

MALAYSIA

The market for lobster is small but growing, due to increases in disposable income and a growing affluence in Malaysian society. Demand for lobster is seasonal, and high during the festive seasons. Malaysia has domestic lobster production {*Palinurus* spp.} which is generally cheaper than imported lobster products. Domestic lobster production totalled 1,118 MT in 1993, an increase from 993 MT in 1992 {12.6 percent}.

Lobster Prices in Malaysia

{RM\$ per kilogram}

Price Structure	1992	1993
Ex-Vessel	16.40	15.75
Wholesale	17.60	16.75
Retail	22.70	22.30

Source: Malaysian Department of Fisheries

Most lobster products imported are used by the major hotels and family restaurants, whose clients are largely from the middle and upper classes. In general, lobsters are preferred in the following forms: cooked and frozen by retail and family restaurants; and live for use in the foodservice sectors {grill rooms}. Import statistics for lobster products from January-August 1992 were as follows: H.S.0306.1200 {24.55 tonnes}; 0306.2111 {.29 tonnes}; 0306.2119 {.60 tonnes}; 0306.2190 {10.34 tonnes}; 0306.2219 {1.43 tonnes}; 0306.2290 {63.45 tonnes}; 1605.3010 {1.72 tonnes}; and 1605.3090 {7,500.57 tonnes}. Suppliers of lobster to the Malaysian market are Australia, the United States, Thailand, Japan, Canada and New Zealand. Canada exports only two forms of lobster to Malaysia, 0306.12 and 0306.22.9.

Current potential for lobster is mainly in the Malaysian wholesale sector, primarily because it caters to the major hotels and restaurants. In addition, most Malaysian importers prefer to deal with cooked and frozen products, rather than live. *Homarus* spp. are reported by Malaysian importers as better in quality and taste compared to *Palinurus* spp.. By capitalizing on these qualities, supported by adequate promotion and proper marketing strategies, demand for North American lobster appears promising. In general, the main competition for imported lobster is domestically produced lobster products and tiger prawns, which are slightly cheaper and fresher.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand is a significant producer of rock lobster {*Jasus edwardsii*} with landing of 2,800 MT in 1992, a decrease from 3,000 MT in 1991 {6.7 percent}. Rock lobster is harvested from the temperate northern parts of New Zealand to the subantarctic south. New Zealand rock lobster is available live, whole cooked, and as fully processed frozen tail and body meat. New Zealand rock lobster meat is sweet and entirely free of strong flavours. New Zealand rock lobster has pearly-white flesh; has a firm texture; remains moist on preparation; and adapts well to most cooking methods. The following information was obtained from the New Zealand Fishing Industry Board. New Zealand rock lobster {*Jasus edwardsii*} is a true cold water species whose habitat extends from the temperate north to the sub-Antarctic south. The bulk of New Zealand rock lobster harvest originates from the southern controlled fisheries districts. These districts include the rock lobster grounds surrounding the Snares Islands, Chatham Islands and Stewart Island.

New Zealand rock lobster is easily distinguished from warm water species by its deep maroon-coloured shell. The depth of colour varies according to habitat. The annual harvest of rock lobsters in New Zealand was over 5,000 tons grossweight during the mid-1980's, declined to a low of 1,200 tonnes in 1988, and has remained fairly steady since that year, equalling 2,800 tonnes in 1992. Fishing is strictly controlled and minimum size and method restrictions apply throughout the fishery. The fishery is open year-round with seasonal high and low points according to district. Rock lobster catches are usually highest during the winter months which, in the Southern Hemisphere, run from May to September.

Most New Zealand rock lobster is delivered live to shore-based plants either for processing into frozen tail meat and other product forms, or live shipment. A portion of the Southern fishery's catch is tailed and frozen at sea. Static-knife processing has been adopted by most New Zealand lobster processing plants. By removing the viscera intact, the process ensures optimal recovery and quality standards.