

CLEVELAND

SUPPLY AND CONSUMPTION

The post territory includes the states of Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia and Western Pennsylvania and represents a population of 20 million. Present market for seafood consumption has increased by 25 percent from 1989, due to accessibility and marketing of seafood as a healthier alternative to red meat. Salmon is rated high among the top three seafood choices along with yellowfin tuna and swordfish, according to local seafood wholesalers. Salmon is preferred based on texture, flavour and flexibility of preparation, with varieties of choice being coho, North Atlantic and Pacific salmon.

Approximately 95 percent of the salmon sold is from Atlantic Canada, and occasionally Chilean or Pacific is purchased mainly during the summer months. Local wholesalers find that Atlantic Canadian salmon is more accessible, Canadian companies are more responsive to orders, the overall quality is high, and seafood processors from Atlantic Canada are well known in the territory.

Commercial officers interviewed 12 wholesalers and brokers in northeast Ohio who sell to grocers, restaurants and foodservices operations. These wholesalers buy and sell by price, seasonal preferences, and consistency of quality and size. For example, more Pacific salmon is sold in the summer months because it is more plentiful and less expensive than other salmon varieties. In general, wholesalers in northeast Ohio report moving 3,000-5,000 pounds weekly, with sales higher (up to 10,000 pounds) in the summer months due to lighter eating habits and the ability to grill fish outdoors. The Consulate Trade Office in Pittsburgh reports that wholesalers are moving approximately 2,000-3,000 pounds per week, and the Trade Office in Cincinnati reports an average of 3,000-4,000 pounds per week. Depending on price and available quantities, wholesalers are either sourcing direct with product drop-shipped, or buying through distributors in Boston. For example, the National Wholesale Grocery Company, First National Supermarkets, Incorporated, with corporate headquarters in Cleveland, sell an average of 10,000-15,000 pounds weekly. The company buys through a local wholesaler, State Fish, who sources the product in Boston. First National also employs a private seafood consultant in Toronto who works with the firm's Federal inspector in Boston. The post has been working with the seafood buyer at First National who has expressed some interest in purchasing Pacific salmon from a firm in British Columbia.

HEALTH REGULATIONS

No new health regulations apply, other than a soon to be implemented Food and Drug Administration voluntary nutritional labelling for seafood products which will more than likely boost salmon consumption due to high nutritional value.