Technical Memorandum NMFS OF 2

SURVEY OF CHAIN STORE EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES CONCERNING THE MARKETING OF FRESH SEAFOODS

Economic Analysis Staff
Washington, D.C.
May 1979

noaa NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION / National Marine Fisheries Service

NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS OF 2

SURVEY OF CHAIN STORE EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES CONCERNING THE MARKETING OF FRESH SEAFOODS

W. Gail Willette

Economic Analysis Staff
Office of Policy and Planning
Washington, D.C.
May 1979

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Juanita M. Kreps, Secretary

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
Richard A. Frank, Administrator

National Marine Fisheries Service
Terry L. Leitzell, Assistant
Administrator for Fisheries

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The survey was designed, conducted and tabulated under the supervision of Sam Gillespie, Gillespie and Associates, Bryan, Texas, under contract #6-195351. The author wishes to express her gratitude to Dr. Gillespie for his cooperation in interpreting the material used in this report, and to William Green, of the NMFS staff, for his assistance in refining the original tabulation for publication.

CONTENTS

SURVEY OF CHAIN STORE EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES
CONCERNING THE MARKETING OF FRESH SEAFOODS

W. Gail Willette
Industry Economist
Economic Analysis Staff
National Marine Fisheries Service

INTRODUCTION

This paper reports the results of a survey undertaken to examine problems and attitudes associated with the sale of fresh fish by retail supermarkets. The subject is timely, for the manner in which seafoods are distributed has an important bearing on the future development of the United States fishing industry. The United States has claimed authority to control and manage most of its important marine fisheries out to 200 miles. As a result, opportunities are being created for a sizable expansion of domestic fishing, and the future promises to bring larger quantities of fresh seafoods to United States docks. An influx of new fishery products in the United States could well tax the capacity of the marketing and distribution system, and new distribution outlets may have to be developed.

In looking at potential capacity for marketing greater supplies of seafoods, it is logical to turn to the grocery trade. Grocery stores, including supermarkets and smaller stores, account for the bulk of food sales to final consumers. In 1976, about 75 percent of consumers' food budgets was spent for purchases of food for use at home, and the remaining 25 percent was spent for food away from home. 1/ The proportion of seafood purchased for home use, however, is probably much smaller than is the case for all foods. For example, less than 40 percent of the total poundage of frozen fish marketed in the United States is sold in retail channels, while more than 60 percent is distributed to the institutional trade, which includes restaurants of all types and public institutions. 2/

The survey was conducted in the spring of 1976. It represents a sample of chain supermarkets in all regions of the United States. 3/ Questionnaires were received, after telephone followups in some cases. These chain offices

---

1/According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 12.7 percent of personal disposable income in the United States in 1976 was spent for food for use at home, while 4.1 percent was spent for food away from home. (National Food Review, April 1978)

2/Quick Frozen Foods Magazine, New York, November 1977.

3/Supermarkets are defined as stores having sales areas 6,000 square feet or more and annual sales volume of at least $650,000. Chains are defined as having two or more store units.

constituted a random selection from approximately 4,500 chain offices in the United States. 4/ Questionnaires were completed for each chain by the person responsible for the firm's seafood merchandising and/or buying.

The first section of this report summarizes the findings from the survey. Sections on purchasing, instore handling, merchandising and marketing, and sales and profitability follow. Responses to specific questions are presented in the appendix.

Highlights from the Survey's Findings

The basic steps in the sale of fresh and thawed seafoods by retail supermarket chains were examined in the survey as well as the attitudes of chain stores toward the marketing of fresh seafoods. Highlights from the survey's findings are as follows:

o Purchasing

A substantial majority of retail chains sell seafood products in a fresh or unfrozen form. Individual stores in a chain rather than central buying offices are chiefly responsible for ordering seafood supplies. These stores place orders with only a small number of distributors. The majority of stores are dissatisfied with the merchandising expertise of suppliers.

o Instore Handling

Special employee skills for the handling and marketing of fresh seafoods are generally lacking. Employees, moreover, dislike working with seafood. Stores also are concerned with odor control and sanitation.

o Merchandising and Marketing

Most chain stores agree that customers prefer fresh seafood to frozen seafood. Nevertheless, stores devote little manpower or space to marketing and merchandising fresh seafood. In addition, stores are not using all the effective promotional aids made available by wholesalers.

o Sales and Profitability

Retail chain stores generally find fresh seafoods profitable, in spite of handling and merchandising problems. The large majority, however, feel that sales and profits are inadequate to support a full service fresh seafood counter. In general, top management's enthusiasm for or interest in fresh seafood is either limited or nonexistent.

