

U.S. Scallops Net Export Record to EU

By Joel Chetrick

The past 10 years have seen a remarkable, nearly 50-fold volume increase in U.S. scallop exports to the EU (European Union), from 55 metric tons in calendar 1993 to 2,746 tons in 2003. Export values in this market were also up, jumping from under \$1 million to more than \$25 million during the same period.

Frozen scallops comprise 51 percent of total U.S. sales volume to the EU, followed by fresh scallops (30 percent) and prepared/preserved scallops (19 percent).

Major competitors in the EU scallop market include Argentina, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Peru and the United Kingdom.

Supply, Demand Abound

Increased supply has fueled these skyrocketing sales. Successful management measures in U.S. fishing waters have produced bountiful supplies. These measures have included restrictions on size, areas fished and commercial gear, plus limits on possession, landing and trips.

Demand is up, particularly in France. In 2003, U.S. exporters shipped \$14.2 million worth of scallops to that country, accounting for 56 percent of U.S. sales to the EU.

Other significant and growing EU markets include Belgium, with purchases of \$3.3 million, the Netherlands (\$2.8 million), the United Kingdom (\$2.7 million) and Spain (nearly \$1 million).



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Promotion of U.S. Scallops

Beginning on Oct. 1, 2004, Food Export USA Northeast will be conducting international promotions of U.S. scallops and many other seafood products. This is a cooperative effort between FAS and 10 state departments of agriculture in the Middle Atlantic and New England regions. The FAS MAP (Market Access Program) helps fund promotional activities for products covered by the group.

In recent years, the American Seafood Institute actively promoted U.S. scallop and

other seafood sales in Europe under the MAP. These promotions included trade show exhibits and other activities that targeted cash-and-carry chains and distributors. Future promotions conducted by Food Export USA Northeast will continue to focus on food service trade development.

For additional information about scallop promotions, contact Colleen Coyne, seafood coordinator, Food Export USA Northeast. Tel.: (401) 491-9017; Fax: (401) 491-9024; E-mail: ccoyne@foodexportusa.org

Strong Sales To Continue

Early trade figures in 2004 indicate another record year. From January through June, U.S. scallop exports to the EU were valued at more than \$16.3 million—up 60 percent from the same period in 2003.

U.S. scallops are price-competitive in Europe, aided by the appreciation of the euro against the dollar. Besides favorable pricing, awareness and acceptance of U.S. quality by European importers enhance demand.

According to Steve Barndollar, president of Seatrade International (a seafood supplier in Portsmouth, New Hampshire), “U.S. scallops have become more acceptable, compared to Canadian scallops of the same species. There are also larger sizes available now. U.S. scallops shipped by air now compete successfully with Scottish scallops on European markets.”

Barndollar also credited other factors, such as better sized fresh products and careful attention paid by U.S. packers to the requirements of European markets.

Fresh and frozen scallops are particularly popular in European restaurants. According to one French importer, growing demand in restaurants with Asian cuisine has helped spur U.S. sales. Also, food processors are buying scallops for use in ready-made dishes sold at retail.

Restaurants and other food service outlets usually purchase scallops from wholesalers, cash-and-carry chains and distributors that import directly from the United States.

Rising Tide for Local Fishing Economies

Scallops are a high-value seafood product, and prices have increased in recent years. Export market development has been a major factor in these price



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U.S. Scallop Exports to the EU

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	\$1,000				
France	1,651	4,181	9,253	11,839	14,156
Belgium	26	23	653	1,414	3,257
Netherlands	276	991	1,596	2,471	2,786
United Kingdom	861	527	887	1,595	2,741
Spain	3	3	179	862	985
Denmark	21	18	0	219	646
Germany	7	0	7	16	360
Ireland	0	4	0	0	181
Sweden	29	115	63	27	74
Finland	0	0	0	0	5
Greece	25	20	17	36	0
Italy	0	0	53	3	0
Portugal	0	0	0	10	0
Total	2,899	5,882	12,708	18,492	25,191

increases. The average ex-vessel price per pound of scallop meats in 2002 was \$3.84, compared with \$3.73 in 2001. The 2003 price was \$4.09 per pound.

Increased scallop exports have boosted the economies of fishing communities in the eastern United States. “The large harvest is a real boon to the industry in New Bedford, Massachusetts and in Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia,” said Barndollar.

Massachusetts and Virginia usually

rank Nos. 1 and 2, respectively, for sea scallop landings and account for 79 percent of the total U.S. sea scallop fishing harvest. ■

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