

# FOREIGN FISHERY TRADE

## Imports and Exports

**GROUND FISH IMPORTS:** On February 2, the Bureau of Customs, Treasury Department, announced preliminary figures for imports of fresh and frozen groundfish within quota limitations provided for under trade agreements. A total of 3,623,900 pounds were received from the beginning of the quota period, January 1, to February 2. In 1945, the January total was 1,359,298 pounds, the year's total was 41,313,204 pounds, and the year's reduced-tariff quota (figured on the basis of 15 percent of the average apparent United States consumption of the previous three years) was 17,668,311 pounds.

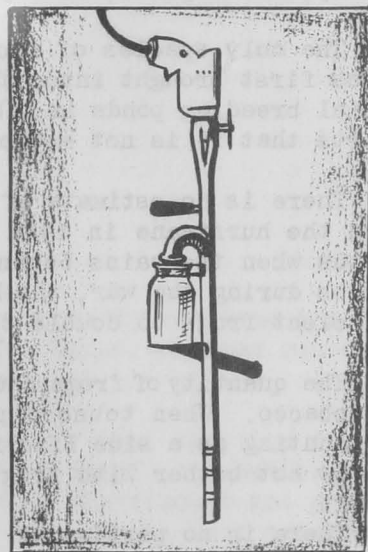
Commodity	Jan. 1-Feb. 2, 1946	December 1-31, 1945	January 1945
Fish, fresh or frozen, fillets, steaks, etc., of cod, haddock, hake, cusk, pollock, and rosefish	3,623,900	3,175,144	1,359,298



### Argentina

Two liver samplers were ordered for use in a plant in Argentina, the Service's Technological Laboratory, at Seattle, Washington, reported recently. Thus, the liver sampler, developed by Fish and Wildlife Service personnel at Seattle (Fishery Market News, May 1944, pp. 9-10, and November 1944, pp. 6-11), is being used as far north as Alaska and as far south as Argentina.

Sharks in Argentina are bought in the round, and the price of the livers is estimated from the length of the fish. The fish are separated as to size and sex. The buying of livers based on the length and sex of the fish has worked out very satisfactorily, it was reported.



## Canada

**COLD-STORAGE:** There was a considerable reduction in holdings of fresh fishery products in Canada's cold-storage warehouses during January, according to the Department of Trade and Commerce of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Despite the freezing of 4,849,000 pounds in January, stocks fell from 27,442,000 pounds on January 1, to 19,377,000 pounds on February 1. The holdings of the latter date were somewhat below the 20,950,000 pounds held on February 1, 1945, a year earlier.



## Cuba

**FROG LEG INDUSTRY:** The export of frog legs from Cuba to the United States has grown during recent years into a sizable industry, with shipments of over 300,000 pounds in 1945, valued at more than 100,000 dollars, according to a report received by the State Department from the American Embassy at Habana, Cuba.



Excerpts from the report follow:

The quantity of frogs in Cuba is increasing rapidly, and exports are expected to gain steadily in importance.

The only species of frogs exploited commercially in Cuba is the bull-frog. It was first brought into Cuba in 1915 from the United States. There are no commercial breeding ponds in Cuba at the present time, as the Ministry of Agriculture asserts that it is not economical to produce frogs commercially.

There is no estimate of the number of frogs in Cuba. The drought which followed the hurricane in 1944 reduced production somewhat, but breeding regained impetus when the rains began again in 1945. Following the temporary decline in exports during the war, the Ministry of Agriculture estimates that there are now sufficient frogs to double the rate of exports.

The quantity of frogs caught depends to a large extent on the price and demand for tobacco. When tobacco prices are low, tobacco growers and workers turn to frog-hunting as a side line for additional income. When tobacco prices are good, they do not bother with frogs.

There is no particular season for catching frogs in Cuba. They are hunted all year round, but in winter, when there is a prohibition in the United States against catching frogs, business in Cuba becomes brisk until spring, when harvest in the United States commences.

There are about 20 cleaning and packing stations in Pinar del Río province. Hunters bring the live frogs to the cleaning stations and deposit them alive in a corral until a truck loaded with ice arrives from the exporter in Habana. The frogs are then cleaned and skinned by hand. The legs are placed in iced tanks and wooden cases and trucked to Habana for repacking and shipping. No use is made of the waste and skins.

Prior to the war, the method of repacking frog legs in Habana involved more detailed operations than at present. During the war, there was a scarcity of paraffin paper and cardboard cartons, and refrigerated shipping was not available. Packers were then forced to pack in bulk without ice coating, in wooden boxes containing 100 pounds of frog legs and about 120 pounds of ice. This method of packing has continued. Packing houses hope, now that the war is over, that they will be able again to glaze and pack as before.



Frog skins heretofore have been wasted because the market possibilities and the method of tanning were unknown, but it is reported that an American processor has obtained information as to methods of drying and preparing skins, and this year intends to ship to New York for distribution to European markets.

Until very recently, frog meat was not used in Cuba, but lately, a number of people have begun using it. In the large cities, it is eaten principally by foreigners. Domestic consumption as a whole is negligible.

Exports of frog legs prior to 1938 were comparatively insignificant, and were, therefore, not shown separately in foreign trade statistics, but subsequently they have risen sharply. Average yearly exports from 1943 to 1945, inclusive, amounted to about 260,000 pounds, or about two and a half times as much as the period from 1938 to 1940.

Miami is the chief port of entry into the United States for Cuban frog legs. From there they are distributed to other consuming markets. About two months ago, about 4,000 pounds were sent by air express to New York, but this method of shipping has not been continued because the freight is high.



