Exporting Aquatic Products to the European Union

Background
The European Commission’s Directorate General for Health and Consumers (SANCO) is the regulatory body responsible for food safety in the European Union (EU). The European Commission has implemented strict regulations for the import of fish, fishery products (including crustaceans, cephalopods and aquaculture products), shellfish or bivalve molluscs (including filter feeders such as oysters, mussels, clams, cockles and scallops), and the products that contain them. Harmonized import rules apply to all EU Member States and ensure that food products originating from facilities within non-EU countries have been assessed as meeting equivalent EU standards of hygiene in the harvesting, treatment, handling, packaging and transport of foods intended for human consumption. Canada is an approved non-EU country, and a listing of approved Canadian facilities permitted to export fish, fishery products and shellfish to the EU can be found at http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/fispoi/export/pageeuuee.shtml.

Regulations and Certification Requirements
The European Commission’s import rules on food hygiene were implemented in 2006. Since then, Canadian exporters of fish, fishery products and bivalve molluscs must comply with the following regulations and certification requirements:

1) Imports of fish, fishery products and shellfish must come from EU-approved fishery product facilities or harvested from approved bivalve mollusc production areas.
2) Imports must be accompanied by the appropriate health certification that confirms that hygiene, public health and animal health requirements are met. The certificate states the identity of the EU-approved facility that processed the product, the type of fish and quantity of each product that is being exported, and the final shipping destination.

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1 The information in this fact sheet is provided by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (SANCO), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, and the Food Standards Agency.
3) Imports must enter the EU through an officially designated Border Inspection Post (BIP) where veterinary and hygiene checks are performed by an Official Fish Inspector. Shipments are subject to documentary, identity and physical checks. Prior notification of shipments to the BIP is required.

The failure to meet these EU legislated requirements may result in shipments being returned to Canada or being destroyed by incineration. Further information is available at http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/fispoi/export/cert10/euuee.shtml and also http://ec.europa.eu/food/international/trade/interpretation_imports.pdf.

**Procedure for Inclusion on EU Approval Lists**
Companies wanting to be added to EU Approval Lists must be in compliance with the European Commission’s import rules on food hygiene. To request inclusion on EU Approval Lists, companies must contact the local office of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Further information is available at http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/directory/offbure.shtml.

**Traceability Requirement**
Since 2010, Canadian exporters of fish and fishery products to the EU must comply with regulations that prevent and deter Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing. Marine fishery imports, including live, fresh, chilled, frozen and prepared products, must be accompanied by a government-validated catch certificate that provides information on how and when fish were caught, and attests that the fish and fishery products originate from non-IUU fisheries (in general, freshwater fishery and aquaculture products are exempt). Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for providing the required catch-certificate. Further information is available at http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/peches-fisheries/fish-ren-peche/index-eng.htm#cont.

**National Aquatic Animal Health Program**
In 2005, CFIA and DFO jointly implemented the National Aquatic Animal Health Program (NAAHP). NAAHP is a science-based regulatory program designed to meet international aquatic animal health management standards (such as those in the EU) and protect Canada’s aquatic resources (both farmed and wild stocks) from infectious diseases that could adversely impact fishery trade. Through monitoring protocols and control measures,
NAAHP is responsible for attesting that aquatic animals and their products originate from regions, farms or sites that are free of disease, thus meeting international export health requirements. Further information is available at http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/health-sante-eng.htm#n1.

**Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement**

Canada and the EU recently completed the sixth round of negotiations towards a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), with discussions focused on the areas of trade in goods and services, investment, government procurement, regulatory cooperation, competition policy, intellectual property, labour and environment. CETA is important as it will affect the trade regulations governing the export of fish, fishery products and shellfish to the EU. Further information is available at http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/eu-ue/can-eu.aspx.