

The Canadian side also queried the apparent increased growth in consumption of roe beyond the traditional consumption area in Hokkaido along with the trend towards new product development and consumption outside the gift giving season. The Japanese side corroborated these trends but indicated that at the present time the market has reached saturation point and is not expected to expand with more production but only with careful nurturing.

3) Market Promotion To Expand Roe Consumption

There was little detailed discussion on market promotion strategies to expand roe consumption. The Japanese side felt that the Hokkaido processors were better informed about this question since they were closer to the market. The Canadian side indicated that Canadian producers needed to have a better understanding of the distribution and consumption pattern of flavoured roe and upon return to Canada would seek funds for initial market research to improve market data on Atlantic roe and alternative competitor products, and to assess substitution effects and ways to promote at the consumer level.

The Japanese side replied somewhat cautiously that while market surveys were a useful first step, the goals of quality enhancement and price and supply stability are the most important criteria in augmenting consumption. The Japanese side also endorsed the idea of regular meetings between associations, to ensure that mutual benefits result. For the time being it was suggested that the present Fisheries Council of Canada ad hoc herring roe committee with two non FCC representatives would continue to be the point of contact with JMPIA.

CONCLUSION

The Atlantic herring roe mission to Japan was considered by all participants to be an outstanding success. Canadian processors were able to examine for the first time, in a systematic manner, processing and handling methods applied to their products in Japanese plants and to compare the quality standards of Canadian roe with that from other countries. Japanese processors are the real customers of Atlantic roe and their willingness to open their plants and engage in a frank exchange of views on improving production and quality standards is an indication of the high premium they place