

realize that a five or seven pound shortage even at twenty cents per pound amounts to an additional cost from one to one and a half dollars per box to the retailer. He naturally has to pass this extra cost to the ultimate consumer, who will not be too pleased at this increase in his food expense. Another thing noticed is the non-uniformity of the various packages as far as fish sizes go. Many varieties are packed from a half pound to three or more pounds which makes it hard for a distributor to sell. They should be properly culled and graded small, medium and large. This would help the dealer or distributor find the proper market for the merchandise. Some markets can use large quantities of certain size fish whereas if they are received mixed the dealer sometimes has to pick his size and then reship the remainder to some commission house to sell for his account. This is a very unprofitable set up and forces a dealer or distributor to curtail his buying quantities of that particular variety, because of the amount of work involved and the gamble on the possible resulting profit.

Stories are heard of price contracts being made with the fishermen at the beginning of a season when certain varieties are fairly scarce. Naturally the price is usually high, too high for comfort. The dealer is wary and only buys from the packer a part of what he could really use if the price was reasonable. The fisherman, with a good price guaranteed, sets forth and usually over produces, overloads the packer who is forced to ship on consignment. This usually gluts the various markets and everyone gets frightened and steers clear of that variety because of its extreme drop in price. The packer then wants to reduce his contract price to the fisherman who gets angry and goes on a strike. There being no production for awhile, that variety is off the market and consequently removed from the minds of the dealers who wish they had never seen this particular fish. When it is produced again the cycle returns. Spanish mackerel, mullet and king mackerel are the types that are produced heaviest and they are the biggest headaches as far as our Northern marketing is concerned.

It has reached a point in New York that when we receive a call from a packer we can tell what quality, what cull and how short the packages will be when he tells up the point of production. We have tried many times in the past to impress them with the facts stated but they still take the attitude that "if you don't want it someone else does." Again that may be true, but will it consume the additional production he could no doubt bring in? Will it remove the glut period and create a steady market during that time which would give him a small profit instead of a large loss? Will it enlarge the consumer demand? Although it is only one man's opinion, the writer says no. In fact it may be said that the current demand will even fall off, because of the increased quality food products now competing for the consumer dollar, unless we in the industry wake up and get on the quality band wagon.

In conclusion, the writer thinks that such a representative group could take the lead in promoting a program to improve the quality and grading of the fishing products produced in the states or countries they represent.

The Development of the Brownsville Shrimp Industry

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This paper will describe the phenomenal change that has taken place in the shrimping industry in the lower gulf area from 1930 to the present time. With the closing of the Bay area on the lower Texas Coast in 1930, the fleet of

small shrimping boats operating from Port Isabel turned their efforts solely to fishing because restrictions placed on bay shrimping made it impossible to otherwise secure a livelihood. For some time it looked as if fishing of any nature on a commercial basis would become extinct in this area, as boats were small and the nets and gear being handled by hand made it impossible to fish in deeper waters.

In 1935 there were few radical changes in commercial fishing in this area. Both Brownsville and Port Isabel had become deep water ports and, as such, were growing in importance. The fleet of small fishing boats meanwhile were somehow managing to exist. During favorable weather they were venturing outside of the jetties to fish their hand-operated rigs, running for harbor at the first sign of bad weather. For a short time in the spring and fall, while calm waters existed, these boats were bringing to port a small amount of white shrimp. It was during this time that the first catches of Brazilian or grooved shrimp were brought to port. A trial shipment of these shrimp was shipped fresh to a Midwestern market and was immediately rejected as being unsaleable and unusable by the buyers at the wholesale level.

Seasonal productions of white shrimp continued in this area for the next ten years. Slow changes gradually took place as larger boats with better equipment were warranted by a better market and increased production. Catches were becoming larger and were being frozen for easier handling and transportation in the sales end of business. This tended to give stability to the production end of the industry, which, in turn, encouraged individuals and firms to increase their investments in boats and equipments. With these improvements the boats were able to venture further away from port into deeper waters and practically all of their production was white shrimp.

In early spring, 1947, several out-of-state firms sent boats to Brownsville to help develop the shrimp industry. Animosity became apparent between Texas dealers and out-of-state interests, resulting in the non-resident boats actually being legislated out of the state.

In the late fall of 1947 it was discovered that huge beds of grooved shrimp were off shore in depths of twenty fathoms or more. It was thought that if the markets could be educated to accept the reddish brown color as being natural, these beds would afford an inexhaustible supply for the shrimping industry. There was no doubt that the quality and edibility of the grooved shrimp was every bit as good as those of the whites. To this end, firms and individuals engaged in the production and marketing of shrimp started their program of education. Shipments were made to market centers as much as 10 cents a pound under the white shrimp price. Distributors, chain stores and jobbers were urged to take the Brazilian shrimp and to assure their customers that the reddish-brown color was natural and in no way was there any connection between the color and age or state of freshness of the shrimp. The Fish and Wildlife Service issued a special market development Bulletin No. 187, wherein they assured the reader that the Brazilian shrimp was as good as the common white species. By late 1948 Brazilian market acceptance was growing more favorable.

