Fish IN

Volume 6 Issue 2
April / May 2013

Newsletter of the SEAFOOD INDUSTRY of Trinidad and Tobago



A Publication of the Seafood Industry Development Company Limited

Commissioning of Fish Landing Sites

The Ministry of Food Production is currently engaged in refurbishing fish landing sites throughout Trinidad. The most recent being the Gran Riviere Fish Landing.

To date a total of twelve landing sites have been refurbished by the Ministry of Food Production of which eight have been handed over to the Seafood Industry Development Company Limited (SIDC) for management purposes. These include Ortoire, Claxton Bay, Otaheite, Brickfield, Carli Bay, Maracas, Erin and Fullerton.

As the Ministry of Food Production continues to strive for excellence in the refurbishing, commissioning and handing over of the various landing sites to the SIDC, so to the SIDC reiterates its commitment to working together with all stakeholders to ensure that operations at fish landing sites are properly managed and the facilities maintained at acceptable levels.



Commissioning the Grand Rivere Fish Landing Site - Honourable Devant Maharaj, Minister of Food Production (right) being congratulated by MP for the area Honourable Dr. Rupert Griffith.

ORTOIRE FISH LANDING SITE

The Ortoire Fish Landing Site is located on Trinidad's east coast. The facilities at this site were recently refurbished On Wednesday 5th December, 2012, it was formally re-opened and its management responsibilities handed over to the SIDC. The site includes an area for retail seafood sales, an ice plant, lockers, storage and processing facilities, office space and washroom facilities.



Fish Retail Market at Ortoire Fish Landing Site

Over the past several years, there has been a steady increase in the number of registered fishing boats utilizing this landing site. The number of vessels increased from twenty-six in 2003 to thirty-five in 2012. Monofilament gillnet fishing is the main type of fishing carried out in this area, while beach seines, which catch a mixture of both pelagic and demersal species are used on a seasonal basis.

Fish pots are also used to catch snapper, grouper, sea trout and lobster further offshore. Fishing trips are made daily, using vessels measuring between 12 - 13 meters in length that are powered by outboard engines. The fishing gear is manually deployed and retrieved.

⇦ *Front cover: Fish displayed on ice - Taken at the International Boston Seafood Show, March 2013*

FISH POTS

In the Caribbean there are four common fish pot designs: “Z” pots; “S” pots; arrowhead or chevron pots; and rectangular pots. The majority of pots used locally are of the arrowhead design in which there is one opening. However, they all work more or less in the same way – the fish enters the pot and are unable to escape because of the design.

Pots are constructed from various materials that range from the traditional wooden frame and wire mesh to the larger steel frame with polyethylene mesh. The mesh size is usually two inch hexagonal. When pots are constructed using non-biodegradable materials there is a risk that lost pots can continue to catch fish for a long time. These are known as ghost pots. It is recommended therefore that pots be designed with biodegradable escape panels.



Arrowhead Fishpots at Ortoire

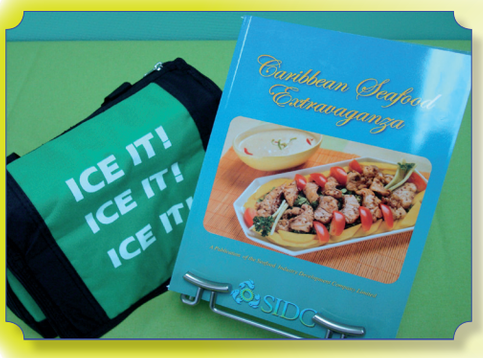
Fish pots can be designed to be highly selective based on the species and size of fish that are being targeted. Pots can also be modified to capture certain species and avoid others. They can also be made size selective by varying mesh size and including escape panels that allows release of undersized species. In this way there is low mortality of catch, since juveniles can escape. This method makes this type of pot fishing potentially sustainable.

After a pot has been constructed it must be prepared for fishing operation by attaching marker floats or buoys to the pot so that it can be located and retrieved. The size of floats and buoys used varies with water depth and currents. Pots are hauled either by hand or with a pot hauler. The method utilised will depend on the depth of the water and the quantity of pots to be retrieved.

The commercial use of fish pots started in the late 1940s with the assistance of the Fisheries Administration in most west coast communities. In 1955 the use of fish pots was extended to Matelot on the north coast where there was once a vibrant and innovative artisanal fishing community. Fish pots are now used largely by fishermen from the north-western peninsula, the south coast at Erin and Moruga and the east coast at Balandra and Ortoire. At Ortoire fish pots are an important fishing gear and the majority of vessels (pirogues usually larger than 12-13m) based at this site use fish pots.

