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Í SJÁVARÚTVEGI



Mackerel

What makes Norwegian mackerel different from Icelandic mackerel?



Seasonality

- Iceland : June – August
- Norway : September – October



What difference does this make ?

1) Fat content :

- Iceland - Low: 10-15% during June-July & up to 20% in August (however, the fat is still around the skin and meat is not firm yet.)
- Norway - High : Above 20% (also fat is penetrated into the meat after middle of September, which makes the firmness of the meat.)

2) Feed :

- Iceland : Fish is still eating – Problems in the belly
- Norway : Fish stop eating when migrating to Norwegian zone – clean stomach

Fishing Method

- Iceland : 100% Trawl
- Norway : 80-90% Purse Seine

What difference does this make ?

1) Bruise :

- Iceland : Towed by trawl for a long time which creates bruise problem
- Norway : Purse seine fishing – no bruise problem.

2) Towing time :

- Norway : Mackerel tends to form a larger school when they migrate into Norwegian zone – allows Purse Seine fishing (fish is still alive when they are caught)
- Iceland : The fish school is much more scattered, and sometimes towing time can be long hours.

Quantity delivered per trip

- Iceland : Large = typically over 1,000MT per trip
- Norway : Small = 200-300~500-600MT per trip

What difference does this make?

- 1) Fishing :
 - Norway – 1 day fishing
 - Iceland – Multiple days of fishing
- 2) Production
 - Norway - 1 day production
 - Iceland - multiple days of production
- 3) Fishing tanks-RSW system :
 - Iceland – Mostly full : Temperature of the fish in the tank not evenly chilled
 - Norway – Half empty: Allows RSW tank to work properly (fish is evenly Chilled)

+ Average size of Norwegian vessels are bigger, and with stronger engines, they seem to have better control of fish tank temperatures.

Operational system

- Iceland : Integrated system = All the fishing vessels belong to their fishing companies who also operate processing plants.
- Norway : Independent system = Fisherman and processing plants operate separately. Their fish is sold in auction

What difference does this make?

- Iceland : fishing vessels have a security as they always have a home to go back.
- Norway : Auction system = if the fishing vessels do not bring good quality fish, then they will get punished by low prices.

+ Auction in Norway : There is an established system, that if the quality of the fish does not meet the standard, the buyers (processing plants) call for an intermediate inspector who will judge the quality and negotiate the price down based on the actual quality. In the long run, each vessel would build a reputation in the market, which would eventually be reflected on the auction prices.

<Summary of main differences>

- 1) Seasonality : Different in Fat and firmness of the meat. Also the feed.
- 2) Fishing Method - Purse Seine vs Trawl : Bruise & Firmness
- 3) Fishing Area : Norway has better access to the fishing ground.
- 4) Duration of the trip : Norway 1-2 days vs Iceland up to 1 week.
- 5) Cooling system
- 6) Operation : Auction vs Integrated system

Why is Japanese market more demanding in quality than other markets?

- 1) Mackerel fillet is the most common way of how mackerel is eaten in Japan (Mackerel is completely defrosted, filleted, and then simply salted). Black skin on stomach is typically kept on the fillets.
- 2) We eat Mackerel also in Sushi style.
- 3) We consume large quantity of Mackerel in Mirin (Marinated) style too, but this is commonly done in China as a custom processing, as quality is not as demanding as fillets.
- 4) Canned Mackerel – very big market, but mainly domestic Mackerel (*Scomber Japonicus*) is used for this purpose.



Right : Mackerel Fillets (salted) – Most common way how Japanese consume Mackerel. WR mackerel is completely defrosted and then filleted in Japan, with black skin on (stomach).

Left : Mackerel in Sushi style. Firmness and freshness is very important.



- Left – Seasoned Mackerel with Mirin (Sake) and sweet sauce.
- Right – Canned Mackerel – typically Japanese local mackerel is used for this item.

Exploring Icelandic Mackerel more into Asian market?

- There are things we can control
- vs things we can not control.



- Nature : Seasonality, fish migrating patterns (Fishing area) etc. can't be controlled.
- Operation / Handling : Iceland has an integrated system, maybe we can control the quality by doing the operation correctly.