

QUALITY STANDARDS AND INSPECTION

Canada's stringent fish inspection activities — which cover vessels, plants, unloading, holding and handling sites, and transportation equipment contributes to the production of safe and wholesome products for international markets.

The Canadian government's Fish Inspection Program is responsible for administering the Fish Inspection Act and Regulations. It has the responsibility for determining that fish and fish products produced in Canada meet regulatory requirements, are produced under sanitary conditions and are properly packaged and labelled. These responsibilities are carried out by inspectors located across the country. Field inspectors are supported by inspection laboratories that regularly test products to determine compliance to both Canadian and foreign requirements. This allows the field inspectors to certify Canadian fish products for the Canadian market.

The Quality Management Program (QMP), which began in 1992 is a joint industry/government initiative in which industry has accepted more responsibility for the monitoring of its own performance. The role of the government has been expanded to include an auditing function in addition to its ongoing inspection responsibilities.

The Quality Management Program is based on the principles of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, and this Canadian initiative represents the first time that HACCP principles have been incorporated into a regulatory framework.

Canadian fish and seafood products have been known for their high standards. The Canadian Government, and the fish and seafood industry, working together through the QMP, now provide even greater assurances that these high standards will continue to be met.

CERTIFICATION SERVICES

The export certification program promotes the international sale of Canadian fish products. Over the past few years, a growing number of countries have enacted legislation that requires imported products to meet health, quality, identity, composition and labeling specifications. In order to facilitate the sales of Canadian fish products to these countries, the federal government will, following a request from an importer, examine particular lots of fish for export to determine if they meet the requirements of the importing country. If the product meets the necessary requirements, a certificate is issued.

EXPORT TRADE SERVICES

Canada maintains more than 100 trade missions abroad. The commercial section of the Canadian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate General is available to provide assistance to importers. All missions also have access to the World Information Network System (WIN) which contains detailed information on current and potential Canadian fish exporters. Importers should contact the commercial section directly. A list of contacts is contained in The Directory of Canadian Trade Commissioner Service available from DFAIT Infocentre.

Export Trade Services are also provided by the geographic and sector bureau at Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) in Ottawa and by the International Trade Centers (ITC's) located in each province in Canada. The ITC's serve generally as the first point of contact for exporters.

The Sourcing Guide of Canadian Fish and Seafood Exporters has two new features: Internet e-mail addresses and Canadian companies that import fish and seafood. This Sourcing Guide has been prepared in consultation with Atlantic provincial governments. We gratefully acknowledge the financial contributions and promotional inserts by our partners who are listed on the inside cover and throughout the guide. We thank the Canadian Association of Fish Exporters for the use of the product availability charts found in the front of this guide.

Information in this guide is also available on computer diskette 3.5"- DOS or Windows format which can be obtained from the Canadian Trade Offices or in Canada at International Trade Centers or through the InfoCentre of DFAIT as can additional hard copies of the guide itself. The Infocentre fax is 1-613-996-9709 or Infocentre Internet e-mail account: infocentre@fait.gc.ca.