Locally, both the artisanal and industrial fishing vessels use fish pots. The artisanal vessels use mainly 1.2m x 1.2m arrowhead pots constructed of chicken wire on mangrove or wild coffee frames. The industrial vessels use collapsible pots made of synthetic mesh or welded wire mesh (BRC) on steel frames averaging 2.1m x 1.5m.

Species targeted by fish pots are snapper, grouper, sea trout, croaker and lobster.



The SIDC currently has a special promotion on its cookbook “**Caribbean Seafood Extravaganza**” and cooler bag. The cost of the cookbook and cooler bag is $35.00 and $65.00 respectively.

This special promotion is available ONLY at the SIDC’s office located at #6 Bejucal Extension 1,
Uriah Butler Highway, Charlieville.
For further information contact us at 665-0751 or 672-3427.

Labelling of Fishery Products

What you pay for is not what you always get



Frozen Fishery Products

Most countries have laws to protect the consumer against economic fraud which is the term used to describe products which are intentionally mislabelled. Clause 6 of the Food and Drug Act (Chap. 30:01) makes it an offense to deliberately mislabel any food, drug or cosmetic. In fact there are specific requirements with respect to labelling such as contents, size of fonts, position of labels on packages etc.

The practice of mislabelling and species substitution is becoming more and more an issue in the food industry. Technological innovations such as DNA testing are becoming more important as a tool to verify the authenticity of the product. The reader will recall the recent fiasco with the horse meat in the beef burgers as a case in point.

The aquatic food industry is not blameless in this regard. The January 2013 issue of Seafood International carried at least five articles pertaining to this matter ranging from supplying customers with the wrong species of fish to deliberately misrepresenting species on the menu. One article referred to a survey conducted in Los Angeles where 74% (103) of the retailers surveyed were either misbranding products or providing false information. The Yahoo news of the 21st February 2013 reported that three in five grocery stores and restaurants in New York have mislabelled stock and substituted varieties that can cause illness. In one instance, all but one of the seventeen white tuna samples turned out to be escolar, a species of fish whose oils have purgative properties. Snapper was found to be the most commonly misrepresented (87%) followed by grouper and halibut.

One may wish to ask of what concern is this to Trinidad & Tobago? The answer lies in the fact that because of globalisation, mislabelled fish and fish products can be imported quite easily into the country. The increasing demand for fish and other aquatic products make this a real possibility. Are we assured, for instance, that the imported product is really what it is claims to be? The possibility of species substitution and all other facets of economic fraud must therefore be considered seriously.

The question arises, are we guilty of such a practice in T&T? Are we presenting to our consumers fish that is not what it is purported to be? For example, take the case of what is commonly referred to as salmon locally. It is not really salmon. In fact there is a vast difference between the two. The local fish is really a weak fish which belongs to the trout family and is correctly known as sea trout. Additionally, a practice was started over twenty-five years ago in which low value species were referred to as white fish. What is really accepted in the international market as white fish are those species which are related to cod fish. Catfish certainly does not fall into this category yet it is sold locally as white fish. The consumer must know what he/she is purchasing. Any attempt to mislead is fraudulent. Additionally, we must also remember that some persons may be allergic to a particular species of fish or may not eat it as a result of their religious persuasion.

The restaurants and various fast food outlets must also seek to be responsible and ensure that what is being offered on the menu is really as stated. A surimi product should not be passed off as a high priced shellfish. This happens far too often.

The consumer must read the label properly, ask questions and become informed. Seafood establishments are required to request certificates of guarantee from overseas suppliers and adopt an approach where the industry polices itself. What is the role of the regulator? It is to ensure that the consumer is provided with good quality seafood which is safe, wholesome and free of misrepresentation.

GLOBAL NEWS

New Global Partnership to Promote Aquaculture in Fighting Hunger

In an effort to fight hunger and reduce poverty, the European Union has funded a one million Euro three year project aimed at assisting low income food deficit countries in Africa and Latin America to develop sustainable policies for improving the livelihood of millions of poor people. The project, “Aquaculture for Food Security, Poverty Alleviation and Nutrition” (AFSPAN) was launched in October 2012 and is managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization in collaboration with a global alliance of twenty development agencies, governments and universities.

