

15. SEA URCHIN (UNI)

Imports (MT)

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
Canada	453	495	417	555	781
S/Korea	1,292	1,008	868	774	830
N/Korea	436	389	586	215	206
China	242	205	191	266	292
Taiwan	33	30	28	24	28
Hong Kong	79	59	49	44	55
Philippines	58	60	72	50	62
USA	1,750	2,318	2,088	2,391	2,286
Mexico	75	164	215	66	36
Chile	223	106	52	206	317
Australia	7	4	7	6	5
Other	0	0	36	95	93

Total	4,648	4,838	4,609	4,692	4,992

Prices - Tokyo wholesale (yen/250g box)

	<u>Year ago</u>	<u>6 mo. ago</u>	<u>Last mo.</u>	<u>Feb. 92</u>
Canadian	600-1700	700-2500	800-2200	800-2200
Los Angeles	1300-5500	1500-7000	1500-6000	1500-6000

Market Situation and Outlook

- The price of sea urchin roe differs greatly depending on the quality. Briefly, there are four major factors determining the quality of sea urchin roe: freshness, colour, yield rate of live sea urchin, and taste.
- Extracted sea urchin roe is assorted on Japanese traditional wooden trays of various sizes: 120-gram tray, 240-gram tray, 330-gram trays, etc.
- Some processors in foreign countries use these wooden trays. However, as the process for assorting roe on these trays requires skilled labour, some processors in exporting countries use small plastic boxes and 100 grams of roe are put at random into each plastic box (without such arrangements as seen for the traditional wooden trays). Industry advises that when there is no skilled labour which can sort the roe on wooden trays, this plastic tray format is preferable.
- While it is difficult to provide the price of sea urchin roe