



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FEBRUARY 10, 1958

QUALITY STANDARDS FOR FISH BLOCKS BECOME EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 1958

Voluntary Federal standards of quality and condition for frozen fish blocks will become effective April 1, 1958, it was announced by the Department of the Interior today.

Standards for frozen, raw, breaded shrimp and for frozen precooked fish sticks have already been issued. Other standards for fish portions, frozen, raw, breaded fish sticks and for halibut steaks are under development. The purpose of the standards is to assure the consumer the opportunity to purchase the best possible product.

Fish blocks are the base product for such items as fish sticks, fish portions and packaged fish. The block must consist of whole, wholesome, skinless fillets or portions of fillets of one species of fish, neither ground nor crushed. The blocks must be frozen but not glazed and must be maintained at temperatures necessary for the preservation of the product. Glazing, a technique which encases the block in a covering of ice, is prohibited because of difficulties encountered in processing. Good flavor and odor is an essential requirement for the top product and largely determines the grade received regardless of workmanship.

The standards were developed by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, United States Fish and Wildlife Service in collaboration with industry technologists and the National Fisheries Institute under contract with the Bureau.

The Department of Agriculture will offer, on a fee basis, inspection and certification service based on the standards. Such inspections will aid in quality control and in facilitating the marketing of the products. The standards do not define labeling, since labeling regulations come under the responsibility of the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Formal notice stating that the fish block standards will be put in force on April 1, 1958, was published in the Federal Register on February 6, 1958. The preliminary notice was carried in the Federal Register on December 21, 1957. Copies of the standards are available at the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C.

X X X