

DOMESTIC INDUSTRIES

The Mexican food and beverage industry now accounts for more than one-quarter of the country's manufacturing production. But the industry is only beginning to fulfil the potential afforded by Mexico's immense natural resources. Processed food exports now exceed \$1 billion a year, and fresh food exports are valued at more than \$2 billion. These numbers are expected to rise steadily as a result of deregulation, new processing technology and modernization, as well as the rapid growth in world wide demand for quality foods and beverages. At present, global demand for processed food products is rising by 10% each year. Mexico is a new frontier for investment and sourcing opportunities for fisheries and agricultural products.

FISHERIES SECTOR

Mexico's Secretariat of Fisheries recently released a document *The Fisheries Sector of Mexico*, which thoroughly examines all components of the domestic fisheries industry in Mexico. The report provides a brief overview of Mexico's fisheries sector and is aimed at assisting private investors to assess and identify potential areas of interest. Highlights of the report are provided below; copies can be obtained by contacting the Mexican Secretariat of Fisheries, the Mexican Embassy, or the offices of the Trade Commissioner of Mexico located in Canada.

PRODUCTION

Mexico's fisheries production has averaged 1.7% annual growth since 1980, increasing from 1,257,148 tons in 1980 to 1,483,079 tons in 1991, valued at \$1.1 billion dollars. Production volume growth was the most significant for sardines, anchovies, tuna, shrimp, shark, and dogfish throughout the period. Mexico is ranked seventeenth in world fisheries production, and is among the top five world producers of dogfish, shark, and tilapia; sixth in the production of anchovy and oyster; seventh in tunids; and eighth shrimp production.

FISHING FLEET

The deep-sea fishing fleet in Mexico is comprised of 3,287 vessels, of these, 1,315 are on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, and 1,972 vessels are based in Pacific ports. Riverside fishing vessels number 71,470, with 35,287 located on the Pacific Coast and 33,189 distributed on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Total storage capacity for the entire fleet is 133,390 tons.

INDUSTRY COMPOSITION

Domestic Mexican fisheries firms processed 778,397 tons in 1991, yielding 316,615 net tons in finished products. The industry is comprised of 413 private enterprises and cooperatives. Reduction was the largest transformation activity performed in 1991, with freezing and canning providing the bulk of the remaining production. The Mexican Secretariat of Fisheries is seeking greater participation of the private and public sectors in cooperation with foreign entrepreneurs to help modernize the Mexican processing industry by developing new technologies. In addition, domestic Mexican firms are hoping to establish related businesses in packing, raw materials, refrigeration equipment, and processing, as well as the design of new product presentations.