

PRICES AND TERMS

Prices paid by Swiss importers are usually based on the European price structures and can be located by referring to *INFOFISH*. The Canadian Embassy in Berne can supply current reference prices to interested Canadian exporters. Generally, there are no special requirements, but usually there is a preference for C.I.F. quotes for a northern European port (Rotterdam is best). Payments are usually made by Letters of Credit. Swiss importers are quite prepared to enter an exclusive agency agreement and they will accept direct sales with the option that the Canadian exporter is reliable and can guarantee a continuous supply.

As a result of a citizen's motion in 1985, legislation was introduced to supervise prices in general. This law has been in force since July 1, 1986, and is an element of Swiss competition law. It is aimed at reducing abusive prices for goods and services that are the result of a lack of competition. Therefore, only enterprises that are members of a cartel or similar organization are subject to this law. Accordingly, there is close co-operation between the Price Supervision, Federal Department of Public Economy and the Secretariat of the Cartel Commission, Federal Department of Public Economy. There are some price controls for products whose price determination is influenced by protective or assisting measures from the government, which are mainly agricultural products.

The Swiss franc is freely convertible and there are no restrictions on the import and export of Swiss currency. Gold, including coins, may be bought and sold freely on the open market. There are no special regulations concerning commercial payments.

INSPECTION

Apart from a few items, Switzerland does not impose quantitative or other restrictions on imports. When goods first arrive at the Swiss border, an inspector from *L'Office Veterinaire* examines shipments by "sight and smell" for the products' fitness for human consumption and labelling requirements. A sample is selected randomly from among the shipment for laboratory testing in Berne. If the inspector is satisfied with his initial examination of the product, then the shipment is cleared. There is a "veterinary tax" applied to all items inspected for import. The laboratory tests focus on proper species identification and mercury content. If a problem exists, the product is noted and further shipments will be looked at more closely. Also, phosphates and colorants are not allowed. The importer must be domiciled in Switzerland and have access to storage facilities. Once a product has cleared governmental inspection, any disagreement between the foreign exporter and the Swiss importer as to the marketable quality of the product does not involve the government. The fee for inspection by a veterinary at the border is SFr 4 per 100 kilograms (minimum fee is SFr 10). The fee is to be collected by the customs office.