

Mission: 424 Dusseldorf
Market: 128 West Germany
Key Sub-Sector: Fish, Shellfish and Other Products

Specific Product Opportunities

Lobster, live
Lobster, frozen
Shrimp
Salmon, smoked
Salmon, frozen
Salmon roe

General Comments:

The Federal Republic of Germany is the largest and most affluent Member State of the EEC. West Germany is largely dependent on imports to meet the growing demand for seafood, fully two-thirds of all seafood is imported. Per capita consumption of fishery products is relatively high and reached 13.2 kg/yr in 1987. At the end of 1987, the FRG large deep-sea fisheries consisted of 17 units, of which 5 are freezers, 9 wetfish trawlers and 3 Dutch herring freezers flying the German flag. The cutter fleet has approximately 650 units.

There are good export opportunities for Canadian fish products in West Germany, however, there are some disadvantages for Canadians. Over the years, Dutch and Scandinavian suppliers have developed an expertise in meeting the specific requirements of the German market. This factor, as well as their proximity to the market and their tariff preferences, means they can generally outperform North American newcomers.

West German importers, brokers and processors are professional to the point of perfection and they require that their trading partners maintain the same degree of professionalism and close attention to detail. They insist on meticulous care in all transactions as the only way of adhering to precise cost scheduling that is necessary to the survival of their processing industry in a highly competitive market.

In practical terms, this means that exporters must comply with technical specifications, but also ensure prompt and complete responses to requests for offers, precise grading of products, complete and accurate labelling of packages, and speedy shipments. This does not mean that the German market accepts only products of premium quality. On the contrary, the market is very value conscious and will accept products of medium quality--but of consistent standard at reasonable prices.