
CUBA**SUPPLY & CONSUMPTION**

Exports of lobster tails (H.S.0306.11) represents one of the principal sources of foreign exchange earnings for Cuba. Consequently, the Cuban government does not encourage imports of any type of lobster or lobster products. Lobster is not available to the local population as virtually all production is exported with a minimum quantity sold at hard currency stores for consumption by foreign tourists and diplomats, as well as in dollar restaurants that cater to foreign residents and international tourists. Due to a shortage of local lobster, the production of which was totally committed to export markets, the Embassy in Havana understands that Cuba imported a small quantity of Canadian lobster destined for tourist consumption. However, this quantity did not appear in Canadian export statistics for 1991 or 1992, thus the quantity involved must have been insignificant. This purchase was reportedly conducted by the state trading agency CARIBEX and its Canadian representative Caribex Seafoods Limited. The Embassy does not believe this instance represents an ongoing opportunity for Canadian exporters. Additionally, it is difficult to forecast whether the situation will arise again in 1993, as it is extremely dependent on Cuba's ability to meet the demand generated by this segment of the market.

POST COMMENTS

Since local requirements for ad hoc imports of lobster are very small and unpredictable, and given local knowledge of Canadian fish industry, the Post would recommend that Canadian exporters do not plan any specific export strategy for Cuba, including attendance at local trade shows. If required, Cubans will instruct Caribex Seafood Limited to source from Canada. Perhaps the most economical and effective manner of promoting sales of Canadian lobster to Cuba, is for Canadian exporters to contact Caribex Seafoods Limited in Toronto to express their interest in exporting to Cuba if and when additional product is needed.

IMPORTERS/USERS

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For Further Information Contact:

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