Exporting Aquatic Products to China

Background
The People’s Republic of China has the world’s fastest-growing economy and is a leader in international trade, including the global seafood market. China’s Ministry of Commerce is primarily responsible for developing policy on market competition, foreign trade agreements, foreign direct investments, and import and export regulations.

Regulations on Inspection and Quarantine
The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) of the People’s Republic of China has implemented specific regulations on inspection and quarantine of import/export aquatic products and related supervision and management work to ensure that fish, fishery products and shellfish, including cephalochordates, vertebrata, echinoids, chordates, crustaceans and molluscs, meet legislated hygienic standards and are therefore safe for human consumption or further processing in China.

In short, AQSIQ administers an examination and approval system for aquatic products that are exported to China. Exporters must pass the examination and comply with the approval procedures to obtain a Quarantine Permit of Entry Animal and Plant Products. In addition, exporters must obtain all other required documents and certificates, such as the original inspection and quarantine certificates and the original production certificates (among other documents), before import shipments arrive at a port of entry authorized by AQSIQ.

It is recommended that Canadian exporters carefully discuss these regulations with Chinese importers to ensure that they are fully understood and followed. Further information can be found at http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/fispoi/export/cert10/aqsiq8.shtml.

Regulations on Packaging and Labelling
Packages containing aquatic products for export to China must be in good condition. The outside packaging must be intact and resistant to damage, and both the outer and inner packaging must be new, non-toxic and clean.

1 The information in this fact sheet is provided by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).
For fishery products that are destined for retail, both the outer and inner packaging (boxes, cans or bags) must be clearly labelled in Chinese and English. Labels must indicate product identity (common name, scientific name and product specifications), production identity (year, month and day of production, and also batch code/lot number), processing facility (name of facility and CFIA registration number), production method and fishing region, country of destination (People’s Republic of China), and preservation requirements (e.g. keep chilled or frozen).

It is recommended that Canadian exporters discuss these regulations with Chinese importers and distributors to ensure that fishery products are properly labelled. Further information can be found at http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/fispoi/export/cert10/chnchne.shtml.

**Certification Requirements**

Fresh and frozen fish and fishery products, including bivalve molluscan shellfish:
- Products must be accompanied by a Certificate of Origin and Hygiene (CFIA/ACIA 5328).

Live fish, including live bivalve molluscan shellfish:
- Products must be accompanied by a Certificate of Origin and Hygiene for live fish or shellfish intended for human consumption (CFIA/ACIA 5584).

Edible seal products:
- Products must be accompanied by a Certificate of Health for edible seal products (CFIA/ACIA 5651).
- In addition, Canadian exporters of seal products must implement control measures that satisfy the regulations listed in the “Code of Practice for the Harvest, Transport, Processing, and Export of Seal Products Intended for Human Consumption”. The Code of Practice ensures that there are established procedures and control measures which guarantee that seal meat and seal products intended for human consumption satisfy international hygienic standards. The Code of Practice applies to all stages of the fishing process, beginning with the harvesting of seal to final packaging and export for consumption.
Tolerances and Guidelines
These are the maximum levels of contaminants permitted in aquatic products:
- Lead: 0.5 ppm
- Mercury (carnivores): 1.0 ppm
- Mercury (other fish): 0.5 ppm
- Inorganic arsenic: 0.5 ppm
- Cadmium: 0.1 ppm
- Total PCB: 2.0 ppm
- PCB 138: 0.5 ppm
- PCB 153: 0.5 ppm