlantic Canada.

The enclosed filtration system, represents the most revolutionary advance in live lobster holding technology. The lobster are graded by size, sex, moulting stage and state of health before being stored in high density individual trays where they are bathed continuously in super chilled seawater. There is no limit to the length of time a lobster can be held in a state of reduced metabolism in which there is virtually no need for food. Over a 10 month period, weight loss does not exceed 5% and there is no adverse affect on meat quality and taste.

Compartmentalization eliminates cannibalism, a trait common among lobster. The constant low temperature and limited energy loss also mean that the lobsters produce harder shells, are fuller and have firmer textured meat. The result is a product of superior quality, available out of season to be marketed on a custom basis at a premium price.

Three dryland pounds have been built since 1982. Located in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, these facilities together have a capacity of up to 3 million pounds. They represent state of the art in lobster holding technology and have put Canada in the forefront of this technology.

WHOLE FROZEN LOBSTER

The second most important product is frozen lobster in brine. This product also known as "popsicle pack" accounts for about 30% of Canadian lobster production. The product is cooked and sealed in salt water in a vacuum pouch. Regulations require that all lobster must be alive prior to cooking.