

DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND FOREIGN TRADE

Lobster production in Mexico in 1991 reached an estimated 2,621 tonnes, an increase of 38.8% above the tonnage caught the previous year, reflecting the intense exploitation currently taking place. In contrast, the production increase from 1989 to 1990 was only 2.4%.

Over 35% of the lobster catch was exported in 1991, amounting to 939,399 kilograms for a value of US\$15,107,327 dollars. However, higher export percentages were recorded in the previous years, when they reached 53.2% and 55.9% in 1989 and 1990, respectively. The principal markets for Mexico's lobster are the United States and Japan. Lobster sales have also been made to France and Spain.

The recorded imports of frozen rock lobster and other sea crayfish (*Palinurus*, spp., *Palunirus* spp. and/or *Jasus* spp.) totalled only 1,435 kilograms in 1991, compared to 16,254 kilograms a year earlier. The major supplier of these sea products is the United States.

There are major discrepancies between official Mexican statistics and Statistics Canada data, concerning Canadian lobster exports to Mexico. SECOFI import data for 1991 recorded only 322 kilograms of *Homarus Americanus* lobster valued at US\$4,074 dollars as originating in Canada. On the other hand, Statistics Canada indicated a total of 3,055 kilograms (rock lobster and other sea crayfish) valued at \$16,000 Canadian dollars exported to Mexico that year. One explanation for this is that products arriving at Mexico's northern border crossings are registered as entering from the United States.

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

The New La Viga Fish Market in Metropolitan Mexico City is the largest and most modern in Latin America. It is the major distribution center for all fisheries products, including lobster and crayfish. "Central de Pescados y Mariscos La Nueva Viga" is a modern facility for wholesale and retail of fisheries products, and home of the National Society of Fish and Seafood Distributors.

Product is distributed from La Viga to other urban centers in the interior, where lesser facilities receive and distribute to consumer outlets. Frozen lobster (whole-boiled and tails) is available wholesale or retail at La Viga, or from a number of supermarket chain stores, and fisheries products retail markets. Leading gourmet restaurants and five star tourist hotels list lobster on their menus.