

main spring, summer and winter seasons. However, in recent years the expansion of lobster pounds has been a major factor in creating year round supply. Pounds vary from large cages to fenced off coves (open ocean systems) to sophisticated dryland enclosed filtration systems which one Canadian company has developed.

In the enclosed filtration system there is no limit to the length of time a lobster can be held in a state of reduced metabolism. Individual compartments prevent disease and cannibalism, while controlled environmental systems promote hibernation and reduce the need for food. Lobster are often held for up to 10 months at the facility established by Clearwater Fine Foods at Arichat, Nova Scotia. This facility represents state-of-the-art lobster holding technology and is equipped to hold 1.5 million pounds of lobster. The development of dry land pounds has put Canada in the forefront in lobster holding technology. Continued growth in sophisticated holding methods and associated improvements in mortality rates and growth rates will help stabilize prices and provide long term economic benefits for the whole industry.

The United States is the largest market for live lobster. In addition to its own domestic production of some 20,000 tonnes, the US imports about 40,000 tonnes of lobster each year, mainly in live form. (Figure 2) Canada is virtually the sole source of live lobster and some 75 per cent of Canadian live lobster exports are destined for the United States. This very high dependency has been complicated by the fact that US lobster landings have also been growing.

Canadian exports of live lobster to the US have shown sustained growth over the past ten years. While Boston is by far the major destination, Canadian lobster increasingly is being shipped directly to other centres notably New York, New Jersey, California and Florida. California is predicted to replace New England as the largest domestic consumer of lobster products while strong growth is also expected in Florida.

Clearly more needs to be done to promote Canadian lobster in areas of the United States outside New England. My department is attempting to address this problem by holding a lobster promotion in conjunction with the Canadian Consulate in Chicago prior to the start of the spring lobster season. The Great Lakes region centred on Chicago represents the largest market for seafood consumption in the United States. Fisheries and Oceans have also commissioned two studies on the US market. One study will examine consumer taste preferences for Canadian and American lobster and the other will examine the distribution chain for lobster. These studies should provide valuable insights into the promotion of lobster in the United States.

I would now like to turn to Europe and Japan which are expanding markets for live lobster. In Europe live lobster is a growth