## Newfoundland

**THE COD FISHERY IN 1945:** The State Department has recently received a report from the American Consulate General, St. John's, Newfoundland, on that country's cod fishery in 1945. Extractions of the report follow:

Although it got off to a bad start with poor results from the trap fishery on the Northeast coast and the failure of the Labrador fishery, the Newfoundland fishing industry as a whole, which provides a more widely distributed and greater employment than any other, finished up the year with one of the best catches in recent years. Salt codfish production was the highest since 1939; exports of salt cod exceeded those of 1944 by almost 26 million pounds; the herring fishery, because of relief orders, became of major importance; and there was a further expansion of the frozen fish industry.

The estimated quantity of codfish salted during the calendar year 1945 was 106,984,000 pounds, an increase of 1,618,000 pounds over the figure for 1944. Stocks of salted codfish remaining on hand as of December 31, 1945, were only 40,738,000 pounds as compared with 48,210,000 pounds on December 31, 1944.

Exports of salt codfish during 1945, amounted to 120,321,000 pounds as compared with 94,340,000 pounds in 1944, an increase of almost 26 million pounds or 27½ percent. Exports to the United States showed little change.

The number of men engaged in the cod fishery in 1945 is believed to be about 24,700, an increase of about 10 percent over 1944, when the number was 22,400. This increase, almost entirely in the inshore fishery, is attributed to smaller employment on the American and Canadian bases and to a greater supply of materials needed for the industry.

The inshore fishery engaged 18,873 fishermen, a larger number than usual, and production was correspondingly high, being helped by one of the most successful fall fisheries in history and the extension of the season. The failure of the trap fishery early in the season has aroused discussion as to whether this type of fishing is worthwhile, since the cost of traps and their continuous repair is so much larger than the outlay for hook and line fishing.

Export selling prices were set by the Combined Food Board and were the same as 1944, with the exception of standard Labrador, hard dried, which was increased by \$1.60 a quintal<sup>1/</sup> for large and medium and \$1.55 for small.

Labrador fish is the lowest priced of the codfish grades; in fact, the wisdom of continuing an industry occupying a large number of men and absorbing considerable capital to obtain a grade of fish in little demand and of poor quality is often questioned by the Press.

The deep-sea fishery was the best of the century. Some bank fishermen extended the usual March to September season by operating in conjunction with shore-based filleting plants in Canada and Newfoundland. The 111 vessels engaged and the number of men employed were fewer than usual, but the catch of 127,630 quintals made the per capita production one of the best on record. Ship to shore telephone service was used for the first time in the deep-sea fishery.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the Newfoundland fisheries is the continued growth of the frozen codfish industry. There are now operating 44 filleting plants and 15 freezing plants, 13 of the latter being quick-freeze plants and 2 using the sharp-freeze method.<sup>2/</sup> The latter are now being converted to quick-freeze plants.

The production of frozen cod fillets in 1945 was 30,852,000 pounds as compared with about 24,000,000 pounds in 1944. Exports of fresh and frozen cod fillets in 1945 were 33,881,000 pounds, of which at least 90 percent consisted of frozen codfish. Of these exports, Britain received 19,382,000 pounds; the United States, 6,053,000 pounds; Canada, 8,566,000 pounds; Australia, 1,000 pounds; and Portugal, 300 pounds.

From the above, it will be seen that about 75 percent was taken by Britain. The shipments to Britain were sold at lower prices than were obtainable in Canada and the United States.

There is no assurance that Britain will continue to take large quantities of fresh and frozen cod fillets, so that Newfoundland is looking to the United States for additional markets. It is believed locally that the United States could ultimately

<sup>1/</sup>One quintal equals 112 pounds

<sup>2/</sup>After certain alterations which are now being made, are completed, these plants will have a daily maximum production of 622 pounds, with a storage capacity of 8,945,000 pounds.



absorb up to 100,000,000 pounds of Newfoundland fillets a year. That the country is optimistic regarding the industry is evidenced by the fact that much new capital is being invested in cold-storage operations, including the building of draggers or schooners with diesel power for trawling.



## Norway

**SALTED FISH:** A total of 2,000,000 pounds of salted fish, dry salt basis, has become available for immediate importation from Norway to this country, according to the Department of Agriculture. The action follows recent recommendations by the Combined Food Board.

The available supplies include 1,000,000 pounds of pickled boneless cod fillets (skin on) and 1,500,000 pounds (1,000,000 pounds dry salt basis) of heavily salted salt bulk ling, washed and pressed. The cod fillets will be shipped in casks and the salt bulk ling in wooden boxes.

All shipments involved in this action will be exported by a Norwegian Government agency, and not by individual exporters.



## South Africa

**FISH MEAL AND OIL:** The following item is reprinted from the Commercial Intelligence Journal (Ottawa, Canada) for February 9, 1946:

The Fisheries Development Corporation of South Africa, Limited, is to form a new company to produce oil and meal at Stumpnose Bay (just north of Saldanha Bay) from pilchards, according to a report in the Cape Argus in late November. The report stated that orders had already been placed in the United States for the necessary plant and that work on the building was to be started as soon as possible. The company is to be financed jointly by the Corporation and four canning companies, each of which will hold a fifth share.

It was announced at the same time that there is a further plan for another company with headquarters at Hant Bay near Cape Town to produce fish-liver oil, frozen crawfish tails, and smoked fish.

According to another South African press report, a Cape Town firm handling marine products has purchased, in the United States, a complete plant for the production of fish meal and oil from pilchards caught in South African waters. The plant, it is stated, will be capable of processing ten tons of fish per hour.