

explain. The problem was thought to be particularly prevalent in fish processed in New Brunswick but it was uncertain if the fish were actually landed by local fishermen or transported from another province. The variation in sponginess was attributed to characteristics inherent in the resource. The company also noted a higher degree of "crunchiness" among the southern Bay of Fundy stock. 90% of the company's production comes from southern stock.

Mr. Ohta also noted variations in technician's grading practices between 1987 and 1988. The No. 2 grade roe produced in 1988 was said to be the same quality as No. 3 roe produced in 1987 with the effect that in 1988 there was no real distinction between No. 2 and No. 3 grade roes. There was no explanation for this observation but it was noted that supply/price factors affect the situation from one year to the next and regardless of grade designations, price is the main consideration. It was also apparent that distinctions between the various product grades are at best only crude and are not well understood by the Japanese themselves.

With respect to differences between Canadian and European roes a clear preference was shown for European product because of more consistent results which were attributed to differences inherent in European herring.

MEETING WITH JAPAN MARINE PRODUCTS IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION

The meeting focussed on three agenda items (1) grade standards for herring roe (2) current market situation and (3) market development. The meeting, which provided an unusually frank exchange of views, attracted 29 representatives of Japanese roe importers headed by Mr. R. Tanabe, Executive Managing Director, JMPIA.

(1) Grade Standards for Atlantic Herring Roe

The Canadian side suggested that four options with respect to quality standards were possible (1) maintain status quo - business has been successful over the past few years; (2) voluntary grade standards; (3) compulsory grade standards (involvement of government inspectors) (4) minimum quality standards (specific minimum requirements).

The Japanese chairman expressed the view that the choice of options was a matter for Canadian producers as long as the product is of a quality acceptable to Japanese importers.