

Minneapolis/St. Paul is the major grocery distribution hub for the Upper Midwest portion of the United States. As the headquarters of four major warehouse distributors, including three of the ten largest in the United States, it is a centre of food distribution that influences the entire central plains region. The grocery market in the Upper Midwest is highly competitive and standards are extremely high. The Upper Midwest is also a centre of distribution for the foodservice industry and is the headquarters of several national restaurant chains. The presence of a large number of food processing manufacturers provides further opportunities for fish and seafood sales.

The size of the fish and seafood market in the Upper Midwest is estimated at approximately \$1 billion, and represents a higher than expected rate of consumption due to highly innovative merchandising efforts at the retail level. Major U.S. foodservice organizations indicate this market is 2-3 years ahead of the rest of the U.S. in marketing, inspection, quality control, transportation, merchandising, presentation and advertising. The market is currently divided as follows: 60 percent of fish and seafood is sold through retail stores; and 40 percent in the restaurant and foodservice trade. The major growth potential is in the retail sector, with future large increases possible if there are innovations in packaging, quality control and product formulation (eg. value-added, specialty seafoods). Current sales at the retail level are approximately 50 percent frozen and 50 percent fresh.

SOUTH

Virtually all retailers in the Mid-Atlantic market have suffered flat sales as a result of the recession. Despite the lowest price inflation in 15 years, many Mid-Atlantic retailers also struggled to keep marketshare. In the area's largest market, Baltimore-Washington, usually thought to be recession-proof, the effects of the recession plagued many of the leading players. Growth in the region is expected to continue into the 21st century as household incomes increase together with consumer demand for fish and seafood (particularly shrimp and salmon in this region). Consumption of most fresh seafood as well as frozen specialty products will increase, while demand for canned seafood products declines in the Mid-Atlantic. The long-term trend toward health foods should provide Canadian seafood suppliers an opportunity to increase their share of this market. The proximity of the Baltimore-Washington markets offers considerable potential business for Atlantic Canada suppliers willing to take the time to visit with Mid-Atlantic area wholesalers:

The Canadian Consulate General in Atlanta is accredited to a territory which comprises the seven states in the Southeastern U.S., along with Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The combined population of approximately 45 million people represents over 16 percent of the nation's total and the growth rate over the last ten years has been almost twice that of the country as a whole. The retail market for the region is estimated at \$80 billion, or over 20 percent of the U.S. total. The territory has approximately 55,000 food stores, 8,000 supermarkets, and over 17,500 convenience stores; and the foodservice market for the area is estimated at over \$50 billion

As concerns about diet and health continue to change the eating habits of Americans, the best opportunities in the territory are in frozen entrées and other convenience fish and seafood products. There are also substantial market opportunities for value-added, seafood soups and sauces; specialty seafoods, prepared fish and seafood products, frozen convenience seafood products, and microwaveable products and snacks.