4/The chain offices were selected from the Progressive Grocer's Marketing Guidebook, which is published yearly by Progressive Grocer Magazine, 708 3rd Avenue, New York, 10017.

Purchasing

The retail marketing process for fresh seafood begins with purchases made by the retail chain buyers. Survey responses to questions about purchasing are summarized as follows (fig. 1):

o The majority of firms surveyed purchase and sell fresh or thawed seafood products.

o Most firms prefer to purchase fresh fish, rather than frozen fish which are later thawed for resale. Also, most firms prefer their purchases to be at least partially processed.

o Most firms place orders for fresh or thawed seafood from individual stores rather than from a buying office.

o Most firms deal with only one or two wholesale distributors.

o A substantial number of suppliers appear to lack adequate product knowledge.

Product Forms

Almost two-thirds of the chains surveyed reported purchases--and sales--of fresh or unfrozen seafood products. Nearly all chains, however, handle frozen seafood. A fairly substantial proportion (44 percent) also reported selling previously frozen (thawed) fish. The western region had the largest percentage (73 percent) of chains which sold thawed seafood. The Gulf and Southeast regions had the smallest percentage (23 percent).

Firms that market unfrozen finfish as a rule prefer to buy the product fresh, rather than frozen; this preference was reported in all regions. The alternative is to buy a frozen product, thaw (or slack) it, and sell it unfrozen. Most respondents (85 percent) stated a preference for purchasing fresh products, and 15 percent preferred to purchase frozen fish to thaw before selling (fig. 2).

Nationally, the majority of respondents (54 percent) also preferred to purchase fresh finfish in the form of fillets, steaks, or boneless slices (fig. 3). Nearly all other respondents (43 percent) preferred to buy fish at least gilled and gutted. Only 3 percent expressed a preference for whole fish. There were, however, some marked regional differences. Respondents from the Western and the Midwest/Great Lakes/Central Region overwhelmingly preferred seafood purchases to be full processed. In the South and Western parts of the United States, the heavy preference was for partially processed fish.

Purchasing Unit

Individual chain units are principally responsible for ordering fresh and thawed seafood in most parts of the United States (fig. 4). Asked how

