

wholesale and retail markets. The group also held a one day meeting with members of the Japan Marine Products Importers Association in Tokyo.

A highlight of the mission was the preparation of an educational video focussing on various aspects of the production and quality standards of herring roe as well as the retail marketing of various herring roe products. It is intended that the video will be presented at seminars to be held in the New Year for producers of Atlantic herring roe.

VISIT TO HOKKAIDO HERRING ROE REPROCESSORS

The following is a summary of plant visits and comments by Japanese processors:

Niigata Reizo Co. Ltd.
3776 Irifunecho - dori
4-chome, Niigata 950

The group met with Mr. S. Saito, Senior Managing Director and his production staff. Niigata Reizo was the first company in Japan to undertake production of "ajutsuke kazunoko" or Atlantic herring roe, having pioneered the business in 1972. On the day of the visit the company was processing Irish roe and had not yet commenced production of Canadian roe. The focus of the discussion was on general quality standards of frozen roe, how quality standards are determined, and comparisons in quality between Canadian and other roes.

The company noted the dramatic growth in the herring roe business over the past few years and expressed the hope that Canadian supplies would continue to grow. With respect to the overall quality of Canadian roe, Niigata Reizo noted a steady improvement over the past few years but made the point that Canadian producers must continue to focus on improving quality standards. Mr. Saito stressed that quality considerations are the main criteria used by the company in making purchase commitments since price and volume over the past two years have remained virtually the same.

In answer to the question "what is quality", the company noted that "freshness" is the main element. Freshness was explained in terms of visual characteristics - "if it looks fresh it is fresh". Factors include colour, layout, roe maturity, and proportion of broken roe