

provisión para la inspección y certificación de productos pesqueros en las ciudades de grandes centros productores y grandes mercados, de acuerdo con los standards promulgados.

Diferentes departamentos del Ministerio del Interior y Agricultura se encuentran ya trabajando en pasos preliminares.

Voluntary Industry Standards for Fishery Products

MAL XAVIER

National Fisheries Institute, Inc., Washington, D. C.

The question of standards for fishery products has developed much discussion, if not controversy, for many years. The lack of adequate standards has, no doubt, been responsible for many of the unethical practices existing in the industry today. In addition, the lack of uniform standards and a comprehensive program of quality development and control has resulted, in many cases, in the distribution of inferior fishery products to the consuming public.

Like any other industry, the fisheries must progress in order to survive. Some segments of the industry have been progressive, others have not. New production methods and techniques and some new products have been developed, but we must also develop standards—standards of quality and standards of sanitation.

About four years ago, while the breaded shrimp industry was in its infancy, it was discovered that many packers were producing a product containing more breading than shrimp. Subsequent developments, particularly discussions with the Food and Drug Administration, convinced us that something had to be done by industry. Otherwise the Government would act, and perhaps in a manner not to the industry's liking. As a result we were authorized to conduct a laboratory test of frozen breaded shrimp. Samples were purchased in the open market at the retail level by Fish and Wildlife Service personnel, tests were made at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the report of the laboratory's findings was made at a special meeting during the National Fisheries Institute's Convention at Boston in 1951. I quote a short summary of M.I.T.'s report: "The proportion of breading on commercial breaded shrimp samples varied between 21.9 and 62.3 per cent and averaged 41.0 per cent. In the case of 18 of the 26 samples, the breading was in excess of 35 per cent. The ammonia content of 12 of the 26 breaded shrimp samples was sufficiently high to indicate that the quality was questionable or bad. Ammonia content appeared not to be correlated with bacterial count but 11 of the 12 samples which were high in ammonia were among the 12 samples of lowest quality as determined by organoleptic tests. As a matter of fact, in seven of the 26 samples, the breading content was 50 per cent or over.

Subsequent tests have indicated little or no general improvement in bacteria count, while the average percentage of breading has gradually gone up, so that the 1954 tests showed an average of 48.8 per cent breading. Ten

of these samples contained 50 per cent or over of breading. Our Quality Committee discussed breading standards during the 1953 N.F.I. Convention in Washington, D. C. At that time a two-day meeting was held, and it was estimated that about 75 per cent of the volume of breaded shrimp produced was represented. Six months later "Suggested Tentative Standards for the Breaded Shrimp Industry" were set up and approved, and subsequently subscribed to by additional packers. This marked the first attempt by industry to set up standards.

In 1952, N.F.I. conducted a frozen fish and shellfish, and a canned fish cutting and judging at the Los Angeles Convention. Here again the results were generally poor. During the following year, 1953, frozen cod, haddock and ocean perch fillets, headless shrimp, and canned sardines were included. In 1954 the program was expanded to include flounder, sole and Pacific perch fillets, halibut and salmon steaks and fish sticks. Results of the second (1953) cutting and judging showed that a great improvement had been made in quality over the samples judged at Los Angeles. The 1954 tests showed that one item held about even with 1953, while the balance showed a slight decline and in one case, a marked decline. A vast amount of work remains to be done on improving the quality of packaged frozen fishery products.

Despite the great strides made in production and distribution techniques in frozen fish and shellfish, little or no advances have been made in the development of better quality fresh fish. At our recent convention in Cleveland, Ohio, it was brought out that there is still available a great market for fresh fish and shellfish. We certainly hope that, through our newly created Fresh Fish Committee, we can provide the necessary revitalization for this still very important segment of our industry.

Within the past two years investigations by government agencies, including the New York City Department of Health, have shown that deplorable sanitary conditions existed in some processing plants in the blue crab industry. N.F.I. has, within the past year, called many meetings of producers in an endeavor to bring about better sanitary conditions in processing plants as well as in the distribution of picked crabmeat. Through our Blue Crabmeat Committee, and with the help of Government technologists, a "Voluntary Sanitation Code" has been drawn up. This code, while not approved by Federal, State or City Governments, is, nevertheless, a step in the right direction, and is being subscribed to by the industry.

