Export Highlights

Following very strong performance in 2021, Canadian exports of farm-raised seafood slowed in 2022- volume shipments were down almost 10% from the previous year- well below recent historical averages (2020 recognized as a pandemic outlier). Meanwhile, strong prices pushed the value (C$) of sales up 6.8%, bringing overall exports to $1.24 billion, or 99,132 MT, reaching an all-time high in Canadian dollar terms.

Farm-raised oysters were the star performer in terms of export growth in 2022. The full year data show a surge in exports with volume shipments up 45% and value of sales up 56%. Canadian producers are the top exporters globally to the US, with market share for this segment at 66% of volume shipments- and an even higher share of BC's in value terms. Proximity to the massive US market and reputation for quality are huge competitive advantages for Canadian oysters. This segment is a significant and growing share of the aquaculture sector's production and accounted for 10% of the sector (by volume) in 2021 and has huge potential for further growth in both BC and Atlantic Canada.

Canadian exports of farm-raised salmon were down 13% in 2022 in real terms with strong prices pushing nominal growth up by 4%. Atlantic salmon are the main farm-raised species in Canada (Coho and Chinook) represent about 15% of exports and the US is the largest export market and demand has been strong. However, reduced salmon volumes in British Columbia linked to a political decision taken by the DFO to shut down 25% of BC's production is weighing on exports and eroding Canada's market share of the US market.

Table 1: Farm-Raised Seafood Exports

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<tr>
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<th>2022 Volume (kg)</th>
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<th>2022 Value (C$)</th>
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Fig 1: Historical Growth Rates (% change) of Exports of Farmed Seafood (C$)

Economic Footprint of Canada's Farm-Raised Seafood Sector

The Canadian farm-raised seafood sector produced 150,000 MT of seafood with a farm-gate sales value of $3.43 billion. This was an increase of 13% in real terms over 2020 levels and an almost 25% jump in nominal terms. The strong growth rates are largely due to the base year effect- due to the pandemic-related weakness in 2020. Looking at the long-term growth trend, real production has been relatively flat for the past two decades (1.1% between 2001-2021). The decision by the Government of Canada to close 19 farms in BC’s Discovery Islands will have a significant impact on production levels going forward.

Fig 2: Historical Growth Rates (% change) of Exports of Farmed Seafood (C$)

Canadian Production

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Fig 3: Economic Activity and GDP, Farmed Seafood (Millions C$)

Economic Highlights

- Updated: February 2023
- 2021 GDP: $56,336,993
- 2021 YTD/YTD: $8,288,909 (-1.6%)
- 2022 GDP: $81,356,013
- 2022 YTD/YTD: $14,520

Fig 4: Number of full-time jobs in the Farmed Seafood Sector (2018-2020)

Fig 5: Canadian Aquaculture Production (Tonnes)

Fig 6: Number of full-time jobs in the Farmed Seafood Sector (2018-2020)

Updated: February 2023

Source: Statistics Canada and RIAS Consulting

Source: Statistics Canada data retrieved from CATSNET Analytics, AAFC

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With overall production in Canada posting healthy gains in 2021, the provincial profiles are mixed. Most notably, in British Columbia, Canada's largest producer of Atlantic salmon, production fell by 4.5% in 2021, due to a drop in finfish production (-7.5%) that more than offset strong gains in shellfish production (+42.8%). In Newfoundland and Labrador, a major producer of Rainbow Trout, growth was a modest but steady 3.4%. Ontario, a major producer of Atlantic salmon, saw healthy gains in both finfish (+107%) and shellfish (+50%) production, bringing the sector well above pre-pandemic levels. Prince Edward Island's shellfish production rebounded strongly from the pandemic-related losses in 2020, with growth of almost 40% in 2021. Nova Scotia was the only province in Atlantic Canada with negative growth in 2021 with overall declines of 9% due to a sharp drop in finfish production (-23%) and strong growth in the smaller shellfish subsector (+40%).

In the US, consumption of fresh and frozen seafood on a per capita basis has grown sharply over time, holding steady at around 73 lbs/person for the past several years. The US is the single largest importer of seafood and Canada is a top exporter for all farmed species. For fresh Atlantic salmon, Canada is the largest supplier to the US and in the top five for other species including rainbow trout, mussels, chinook salmon and oysters.

As inflation soars at the grocery store and the gas pump, prices are top-of-mind for most Canadian consumers in 2022. Data available through September 2022 showing an average price of $26.48/kg of salmon at the grocery store. This is 12.7% higher than in 2021. With overall growth in Canada posting healthy gains in 2021, the provincial profiles are mixed. Most notably, in British Columbia, Canada's largest producer of Atlantic salmon, production fell by 4.5% in 2021, due to a drop in finfish production (-7.5%) that more than offset strong gains in shellfish production (+42.8%). In Newfoundland and Labrador, a major producer of Rainbow Trout, growth was a modest but steady 3.4%. Ontario, a major producer of Atlantic salmon, saw healthy gains in both finfish (+107%) and shellfish (+50%) production, bringing the sector well above pre-pandemic levels. Prince Edward Island's shellfish production rebounded strongly from the pandemic-related losses in 2020, with growth of almost 40% in 2021. Nova Scotia was the only province in Atlantic Canada with negative growth in 2021 with overall declines of 9% due to a sharp drop in finfish production (-23%) and strong growth in the smaller shellfish subsector (+40%).

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