

Consumption of smoked products, most notably smoked salmon, is increasing year by year.

5.3.4 New products

France is a country where new food products are very actively marketed, and where an extensive range and variety of products are on offer. New products that have recently made their appearance in the French market are vacuum-packed fresh fish and surimi in all forms (7000 tonnes of surimi were imported in 1988).

Generally speaking, the French like fancy dishes, are prepared to pay high prices for their food, and take time over and enjoy their meals.

5.3.5 Distribution

The food product distribution system has undergone far-reaching changes in recent years. Alongside the traditional fish markets selling (for the most part) fresh fish, which have been losing ground, the large-scale distributors (i.e super market chains) have come to play a leading role in sales of food products generally (the very large supermarkets, with over 2500 m² of floor space, known as "hypermarkets" and ordinary supermarkets having between 400 and 2500 m² of floor space together account for 51% of all sales), including fish products, both fresh and frozen.

5.3.6 Restaurants

The "conventional" restaurant sector constitutes an attractive outlet for fresh products. Nearly all restaurants have a number of fish dishes on the menu, based on such species as salmon, archerfish and cod. Specialized catering firms supply them with high-quality deep-frozen products.

The category of institutional and corporate food services, which includes factory canteens, school cafeterias and the like, is much more extensively developed in France than it is in Canada. This sector constitutes an attractive outlet for down- and midmarket products.

Restaurant chains are relatively undeveloped. Such as they are, they tend to offer downmarket meat products rather than fish and seafood.