

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Although South Florida boasts a significant consumer population offering ample opportunities for Canadian fish and seafood exporters, the area also represents an enclave of importers, distributors and brokers whose target markets are those of Latin America and the Caribbean. South Florida, and Miami in particular, acts as the regional headquarters for many U.S. companies whose main markets for export are the numerous smaller countries and island nations which make up the vast Latin American regional market. Historical linkages dating back hundreds of years, combined with modern less-than-container-load distribution and transportation facilities, have allowed Greater Miami to become a focal point for trade with smaller nations in the region. Canadian fish and seafood exporters should view the South Florida area as a potential market for exports, but should also consider the area as a major distribution centre for the entire region.

Miami is not the only location in South Florida where regional distribution companies and brokers are positioned to target the Latin American markets. Significant volumes of distributors and agents can also be found in Fort Lauderdale, Key West, Marathon, Key Largo, Islamorada, Coral Gables, Hialeah, Hollywood, Boca Raton, Pompano Beach, West Palm Beach, Coral Springs, Homestead, Hallandale, Kendall, Davie, Dania, Delray Beach, Key Biscayne, Boynton Beach, Lake Worth, Oakland Park, Deerfield Beach, and Miami Beach. South Florida companies located in these urban centres often act as trans-shipment points for products destined for Latin America and the Caribbean. Alternatively, some companies purchase fish and seafood domestically and internationally, either package or re-package the products, and then distribute the goods to appropriate markets in the region.

Regional markets served by distributors and brokers in South Florida are generally of two different types: {1} those markets which are too small to be serviced by most international fish and seafood exporters; and, {2} those markets which are strategically located to South Florida with respect to geographical proximity. Descriptions of the two different markets serviced by South Florida companies are as follows.

- {1} Many of the markets in the Caribbean Sea are small island nations with very small populations. These markets often do not consume quantities of fish and seafood sufficient to warrant full container-load deliveries of fish and seafood. Therefore, many of these markets are serviced by South Florida companies which can supply less-than-container-load deliveries of various species and products. In addition, because many of these Caribbean markets cater to the tourist market, certain luxury seafood products must also be imported in less-than-container-load quantities. Included in this classification of market are: Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Bahamas, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago, U.S. Virgin Islands, Barbuda, Antigua, Grenada, Belize, Martinique, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Turks & Caicos Islands.
- {2} The second group of markets in Latin America serviced by South Florida distributors and brokers are those nations which are in geographical proximity to South Florida. Often lending to historical trading patterns, many countries in Central America and South America have well established trade linkages to the United States through the port of Miami. Distribution and maritime routes leading from Miami can easily access Central America by sea, with the added advantage of the Panama Canal to provide immediate access to the Pacific Ocean and ports of call along its coastline. Included in this classification of market are: Guatemala, Panama, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana, Ecuador, Uruguay, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil.

In conclusion, it is therefore noted that the South Florida market should not be viewed strictly within a domestic context. Canadian fish and seafood exporters must also contemplate the strategical advantage the South Florida area holds with respect to the entire Latin American territory. South Florida importers, distributors and brokers are actively involved in exporting significant quantities of fish and seafood to a wide range countries in the region. Canadian fish and seafood exporters can therefore include the South Florida market in both their domestic U.S. marketing plans, and in their Latin American export marketing strategies.