

The salmon market, as with other food markets in Hong Kong, is extremely competitive. With respect to quality, Canadian salmon has the following drawbacks, especially in fresh/chilled form: 1) colour is too pale compared to Norwegian and Scottish salmon; 2) spots on the skin, which give the appearance that the salmon was once frozen, then thawed and sold to Hong Kong as fresh; 3) the meat is too soft, the Chinese prefer it firmer; 4) not enough fat content, the Chinese prefer it more oily in appearance; 5) poor and inconsistent size standards in shipments.

Health regulations imposed on the importation of salmon products into Hong Kong are outlined in the "Public Health and Urban Ordinance, Food and Drug Section". Allowable limits for certain specific substances in salmon products are as follows: tin 230ppm, arsenic 6ppm, lead 6ppm, cadmium 2ppm, antimony 1ppm, chromium 1ppm, and mercury 0.5ppm. Canadian products have no difficulty meeting these standards.

The selling features of Canadian salmon need to be identified and promoted so as to improve both importers and end-users perceptions towards Canadian salmon products. Foremost is quality and consistency of supply for Canadian salmon exporters to increase positive exposure in the Hong Kong market. Promotional activities to be considered by Canadian salmon exporters and associations could include educational workshops targeted at hotel chefs and importers. Promotional leaflets and brochures describing the processes, species, nutritional value and other features of Canadian salmon should be developed and distributed widely to complement any promotional activity. Coordinating promotional activities with hotels could be undertaken to influence consumption by the tourist trade.

LOBSTER

Currently, almost all lobster available in this market is in live form. Due to the grouping of this item under one general category, it is not possible to provide exact information regarding quantities imported from various sources. According to trade contacts, annual consumption will be approximately 1000-1500 metric tonnes. Sizes 1-1.5 lb are preferable for hotels and western style restaurants, but for Chinese restaurants, larger sizes are preferred. Principal sources are Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada, with some from local waters and neighbouring countries. Canadian exports of lobster showed a steady increase reaching approximately 75 metric tonnes in 1990. The demand is expected to grow steadily at approximately 15-20 percent annually. Demand for lobster tails also exists in the market, approximately 500 metric tonnes per year, with Australia, New Zealand, China and Cuba as the primary suppliers. Hotels and restaurants provide the main demand for lobster tails, with somewhat limited potential for quick frozen, frozen in brine, and canned lobster.

Live lobster is normally shipped by air. Some importers take delivery upon arrival and distribute the product to customers immediately, while others store lobsters in tanks and later deliver product to buyers on a daily basis. It is estimated that imported lobster products are imported into Hong Kong as follows: importers (70 percent); wholesalers and distributors (10 percent); retailers and supermarkets (10 percent); and end-users, hotels and restaurants (5 percent). Wholesalers sometimes purchase for their own accounts. The majority of wholesalers, because of their tight financial situation, draw supplies for stocks from importers who provide them with special terms and credit facilities. Hotels, restaurants and other food establishments do not usually purchase directly from the suppliers, but rather from the importers or wholesalers on a contractual basis for a period of three or six months on prices agreed upon by both parties.