You are all familiar with fish sticks, the production and distribution of which has mushroomed during the past two years. In producing fish sticks it is first necessary to fillet and skin the fish and then press and freeze the fillets into blocks or slabs before cutting or sawing into sticks. Again at our Cleveland Convention the fish stick industry met in an endeavor to work out some of the most pressing problems then confronting this fast growing segment of the industry. It was agreed that specifications or standards had to be drawn up, so that this new and revolutionary development could get off on the right foot. First, it was necessary to develop block or slab specifications. This phase of the work has been underway since shortly after the convention and is now completed and ready for adoption. The next phase will be the development of standards for fish sticks, both cooked and uncooked, including the breading and/or batter and oil used

for frying. All of the foregoing leads to the one ultimate aim of N.F.I.'s Quality Program—the placing before the general public of wholesome and nutritious fish and shellfish products of the highest possible quality. No matter how much money is spent to promote a commodity or advertise a product if it does not meet a high quality standard—time, money and effort have been wasted.

Among other advantages, standards will provide a practical means of determining loan and sale values, through the medium of proper inspection and the issuance of appropriate certificates which will bind both seller and buyer to accept the verdict of the issuing party, whether the latter be a government agency or a private laboratory. It must be agreed beforehand that, since these industry standards are voluntary, both buyer and seller will agree to bind themselves by any decision handed down in the certificate of inspection.

For many years, problems of quality and quality development in all segments of our industry have been handled by N.F.I.'s Quality Committee. This placed an almost insurmountable burden on this committee, particularly the chairman. During the past year the work load has been spread by the appointment of commodity sub-committees, such as Breaded Shrimp, Fresh Fish, Blue Crabmeat and Fish Stick Committees. No doubt there will be need for other committees as time goes on. This will have the effect of better control of the over-all quality program.

With Saltonstall-Kennedy funds now available to the Fish and Wildlife Service, it will be possible for the federal government to collaborate with industry in developing and establishing voluntary standards. A long term educational program will be necessary. It will affect everyone from the fishermen on up to the retailer and the entire process must be kept on a high quality plane. Voluntary industry standards are bound to bring about many benefits. Not only will packers and processors of similar products be brought closer together, but they will also bring about economies in the industry. In affording security in selling and buying commitments, they will bring about better relations and understanding from the fisherman on down to the retailer. Voluntary industry standards will benefit the consumer and industry alike by giving the consumer better quality products and better industry public relations.

Standards Voluntarios Industriales para Productos Pesqueros

MAL XAVIER

National Fisheries Institute, Washington, D. C.

Abstracto

La industria pesquera debe progresar no solo en el desarrollo de métodos y productos nuevos, sino también en el desarrollo de standards de calidad. Por los dos años pasados el National Fisheries Institute ha trabajado en el desarrollo de un standard para camarones empanizados, que se convirtió en un Standard Voluntario Industrial aceptado por varias firmas que producen 75% del total de esta industria.

Investigaciones que se condujeron por varias agencias gubernamentales, demostraron que condiciones sanitarias abominables existían en algunas plantas en la industria de la carne de cangrejos azules. El National Fisheries Institute ha tratado de establecer standards sanitarios entre los varios productores.

En la convención del National Fisheries Institute en 1954 se discutieron y se trataron de establecer standards voluntarios para las croquetas de pescado. Este trabajo ha sido hecho en estos últimos meses y está ahora casi completo.

Standards for Crab Meat

LORAIN Z. SZABO

*Food Industry Technical Service
Jacksonville, Florida*

The summer of 1953 was like the lull before the storm, with the crab meat industry prospering. By August there were a few scattered reports of food poisoning due to crabmeat, then all of a sudden more food poisoning cases were reported. The public was alarmed, particularly in the New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia markets. The papers in New York City demanded that the Health Department take steps to prevent the "wanton poisoning" of their readers. The New York City Health Department then asked the Federal Food and Drug Administration for help.

A crew of federal inspectors and technicians in a mobile laboratory came upon the scene to locate the source of the trouble. These men tried to be of assistance and make suggestions for the benefit of the operator. A second contingent of federal inspectors, which the industry referred to as the "wrecking crew", now arrived on the scene. Its job was to make plant inspections and sample interstate shipments. Within short order many shipments of crabmeat were embargoed, some later released, others seized and condemned.

The effect of this upon crabmeat sales was disastrous. There was no ready market; the commission merchants were wary about buying and the consuming public was afraid to eat fresh crabmeat. The Federal Veterans Hospital Administration stopped buying crabmeat and New York City was ready to ban shipments to that city. Other major cities were preparing to do likewise.

The crabmeat industry was in serious difficulties, and at this crucial time the National Fisheries Institute entered the picture. It headed off any immediate drastic measures that had seemed certain to be taken by New York City. It promised the officials that the industry, itself, would at once do something.

In order to carry out the promise that N.F.I. had made, Mr. Jackson, its General Manager, initiated area meetings of crabmeat producers along the Atlantic seaboard, at which the dealers were forcefully told that the salvation of their markets was in their own hands. Some packers readily admitted that at times their plant sanitation had slipped, but all expressed willingness