The objective of AFSPAN is to understand the current status of the contribution of aquaculture to food and nutrition, security and poverty alleviation. The nature of the project is research based and involves field research on aquaculture farming communities in developing countries. It entails reviewing the current knowledge on the contribution of aquaculture to food and nutrition security and poverty alleviation, developing tools and methodologies for better assessment of this contribution and strategies for improving the contribution of aquaculture to food security, nutrition and poverty alleviation all of which would impact food security.

Source: http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/159323/icode/

ALWAYS ENSURE FRESH SEAFOOD IS ON ICE!
ICED SEAFOOD = SAFE SEAFOOD

INTERNATIONAL BOSTON SEAFOOD SHOW

THE INTERNATIONAL BOSTON SEAFOOD SHOW

(IBSS) took place during the period 10-13th March 2013 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Centre. The International Boston Seafood Show is held in conjunction with Seafood Processing America and is reputed to be North America’s largest trade event.

Each year over 19,000 buyers and sellers of seafood from over one hundred countries come together at the event since the event offers the best opportunity for reaching the entire North American seafood market. It offers opportunities for the industry to source the newest seafood products and processing equipment, keep abreast of the latest seafood consumer trends, meet suppliers and buyers and build business relationships.

There were a large number of exhibits that displayed the widest range of seafood and seafood products and equipment.



Overhead view of a section of the IBSS exhibiton area

Shellfish


Shrimp

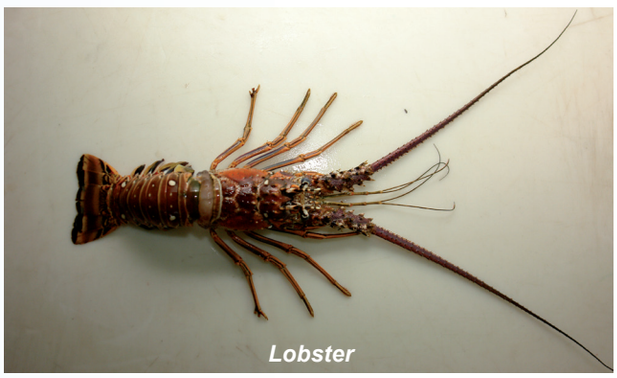
Shellfish are defined as aquatic invertebrates whose bodies are covered by a shell. Common forms of shellfish found on the local market include shrimp, crab, lobster, and oysters.

Shrimp are marketed as whole, headless, peeled and de-veined (P&D) as well as peeled and unde-veined (PUD). Whole shrimp are sold just as they come from the sea. When the head is removed, it is referred to as headless and when the shell is re-tained, it is marketed as 'shell on'. Peeled shrimp where the gut ('sand vein') has been removed is re-ferred to as peeled and de-veined (P&D), whereas where the gut has not been removed it is referred to as peeled and un-deveined (PUD). Shrimp are sold on the basis of how many shrimp weigh one pound. The smaller the number, the larger the shrimp. For example, 16/20 means there are 16 to 20 shrimp per pound and is sized as a jumbo, whereas 61/70 means there are 61 to 70 shrimp per pound and is sized as small.

Shrimp should have a mild odour, similar to fresh seaweed or seawater. Avoid purchase if shrimp has a strong ammonia-like or 'rotten-egg' smell, since this indicates decomposition. Always purchase shrimp that is adequately iced. Shrimp not stored in ice spoils faster. Melanosis or black spot formation is a natural deterioration of the shell and meat, and is strongly indicative of loss of quality caused by poor handling and storage.

The shrimp head contains more than 80 percent of the spoilage bacteria found in shrimp. So, headless shrimp are less likely to spoil than those with heads left on. The shells on shrimp tail meat should always be left on because they help reduce drying out (freezer burn) during frozen storage.

Lobsters are sold alive, chilled, or frozen. They can be purchased either whole or as lobster tails. When purchasing fresh lobsters, ensure that there is move-ment of the legs and antennae. This indicates the lob-sters are alive. Also, shells should not be cracked or discolored since this indicates a loss of quality.


Lobster


Blue Crab

Crabs must be purchased with their claws immobi-lized to prevent injury. They are marketed as a fresh or frozen product (legs and claw parts). Crab meat is usually found in the delicatessen section in the supermarket and can be used for a variety of dishes. Similar to lobsters, when purchasing crabs look for signs that they are alive.

Oysters are served raw locally with a highly seasoned sauce made from lime juice, salt, pepper and ketchup. Like shrimp, oysters are filter feeders. They are harvested from the sea or mangrove swamps. The consumption of oysters has been linked at times to incidences of food borne diseases such as Cholera.


