

insist on meticulous care in all transactions as the only way of adhering to precise cost scheduling that is necessary to the survival of their processing industry in a highly competitive market.

In practical terms, this means that exporters must comply with technical specifications but also ensure prompt and complete responses to requests for offers, precise grading of products, complete and accurate labelling of packages, and speedy shipments. This does not mean that the German market accepts only products of premium quality. On the contrary, the market is very value conscious and will accept products of medium quality - but of consistent standard at reasonable prices.

The development of EEC directives on fisheries products is being monitored closely through an interdepartmental working group that has been established on the EC internal market integration. The working group will analyse the situation as it evolves to identify and resolve potential barriers as well as to identify opportunities for Canadian exporters.

The following information may be useful in general terms in approaching the German market:

1. Finding a niche: For many companies, the secret of success, particularly on the highly competitive consumer market, is to identify and exploit a narrow market segment. To identify this niche, on-the-spot market research is virtually essential. Regional variations in consumer spending patterns are much more marked in Germany than many similar-sized countries, and importers should always seek local advice to establish whether their product is accepted well in a particular area. Even domestic producers usually pick a "Nielsen" area to test their product prior to launch.

Foreign producers should always be prepared to see the market from the German point of view and adapt their product accordingly.

2. Trade fairs: Even for domestic firms, trade fairs are a crucial part of selling in Germany; for foreigners, they provide perhaps the best possible gateway to the market. But it is essential to avoid exhibiting until the product is completely ready for the German market.

3. Sources of information: There are many official and quasi-official sources of information. The Canadian Association of Fish Exporters (CAFE) in Ottawa can provide advice on markets. A local German chamber of commerce (Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton) may be a valuable source. A central source of literature in English is the German Foreign Trade Information Office (Postfach 10 80 07, Koln 1), which produces a helpful publication called "How to approach the German market", and another on "Import Duties, Taxes and Import Regulations".