

Whereas Dutch mussels are bred on sandbanks, Canadian ones are bred floating in the water. This carries the advantage for the customers that they no longer find themselves grinding away on sand while enjoying their mussels. Moreover, the Canadian mussel has its peak season at a different time of the year to its Dutch counterpart, thus prolonging the mussel season for Belgian consumers.

Nevertheless, Canadian exporters will have to secure their market shares. The problems with the Dutch mussel have not passed unnoticed by other mussel producing countries. Not only is there an increased competition from Spain, the New Zealand kiwi mussel is now also being introduced on the Belgian and French markets.

Another product in which Canada definitely has a competitive edge is the production of oysters. In recent years, oyster consumption has become more generalized, and customers now purchase them during the entire season in the large food chains. At the present time, only Dutch round oysters and the oval Normandy creusers are on the market, but customers are looking for a new taste. Therefore, Canadian oysters could definitely add a new flavour, catering to a public that so far has not found its choice in the range offered.

As already mentioned, there is enormous ground to be covered for Canadian exporters when launching themselves into new products such as the entire range of frozen microwaveables, prepared seafood dishes and value-added fish products like surimi. Anyone with sound imagination and clear marketing based on providing adequate information to the customer, can successfully introduce a wide variety of fisheries products to the Belgian market. *(Note that although not mentioned specifically here, since the Belgian and Luxembourg markets are entirely integrated, this study is applicable to both of them).*

Finally, another approach to the marketing of fish and seafood products in Belgium is through establishing a local presence in the market by means of either the acquisition of a Belgian company or by entering into a joint-venture with a Belgian partner.