

OCTOBER All sizes available and quality improving especially in second half of month when new area opens, approx £4.50 lb about £1.50 lb cheaper.

NOVEMBER All sizes and all hard shelled giving excellent quality, approx £4.30 lb about 1988 £1.50 lb cheaper.

DECEMBER All sizes available, both fresh caught and 1988 stored water cold so best quality, approx £4.30 lb about £2.50 lb cheaper.

This relative stability is due to the organization and size of the operation as described by David Shortall. The exceptionally high price last April was caused by bad weather and shortage of stored fish. The prolonged bad weather had not been expected so not enough stored lobsters were held back.

As an importer and distributor of the live product, it means that we can virtually guarantee supplies of any size required by our customers 365 days a year.

It also means that fresh lobster dishes are being put onto the menus at major sporting and banqueting events. These events can now cater for 10,000 portions of fresh cooked lobster, all of an identical size and produced from a live product. The UK lobster fishery could not previously cope efficiently with events as big as these using one specific size of lobster. Because of the erratic nature of the day to day trade to Restaurants and Hotels with unpredictable orders, stocks of lobsters need to be kept live close to distribution outlets. This ideally means keeping lobsters live in holding tanks awaiting orders. Simson's tanks can comfortably hold 4,000 of live lobsters.

The bigger, more organised specialist live lobster exporters in Canada close to a major airport, can accept orders up to 1800 hours UK time and subject to airspace being available, the ordered lobsters will be shipped the same day and be available for collection the following morning at Heathrow Airport.

This enables us to top up stocks overnight if we sold one grade heavily. Generally speaking the time delay is much shorter than obtaining the lobsters from Scottish sources, and the sizes received will be the sizes