

MARKET ACCESS

INSPECTION

As of January 1, 1993, fisheries products entering the EC are subject to EC Directive #675 which contains stringent provisions with respect to inspection. Initial implementation of the directive caused serious problems for product entering the United Kingdom, particularly fisheries products exported from Norway and Iceland which are major sources of supply for the U.K. during this time of year. Because of the initial problems experienced under EC Directive #675, the European Community has temporarily suspended enforcement of the directive until higher quality inspection equipment can be put into place. Canada has asked to be granted a derogation from EC Directive #675. The EC must first evaluate the Canadian Quality Management Program (QMP), which will include inspection of Canadian operations, to determine if Canada will be granted a derogation. In addition, there is a charge payable by the importer for all seafood which varies by port or airport (ex. £75-£100 for 1500 kg lobster).

UK FOOD ACT

The UK Food Act (1990) came into effect in January 1991. It requires retailers to be more stringent in the quality control requirements they place on their suppliers and this has an effect on importers, who must be more demanding of their overseas suppliers. This is not only in terms of physical facilities and processes at plants, but also the documentation to support this level of quality control. Increasingly, importers are taking supermarket quality control representatives to visit their overseas suppliers plants and operations.

LABELLING, PACKAGING & ADVERTISING

The EEC has directives on the labelling, packaging and advertising of pre-packaged food products for retail sale. Products not conforming to these requirements are prohibited entry. The following particulars should be noted by exporters of pre-packaged food products to the European Community. The label must indicate: 1) brand name under which the product is sold; 2) list of ingredients; 3) net quantity in metric units; 4) date of minimum durability (ex. best before); 5) special storage conditions or methods of preparation; 6) name and address of manufacturer, packer or seller established in the EC; 7) country of origin; and, 8) instructions for use when purchaser would be unable to prepare contents without such instructions. If the food product has been prepared for retail consumption, the label must also indicate whether the contents have been steamed, boiled, smoked, freeze-dried, powdered, deep-frozen or prepared in some other manner.

Any labelling that is considered to mislead purchasers as to the origin, composition, quantity, identity, characteristics, methods of manufacture or production, will be banned and the product cannot be offered for sale. The language used in labelling or advertising should be that of the member state to which the goods are consigned for sale. Other recognized languages of the Community are acceptable in some instances. The characters must not be less than 1.5 mm, and not less than 1/10th the size of the largest characters used on the label to a maximum height of 5 mm. Further information on the labelling of EEC-bound food products is available from the European Community Trade Policy Division at 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, K1A 0G2, tel:(613) 995-8297, fax:(613) 944-0034.

DOCUMENTATION

There is no prescribed form of customs invoice required to clear Canadian goods through customs in the various member states of the EEC. Generally, all that is required is the exporters' standard