

## JAMAICA

### SUPPLY & CONSUMPTION

Local lobster requirements are filled through one of two channels: 1) imports primarily from Belize; and 2) local supplies from catches off the Jamaican coast. It should be noted that the island has a closed lobster season which lasts from April 1 to June 30 of each year. Strict penalties are administered to those found breaking this fishing law. Competition, therefore, during the off-season comes from other seafood products such as fish, crabs, shrimps, conch and scallops.

Imports of lobster to Jamaica in 1991 totalled 2682 kilos frozen and 2852 other product forms. Exports during 1991 totalled 112,448 kilos frozen and 18,509 other product forms.

### DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

Retail stores operated by some of the major importers are the main source of distribution, although the "one-man operation" source is very prevalent as well. A substantial amount of the lobster catch is also sold at the fisherman's wharves and at the various fishing villages all over the island.

### PHYTOSANITARY REGULATIONS

Very strict phytosanitary regulations are in place and a phytosanitary certificate, certifying that the lobsters are free of all diseases, must accompany the shipment. Should the certificate not be presented, Customs Authorities will seize the goods and release will not be guaranteed until presentation of this health requirement.

### TARIFFS/NTB'S

Jamaica is a signatory to the Common External Tariff (CET) which is born out of CARICOM and also levies an additional 10% General Consumption Tax (GCT). At present, duties on lobster imports from third countries are set at 45%, but will be lowered to 30% plus GCT as of April 1993 in Jamaica, and January 1, 1993 throughout the rest of CARICOM.

### PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Embassy in Kingston has always maintained that the most effective means of introducing and promoting Canadian lobster to the local market, would be to host a series of lobster tasting sessions in the larger hotels and restaurants around the island. As the island is a major tourist resort, imports are geared primarily for that market and buying trends are highly swayed by quality product and marketing.

### POST COMMENTS

Most Canadian products are price competitive in the local market, but are impeded by the high transportation costs. More creative ways of sending goods to this region must be found and alternatives to the normal freight channels must be explored. Where lobster is concerned, it should be noted that the island exports a substantial amount to North America and other Caribbean islands, therefore Canadian suppliers have to be price competitive in order to give themselves a chance in this very competitive market.

Sales of imported seafoods to Mexico are usually made through local agents or distributors, who normally operate on a commission basis. Products coming into the country move from the exporter to the local agent or distributor, then delivered to the wholesaler, supermarkets, hotels and restaurants.