



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ADDITIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS FOR FISHERY PRODUCTS SCHEDULED: MORE INSPECTION PLANNED

The Department of the Interior shield--the housewife's assurance of quality fishery products--will be in greater evidence in American retail food markets next year because ---

The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, plans to establish voluntary quality standards for five additional fishery products in 1959, bringing to eight the total such products which will be entitled to bear the shield showing either Grade A or Grade B, both of which are good; and because ---

The Bureau expects that several additional fish processing firms will request the Department's continuous inspection service, thereby joining the 18 firms which now have the right to use the Department shield showing "continuous inspection"; and that other firms will avail themselves of the sampling service and earn the right to state that the products offered the housewife are part of a lot which was officially sampled by Bureau inspectors.

In addition to these direct efforts to assure quality the Bureau is continuing its research on methods for "handling for quality"--methods which begin with the catching of the fish and which follow through to assure the processor the type of raw material which he can use for quality products.

The first of the five new standards of quality will apply to haddock fillets. These standards will become effective March 1. Considerable advance notice was given before these standards were promulgated. Meetings were held in several cities before the proposed standards were published in the Federal Register and a comment period was provided after the publication. Processors and consumers indicated satisfaction with the proposals.

Other voluntary standards scheduled for promulgation during the year include those for halibut steaks, raw breaded fish portions, cod fillets and ocean perch fillets. Standards already in effect are for frozen fried fish sticks, frozen raw breaded shrimp, and frozen fish blocks. Since the fish blocks are used in making fish sticks, they are not apt to be seen on retail counters.

To meet Bureau standards of quality the fishery products must be made out of wholesome material of good odor and taste and must be processed under sanitary conditions. The shield with the U.S. grade designation is used only on products for which standards have been established.

The Bureau offers two types of inspection service, continuous and sample or lot inspection. In either instance the processor pays for the service. It is not mandatory that a processor use the inspection service or accept the quality standards but those who do so have the opportunity to announce that fact to the person purchasing the product at the retail counter.

In spite of the fact that the Interior's inspection service did not begin until July 1, 1958, by mid-December, 18 firms had accepted the opportunity for continuous inspection and oral and written inquiries about the inspection service indicate that many more will avail themselves of it during the coming year.

The "handling for quality" research of the Bureau has been going on for several years. Included in the work are methods of landing fish with minimum bruising; icing and storage in the hold to avoid spoilage; washing the decks and holds with chlorinated sea water to reduce the possibility of bacterial action; unloading and transporting techniques and refrigeration. In addition the Bureau is conducting research on preservation by radiation, on rancidity, and on numerous other things which influence the quality of the product that reaches the consumers' tables.

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