SEAFOOD MARKET IN BRIEF

The Swedish market for fisheries products is characterized by a distinct relationship between quality and price. The only restrictive measures in the Swedish market which act as minimal barriers to trade are proper nomenclature and quality. Swedish consumers are interested in value-added, quick preparation seafood products, as approximately 85 percent of swedish families have two incomes.

Norwegian and Alaskan salmon have gained marketshare over Canadian product in recent years, which has lead to a decrease in Swedish imports of Canadian salmon. Prices of the latter have been extremely low and very competitive.

The local market for roe/caviar (including frozen) is very large. Total consumption of spread type caviar (all domestic production is of this type) predominantly packed in tooth paste type of tubes is approximately 5000 tons per year. There is marginal consumption of canned sturgeon caviar. Fresh or frozen salmon roe consumption is marginal, but there is potential for some growth in the catering sector. Dyed lumpfish roe (orange or black) is gradually loosing market share to non-dyed caviar. The Embassy in Stockholm has indicated in the past that good market prospects exist if Canadian producers of roe can develop direct trading relationships with Swedish importers.

Reliable Swedish importers set a high preference in being able to discuss quality requirements, labelling etc. direct with the Canadian processor and possibly visit the processor for on the spot discussions and supervision of production. In addition, the following product species enjoy a good market in Sweden: salmon, herring, lobster, pelagics, IQF shrimp, crab and crayfish. The frozen, cooked lobster in brine market in Sweden has become thoroughly saturated due to oversupply, and thus the product has lost the luxury status with which it is usually associated.

There may be opportunities for imports of Canadian live lobster, but there is a lack of infrastructure at this time to support trans-shipment requirements. At present, the local Nordic lobster is preferred at high-class establishments for traditional reasons. In general, any Canadian seafood exports to the Swedish market must be a distinctive product which pays attention to quality and price.

LOBSTER

Swedish per capita consumption of shellfish and seafood in general is very high. The local annual catch of lobster totalling about 19 tons (live weight) is by no means meeting demand. Norway and Scotland were the main foreign suppliers until Canadian and U.S. frozen lobster cooked in brine captured the market, a market which is now being complemented by Canadian and U.S. live lobster.

Local fresh fish wholesalers and some fishermen have always supplied the majority of the lobster in the fresh, already boiled form, to the market. When the North American cooked frozen lobster, which soon became known as the "Canadian" lobster was introduced, it proved to be an excellent complement to the fresh lobster, in that it was far less perishable and also available at lower prices.