

Fish Products Data Compilation in Malaysia

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Introduction

Fish is a major traditional source of animal protein for a large section of the population in Malaysia especially in the rural areas. In 1995, the total quantity of marine fish landed was 1,108,436 tonnes of which about 57% was consumed either fresh, dried, fermented or others, 29% was landed as trash fish and while rest was estimated to be lost due to spoilage.

In early 1996, the Marine Fisheries Research Department (MFRD) of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) requested the Department of Fisheries of Malaysia to conduct a survey on fish products in Malaysia. It was the third time SEAFDEC was compiling an inventory of fish products in Southeast Asia. The Southeast Asian Fish Products compilation provides comprehensive and convenient reference material for use by researchers, food scientists, fish technologists, administrators and fish traders and others in the private sector on the different fish products produced and consumed in Southeast Asia. The publication describes the different technologies and techniques involved in the production of fish products. Some information on prices of both raw and finished products are also documented, together with related packaging methods and materials, storage conditions, shelf life and ways of consumption. Information on production, export figures including countries of export destination and problems in marketing and quality control are also included.

Data Gathering

The collection and compilation of fish products data in Malaysia was done by the Fisheries Information System Section, Corporate Planning Division of the Department of Fisheries Malaysia. The Section sent questionnaires to the Marine Fisheries Extension Center in the country and to the Fish Handling Unit of the Malaysian Fisheries Training Institute in Terengganu. Still photographs and slides were also requested on the fish products. The questionnaire was designed to record the name and description of fish products, the main materials and additives used, cost per kg

as well as outline of processing methods. Information on machines used to process the product, their packaging and storage conditions, shelf life, ways of consumption, retail prices and problems in marketing and quality control were also included in the questionnaire. Two months were given for the Center and Institute to collect the information.

The data for the production on the fish products for the years 1984 to 1993 was gathered from the Annual Fisheries Statistics, Volume I produced by the Department of Fisheries while data for export and countries of destination (export) for the years 1984 to 1993 were gathered from the Annual Fisheries Statistics Volume 2 produced by the Department of Fisheries (data was originally compiled by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia). Secondary data was gathered to supplement information for the questionnaire. These included data published in reports, manuals and results of other surveys.

Observations and Problems Encountered During the Survey

The questionnaires were returned to the Fisheries Information System Section as required. However, some data and information were not available. Production figures for products like smoked tuna, prawn dust and comminuted products were not available because the products are produced on a small scale and data was not recorded in the Annual Fisheries Statistics book. The export figures for the earlier years (1984-1987) for most products except dried prawn and fish meal were not available from the data given by the Department of Statistics in the Annual Fisheries Statistics Volume 2 for Import/Export.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The fish products data is useful for researchers, food scientists, fish technologists, administrators, fish traders and others in the private sector who are interested in the fish processing and fish products field. As such, the periodic updating of the information as SEAFDEC

is doing now is recommended further in the future. Malaysia will continue updating the current information and will send the information to SEAFDEC through electronic mail in the future. This is so because the current information gathered is not comprehensive yet especially for Sabah and Sarawak area. Furthermore Malaysia, under its 7th Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) is setting aside funds to increase its efforts in updating information in this area.

Reference

Department of Fisheries, Malaysia. 1996. Annual Fisheries Statistics, 1995.
Southeast Asian Fish Product, 2nd Edition SEAFDEC. 1991.