

The big push in the future will be towards brand-identified, packaged seafood products, whether for individual steaks or fillets or for value-added items such as single dishes, frozen entrees, etc. Trade is handicapped in the U.S. because the Food and Drug Administration refuses to certify modified atmosphere packaging for sale at retail, and it is a long way from allowing irradiation for seafood. Still, there is much fertile ground in the area of packaged, frozen, and microwaveable seafood.

Value-adding is an area that the small processor could get into; the real rewards would not be reaped for ten years when the tariffs on further processed products disappear, but that also leaves time for product and market development.

Safety - It is becoming increasingly likely that 1989 will go down as "the year of food safety" in the United States. And it is unlikely that seafood can escape being tarred by that brush any more than it escaped last year's "summer of pollution," particularly since seafood in the U.S. is not subject to any kind of mandatory inspection the way that beef, pork, and poultry are.

The 15.4 pounds per capita in the U.S.A. is a very fragile number. People do not have to eat seafood, and if they hear too many negative things about it, they won't. One effort that would help turn the situation around would involve Canadian companies, whatever their size, gaining a greater control of the marketing of their seafood products within the U.S. If cross-border partnerships and joint-venture operations are established, safety and quality control become issues to be handled jointly, not one side taking the rap for everything that's wrong with a product.

Rules and Regulations - A challenge which can not be easily dismissed is the trend that American harvesters and processors are starting to use conservation as a trade weapon, putting size restrictions on Canadian groundfish and lobsters coming into the U.S. The New England Fisheries Management Council is working to establish size limits on lobsters and certain