

throughout central Canada, although Arctic char is attaining commercial status. The search is under way to successfully raise such species as black cod, halibut, and wolffish.

Quality standards and inspection

Canada's stringent fish inspection activities — which cover vessels, plants, unloading, holding and handling sites, and transportation equipment — ensure that only the country's finest products reach international markets.

The Canadian Government, through the Inspection Branch of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, is responsible for administering the Fish Inspection Act and Regulations. It has responsibility for assuring that fish and fish products produced in Canada meet regulatory requirements, were produced under sanitary conditions, and are properly packaged and labelled. These responsibilities are currently met through the operation of a Fish Inspection Program carried out by a staff of over 500 inspectors located in all 10 provinces and the Northwest Territories.

There are 105 field inspection centres across the country supported by 23 strategically located laboratories. Laboratory staff regularly check to ensure that products for which grade standards have been established comply with all regulatory requirements and thereby enable the field inspection staff to certify Canadian fish products for the export market.

In 1992, a new, and highly innovative program was launched to assure compliance with these stringent regulatory requirements. Called the Quality Management Program (QMP), this new program is a joint industry/government initiative in which industry has accepted more responsibility for the monitoring of its own performance. The role of the government has been expanded to include an auditing function in addition to its ongoing inspection responsibilities.

The Quality Management Program is based on the principles of the Hazard Assessment Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, and this Canadian initiative represents the first time that HACCP principles have been incorporated into a regulatory framework.

Canadian fish and seafood products have been known for their high standards. The Canadian Government, and the fish and seafood industry, working together through the QMP, now provide even greater assurances that these high standards will continue to be met.

Certification Services

The export certification program promotes the international sale of Canadian fish products assuring exporters that their products will be acceptable to the importing country.

Over the past few years, a growing number of countries have enacted legislation that requires imported products to meet health, quality, identity, composition and labelling specifications. In order to facilitate the sales of Canadian fish products to these countries, the federal government will, following a request from an importer, examine particular lots of fish for export to determine if they meet the requirements of the importing country. If the product meets the necessary requirements, a certificate is issued.

Export Trade Services

Canada maintains more than 100 trade missions abroad. The commercial section of the Canadian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate General is available to provide assistance to importers. All missions also have access to the World Information Network System (WIN) which contains detailed information on current and potential Canadian fish exporters. Importers should contact the commercial section directly. A list of contacts is contained in The Directory of Canadian Trade Commissioner Service.

Export trade services are also provided by the geographic and sector bureaux at External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC) in Ottawa and by the International Trade Centres (ITC's) located in each province in Canada. The ITC's serve generally as the first point of contact for exporters.

The Sourcing Guide of Canadian Fish and Seafood Exporters has been prepared in consultation with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Commercial and Market Development Directorate) and Industry, Science and Technology Canada (Seafood and Marine Products Directorate). We gratefully acknowledge the use of the product availability charts — found in the centre of this guide — which were provided by the Canadian Association of Fish Exporters.

Information contained in this guide is also available on computer diskette 3.5" size which can be obtained from the Canadian Trade Offices or the Agri-Food, Fisheries and Resources Division of EAITC as can additional hard copies of the guide itself.

We welcome comments and suggestions as to how future editions of this guide might be improved.