

smaller while good roe was produced from German Bank herring. The poorest quality roes tended to come from northern herring and the best quality just after peak of maturity was reached.

The Canadian side noted that the lateness of the season in 1988 due to the strike resulted in excess over mature fish. However, it was pointed out that responsibility lay with Japanese technicians on site to determine what constituted an acceptable standard despite extensive over maturation.

The representative of Hanwa also noted wide variations in fish size from year to year. In 1988 herring were much smaller than 10 years ago and resulting variations in roe size affect the credibility of the grading system. The rep indicated that although involved in the herring roe business for 10 years, he still did not fully understand the differences between the various grades clasifications (e.g. 1,2,3,4,5)

The Canadian side indicated Japanese technicians themselves have different methods of grading with some combining grade 2 and 3 while others might take run-of-catch production. It was noted that processors often grade 5-7 products from each box of roe with the proportions of each product varying from grade to grade. (This would appear to explain a reluctance on the part of importers to insist on rigorous grade classifications.)

One Japanese representative made the observation that the grade classification was only one indicator of quality and that grade class tends to fluctuate according to profit margin. During unprofitable years a higher proportion of the pack ends up in higher grades. Conversely in 1988 with higher prices, a higher proportion ended up in lower grades. Grading standards are more a problem with northern roes than southern roes. It was also suggested that Canadian packers might arbitrarily change grades since in the absence of definitive grade standards questionable product could be upgraded to a higher category. This was said to occur when supply/quality constraints limited the availability of certain classes of roes for the lower grades.

A Canadian representative noted that his company worked closely with the Japanese technicians to ensure that product is graded accurately and on a consistent basis. This was based on the confidence established over