

Merluccius spp. (which are the species that interest us) are covered by Tariff Code 03.03.78.10.0.10 H, and are subject to 15% duty. The genus Urophycis (not of interest here) comes under Tariff Code 03.03.78.90.0.00 B and is likewise subject to 15% duty.

Frozen hake fillets come under the following Tariff Codes and are subject to 15% duty: 03.04.20.57.0.10 J (genus Merluccius) and

03.04.20.659.0.00 I (genus Urophycis).

The price paid for South African hake varies widely depending on the landings at Vigo. Right now smaller varieties (No. 0, No. 1X and No. 1) are very cheap due to the large quantities being taken. Landed prices at Vigo are as follows:

Size 0 (200-250g): blocks Pts 70-75/kg, IQF Pts 90-95/kg

Size 1X (350-400g): Pts 115-120/kg

Size 1 (500-550g): Pts 140-150/kg

Size 2C (650-700g): Pts 200/kg

Size 2L (800g): Pts 220/kg

Size 3C (1kg): Pts 260/kg

Size 3L (1.3kg): Pts 280/kg

Size 4 (1.7-1.8kg): Pts 340/kg

Cabinet-frozen fillets, size P (80-90g), with skins: Pts 175-180/kg

Cabinet-frozen fillets, size M (90-120g), with skins: Pts 200/kg

Cabinet-frozen fillets, size G (120-150g), with skins: Pts 230/kg

(The latter fillets packed with interleaving material.)

The price for cabinet-frozen hake fillets without skins is around Pts 400, but sales are dropping as consumers prefer fillets with skins on.

The cabinet (plate) freezer system is best as it reduces the water content of fillets. The air-blast system results in higher water content and poor freezing characteristics (requires longer exposure), so that products fetch Pts 25-40 less per kilo.