In 1948 production of shrimp in this area increased rapidly. Shrimp trawlers began working out of the Brownsville port. Facilities for boats were very few. Early in 1949, 47 out-of-state boats returned to Brownsville, this time determined to stay. Through legal procedure, very costly to both factions, it was determined by courts that out of state boats could legally operate from Texas

ports. The knowledge that out-of-state boats could legally fish from Texas ports brought many fleets from various areas.

With this influx of boats locating mostly in the Port of Brownsville, this city suddenly awakened to the added wealth that this industry was bringing to this area. Millions of dollars were spent for more convenient unloading and working facilities, and enlarging freezer and storage capacities.

By this accumulation of men, representing numerous nationalities, there was foreseen a great need for cohesive efforts. Problems common to all were facing them. To achieve this effort and to solve the problems confronting them, the Brownsville Shrimp Association was formed. This Association's membership was made up of the numerous shrimp dealers located here. This new association continually strived for quality control, and always advertised Brazilian brown shrimp. The remarkable acceptance of this new species of shrimp by the trade as a whole is evidence within itself that careful planning and diligent watching of quality will always bring satisfactory returns.

Due to the success of this organization and to the progressiveness of the dealers of other sections of the Texas Coast, the need of a coast wide association of dealers was felt. By the middle of 1950 the Texas Shrimp Association was formed. Its membership was represented by dealers from all sections of the Texas Coast working together in harmony and for the common good and improvement of the industry as a whole.

The spectacular success of this organization and the harmonious working together of its members brought about the forming of yet another association, which is known as the Shrimp Association of the Americas. This Association is an international association and brings together the Mexican Shrimp Dealers Association and the Texas Shrimp Association and its membership is open to other shrimp dealers. It is hoped that those engaged in the shrimp business in other states of the United States, as well as in Panama and other foreign countries, will form their own dealer's associations and become affiliated with this international organization. The foundations of all of these groups have a common cause. Their purpose is that of facing and successfully solving industry problems through united efforts.

During the latter part of 1950 several of the Brownsville boats, ever seeking new fishing grounds, made trial trips across the Gulf of Mexico to the Campeche banks where were discovered yet another species of shrimp in untold quantities. This shrimp being pink in color, the first reaction in the markets were that they were spoiled. By vigorous assurance and education, as well as advertising, once again this new species was accepted by the trade and today is now one of the favorites of the market.

It has been proven that the entire lower Gulf area from Corpus Christi, Texas, to the Yucatan Channel is an enormous shrimp producing area and by using strict conservation methods, this area will become practically an inexhaustible source of supply. This year the shrimp industry has brought enormous prosperity to this area; the most amazing part of all is that no one realized the possibilities of these vast resources until a cosmopolitan group of men, joined together for the common good of all, with the foresight of veterans, in a systematic manner and with a long range plan of conservation, quality control, advertising and distribution, began to explore the possibilities of this area and have at this time only scratched the surface.

Prior to 1948 practically all of the production in this area was of the white species which was more or less a seasonal proposition, with some seasons good and some bad. Discovery of the off-shore Brazilian species and the increased

catches per boat caused the production of brown shrimp to soon outdistance the white shrimp production and today 95 per cent of the production of this area is brown shrimp and the shrimp industry has been changed from a fair weather venture to a year-round business.

The following table of shrimp production gives a more concrete picture of the growth of the industry. These figures are the combined Port Isabel and Brownsville production in pounds of headless shrimp tails:

1947	1,750,000 lbs.
1948	4,447,700 lbs.
1949	13,036,840 lbs.
1950	17,189,200 lbs.
1951*	19,056,170 lbs.

*Through Aug. 31, 1951, 8 months.

The general growth and progressiveness of the shrimp industry as such, reflects the aggressive willingness of the individuals therein. The change has come about from a small seasonal business to a year round multi-million dollar industry. The men that have made it possible for a trawler to profitably seek its fishing grounds five hundred miles from port are the men who will continue to show the way in the future.

Breaded Shrimp

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Abstract

The commercial breeding of shrimp began in a small way but soon mushroomed as rapidly expanded markets gave new and additional outlets. Today, breeding uses a large percentage of the small and medium size headless shrimp, which formerly acted as a depressant factor on the shrimp economy, but which today are actually a bouyant factor. They are a tremendous help in marketing the production from the Atlantic Seaboard and the Gulf shrimping areas.

The breaded shrimp industry has a large number of ethical producers who have been striving constantly to place on the market a product which is clean, is produced in a sanitary manner, and is free from decomposition and defects. However, the immediate popularity of breaded shrimp with the American public has been felt to be a bonanza by many, who desire only to reap quick, large profits, and who have been heedless of the type of product they introduced into the trade channels. The result has been injury, not only to themselves but to the industry as a whole. The new industry is jeopardized by these practices. Its leaders must, therefore, take on the obligation of "cleaning house" in the industry, unless they wish to have it done by those who, in the process might easily wreck their economy.

From the data presented at the Shrimp Clinic of the National Fisheries Institute at the Boston Meeting in April, 1951, and the writer's own observations and experience, it is felt to be imperative that the breaded shrimp producers bend every effort to place on the market a product which is free from decomposition, bacteriological, insect and rodent contamination; a product with a minimum of breeding material; which is full weight as declared on the package; and is of a reasonable size variation.