

Payment of the import levies be done in the same way as for shipment to other EC countries, i.e. it may be done at the border, at destination or in the port of entrance, whether it is in Italy or in another EC country. If it is in another EC country, the goods are then reshipped to Italy where no customs duty will have to be paid.

#### DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of foreign products in Italy is achieved through a variety of channels, depending on the nature of the commodities, the sales territory to be covered, the type of end user to serve, and the sales promotional activities required.

On the coast of Italy the commercial link between producer and consumer is direct, but in the large inland urban areas, products may change hands several times before they reach the consumer. In the small inland centres where consumption is more restricted, these changes may be more numerous.

This fragmented and limited distribution system with 10,000 retailers for fresh fish (plus 10,000 non registered) has a negative impact on prices, given that the middleman's margins can inflate prices as much as double those paid to fishermen, thereby depressing both production and consumption.

Sales of frozen fish require a specialized importer, which supplies the different species from foreign sources. The importer sells directly to the wholesaler or to processing companies. The wholesaler in turn sells to supermarkets or to other middlemen.

Retail frozen fish outlets amount to over 100,000 units. Canned and preserved fish are largely dealt with in the traditional Italian food system, that is in retail food shops. Fresh fish retail shops have become very exclusive outlets for middle to high income consumers.