

15. SEA URCHIN (UNI)

Imports (MT)

|             | <u>1988</u> | <u>1989</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>1991</u> | <u>1992</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Canada      | 453         | 495         | 417         | 555         | 781         |
| S/Korea     | 1,292       | 1,008       | 868         | 774         | 830         |
| N/Korea     | 436         | 389         | 586         | 215         | 206         |
| China       | 242         | 205         | 191         | 266         | 292         |
| Taiwan      | 33          | 30          | 28          | 24          | 28          |
| Hong Kong   | 79          | 59          | 49          | 44          | 55          |
| Philippines | 58          | 60          | 72          | 50          | 62          |
| USA         | 1,750       | 2,318       | 2,088       | 2,391       | 2,286       |
| Mexico      | 75          | 164         | 215         | 66          | 36          |
| Chile       | 223         | 106         | 52          | 206         | 317         |
| Australia   | 7           | 4           | 7           | 6           | 5           |
| Other       | 0           | 0           | 36          | 95          | 93          |
| -----       |             |             |             |             |             |
| Total       | 4,648       | 4,838       | 4,609       | 4,692       | 4,992       |

Prices - Tokyo wholesale (yen/250g box)

|             | <u>Year ago</u> | <u>6 mo. ago</u> | <u>Last mo.</u> | <u>Feb. 92</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Canadian    | 600-1700        | 700-2500         | 800-2200        | 800-2200       |
| Los Angeles | 1300-5500       | 1500-7000        | 1500-6000       | 1500-6000      |

Market Situation and Outlook

- The price of sea urchin roe differs greatly depending on the quality. Briefly, there are four major factors determining the quality of sea urchin roe: freshness, colour, yield rate of live sea urchin, and taste.
- Extracted sea urchin roe is assorted on Japanese traditional wooden trays of various sizes: 120-gram tray, 240-gram tray, 330-gram trays, etc.
- Some processors in foreign countries use these wooden trays. However, as the process for assorting roe on these trays requires skilled labour, some processors in exporting countries use small plastic boxes and 100 grams of roe are put at random into each plastic box (without such arrangements as seen for the traditional wooden trays). Industry advises that when there is no skilled labour which can sort the roe on wooden trays, this plastic tray format is preferable.
- While it is difficult to provide the price of sea urchin roe