Shucked Oysters on ice

Oysters obtain their food by filtering large volumes of water when submerged. This feeding pattern enables them to obtain essential nutrients, but also allows accumulation of contaminants in their flesh. These contaminants are sometimes responsible for causing illnesses, since oysters harvested locally are not "purged" in treated water. Purging allows them to excrete contaminants before human consumption, therefore lowering the risk of contracting Cholera and associated food borne illnesses.

'A Mediterranean diet rich in olive oil, nuts, beans, fish, fruits and vegetables can prevent heart attacks, strokes and death.' - Seafood International, April 2013

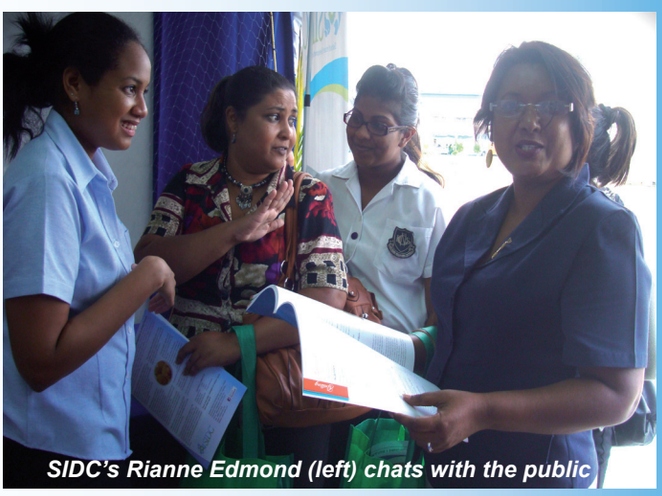


SanCity Green Expo 2013

Hosted by the San Fernando Regional Corporation and held at Skinner Park San Fernando on 24th April to 29th April 2013. The aim of the event was to provide environmental education to youth through e-learning and practical interaction. The exposition featured environmental products, services,and highlighted various projects of the NGO and CBO communities.

The SIDC participated at the expo and had on display an aquarium with tilapia, a video presentation on seafood tips for customers when purchasing seafood, brochures on aquaculture, attributes of fish species to look for when shopping for seafood as well as the SIDC's Caribbean Seafood Extravaganza cookbook.


Risa Edoo speaking to students at SIDC's booth


SIDC's Rianne Edmond (left) chats with the public

CASTING A LINE OF COOPERATION

The SIDC's Industry Development Unit was established primarily to promote and support community empowerment. Building on the experience and successes of the north eastern cluster of fishing communities, through the formation of the North East Coast Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Limited (NECMC), the SIDC intends to work towards moving coastal fishing communities into functioning and representative associations in order to nurture and build organizations that evolve into community bases business enterprises.

'Unity is Strength' would be the basis for building community organizations such as the NECMC. This may be considered as the foundation stone for empowering the fishing communities both socially and economically.

It is important for coastal fishing communities and associations to participate in productive capacity building and business development activities so that there is greater wealth creation in the communities. This ensures more secure livelihoods for members of these communities. Once fishing communities become organized, mainly into associations, they can then evolve into business entities. The SIDC intends to continue its crucial crucial role among networking stakeholders in the sector by linking communities to various external organizations and agencies. Communities shall be given every chance to interact, communicate, and align themselves with intra-, inter- and the external environments.

Establishing linkages with Government, NGOs and other agencies will provide community access to these partners and facilitate training, credit support, health and family planning related services, educational, agricultural, physical infrastructure, women and welfare support, to list a few.

CARRY A COOLER BAG OR INSULATED CONTAINER WITH ICE TO STORE YOUR SEAFOOD AFTER PURCHASE. THIS ENSURES THE COLD CHAIN IS MAINTAINED AND PRODUCT QUALITY AND SAFETY IS NOT COMPROMISED

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Doon Ramsaroop - Chief Executive Officer
Devi Ramberran Narine - Executive Assistant

Contributors:

Charles Nurse - Quality Assurance Officer
Ian King - Landing Sites Manager
Omardath Maharaj - Industry Development Officer
Carla Marcelle - Seafood Consumer Education Specialist
Rianne Edmond - Project Assistant
Venessa Mawahlal – Project Assistant

SIDC©

Seafood Industry Development Company Limited
#6 Bejucal Extension 1, Uriah Butler Highway,
Charlieville, Chaguanas,Trinidad W.I.
Phone: (868)-665-0751 / 672-3427
Fax: (868)-671-8932
Email: info@sidctt.com
Website: www.sidctt.com

Find us on Facebook