

PRODUCT TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Some form of unique product identification will be needed to establish Canadian pork as a safe, high-quality product.

MEXICAN PREFERENCES

Consumer demand is driven mainly by population growth, seasonal trends and a growing trust in the quality of pork meat. Consumption of meat of all kinds is directly related to purchasing power. Pork remains a lower-cost substitute for beef.

Mexican buyers of pork products seek to fill their lines with all the possible types of cuts. This is due to the wide taste of Mexican consumers who demand almost any part of the animal in one form or another. The difference between buyers is mainly the quality and price range of products they carry. Some key demands are readily identifiable:

- in-store butcheries of the large retail stores and certain restaurants and hotels want carcasses;
- retail stores that carry a line of prestigious goods demand high-end deli-products such as smoked meat and cold-cuts;
- large and small retailers located in the lower-class or semi-rural areas need to stock internal organs; and
- the "mom-and-pop" stores require non-sliced or packaged cold-cuts in particular.

Food-service buyers frequently structure their buying lists according to the events they are holding, pre-tailored specifications, such as those required by chains and the quality and taste desires of the chefs. Quality tends to lead over price considerations.

IMPORT MARKET SHARE

The market share of imported pork is expected to increase over the medium term. According to estimates by the *Comisión Nacional de Porcicultores (CONAPOR)*, National Commission of Pork Producers, by the year 2000, 35 percent of the market will be supplied by imports. A rapidly rising population is a major force driving demand growth. Other contributing factors include the following:

- trade barriers are being reduced under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA);