

IMPORTERS/DISTRIBUTORS/USERS

Direct exporting to China is not simple, it often demands that you visit China, learn about the market, and meet with potential importers, end-users, distributors, agents, and Chinese government trade officials. Exporters must develop a network of contacts on the China side and establish close working relationships with several key individuals. Canadian fish and seafood exporters are advised to check all relevant details with their commercial contacts and to adhere strictly to the specifications set by Chinese importers, distributors and authorities. Canadian seafood exporters should be aware the Chinese market is becoming increasingly liberalized and future opportunities may depend on contacts made and developed over the next few years in China.

Canadian firms already selling in the Chinese market know that fish buyers and distributors in China can be hard bargainers and quite fastidious where it concerns quality. While negotiating for the best price can be easily explained, quality is of crucial importance. Not only do Chinese consumers maintain high quality standards, any local fish trader here will be out of business quickly if he supplies fish of less than acceptable quality.

This overview does not provide lists of Chinese importers and other potential outlets for fish and fish products. The underlying reason is the considerable degree of specialization: a squid and cuttle fish trader will not touch frozen or canned shellfish meat and while mussel operators may handle live lobster, they would stay away from groundfish and preserved fish. Obviously, categorization by species or product is required if fish importers and distributors are to be canvassed effectively. It is therefore suggested that Canadian fish exporters interested in the Chinese market obtain specific trade leads for their particular products from:

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