

sold in Japan as it differs greatly depending on the quality and quantity supplied to the market, the average import price during the best season for fresh roe assorted on a 120-gram tray is US\$5.50 per tray, C&F.

- Some trade people advise that the auction price breakeven point at Tokyo Central Wholesale Market is yen 700 per 120-gram tray. Very roughly speaking, a 100-gram plastic box of roe is imported at US \$3.00-3.50 per box, which is generally auctioned at Yen 400 per box at the Tsukiji fish market.
- The process for the extraction of sea urchin roe is labour intensive. It consists of cracking the shell, removing the roe, dipping it into salt water and water containing alum, removing internal organs attached to roe, sorting roe on trays, etc. Workers use only very simple hand tools for these processes.
- For this reason, Japanese trade advises that any success in extracting sea urchin roe in foreign countries depends on the availability of such workers processing sea urchin roe to the product standards demanded in the Japanese market.
- The season for sea urchin roe in Japan's major producing centre, Hokkaido, is from the middle of April to the end of August. The price of any sea urchin roe imported in this period is much lower than the price received during the rest of the year because of the domestic supply.
- The season for both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of Canada is, roughly, from September to March. As the greatest consumption period in Japan of sea urchin roe is winter, Canada is in a favourable position as far as the supply season is concerned.