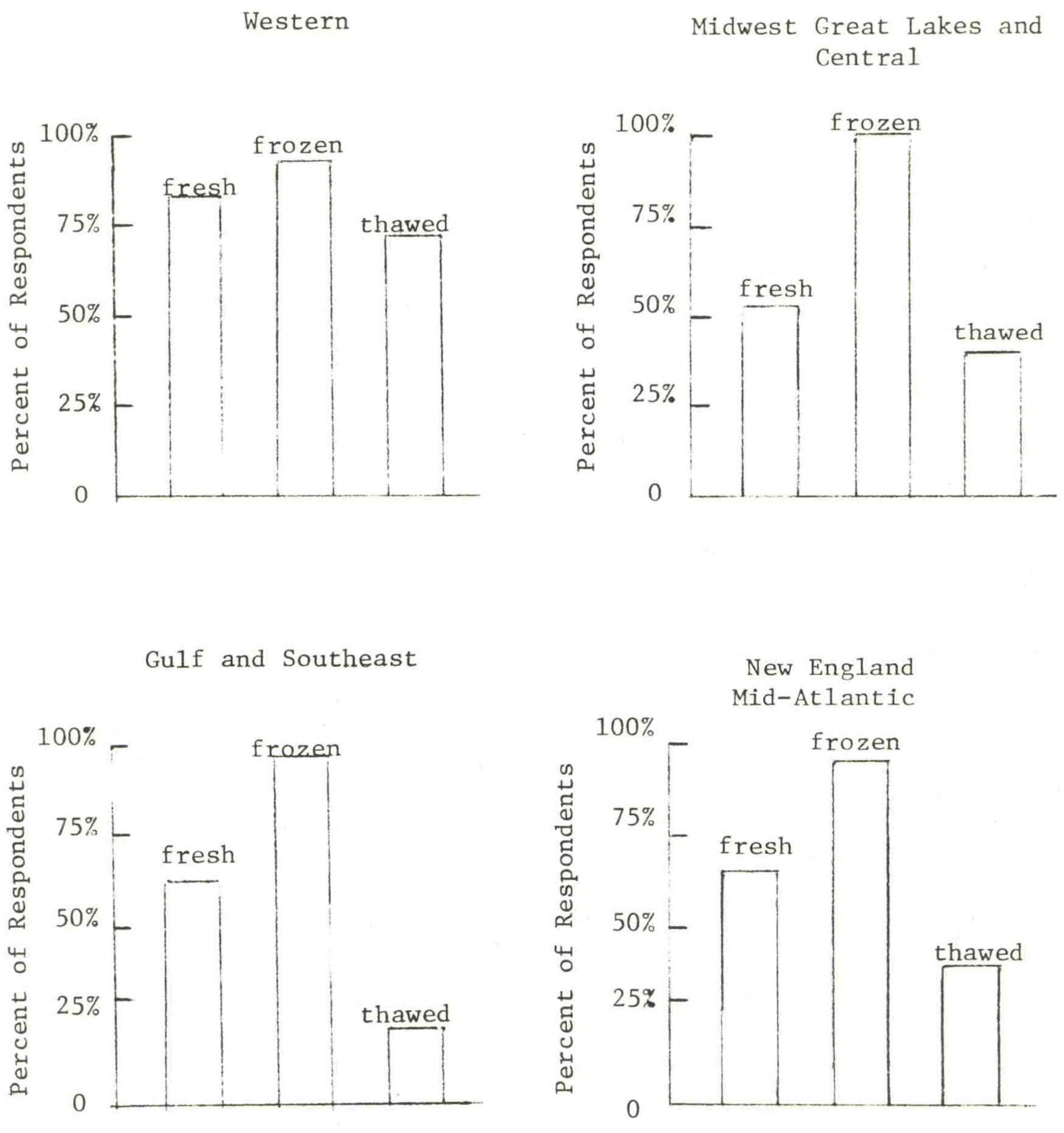

Figure 1. -- Product forms sold by chains, by region.

fresh or thawed seafood orders are normally placed, 64 percent of the respondents stated that orders are placed directly from individual stores, while 36 percent order through a central buying office. Stores in the Midwest and Central States were an exception. More than half the stores in this region use central buying offices for fresh fish purchases.

Suppliers

Nationwide the large majority (79 percent) of chain store units deal with only one or two wholesale distributors (fig. 5). A smaller percentage (67 percent) indicated that suppliers were providing ample quantities of fresh seafood to meet normal demand (fig.6). The inference is that in many areas the number of suppliers is limited. In addition, there may be considerable dissatisfaction with the service that chain units are receiving from distributors. About one-third of the respondents stated that suppliers of fresh seafoods were less accurate in the claims they made about products than were other food suppliers (fig. 7). These results imply that a large number of distributors, or salesmen, are lacking in product knowledge.

Instore Handling

Handling fresh seafood products within the store has some unique characteristics as well as problems. The range of questions related to instore handling revealed the following:

o About one-half the chains surveyed have a designated area within the stores for processing seafoods.

o A majority of respondents are concerned about odor control and sanitation problems in store units selling fresh and thawed seafood.

o Employees in the chains surveyed generally lack the special skills necessary to handle and display seafoods properly.

o Employees generally do not like to work with seafood and perceive this work as a lower status job than working with other meats.

o Employees generally know less about preparing seafood meals than about preparing meals with other fresh meats.

Work Area

The participating stores were asked whether or not a work area in the store was allocated strictly for the processing of fresh seafood (for filleting, etc.). Slightly more than one-half of the respondents indicated that the store had such an area (fig. 8). The New England/Mid-Atlantic region was above average in this respect, with about two-thirds of the stores having a designated seafood processing area. Asked whether seafood processing could be smoothly done in the same area as meat processing, more than two-thirds of the respondents replied that it could not (fig. 9). The responses about work areas suggest the large majority of respondents recognize the need for separate handling areas for seafoods, although about half the stores do not have these separate facilities.

The majority of chains (61 percent) agreed that greater effort is required to maintain sanitary seafood facilities than other processing facilities (fig. 10). An even larger percentage (77 percent) cited odor control in the stores as a problem with fresh seafood (fig. 11).

Skills

Respondents are aware that special skills are needed to handle fresh seafood. The large majority of respondents (79 percent) agreed that at the retail level different skills are required for handling and displaying seafood than for handling and displaying other meats (fig. 12). The strongest agreement came from stores in the Western region. The weakest agreement was in the Gulf and Southeast States.

It is probable that many stores lack expertise in handling fresh seafoods. At least half the respondents stated that retail meat department employees have more difficulty in judging the freshness of seafoods than the freshness of other meats (fig. 13).

Employees may not be willing to acquire the expertise necessary for the proper handling of fresh seafood. The large majority of respondents (73 percent) indicated that in general, retail meat department employees prefer not to work with fresh seafood (fig. 14). In addition, more than one-half the respondents felt that employees perceive working with seafood as a lower status job than working with other meats (fig. 15).

Nationally, 71 percent of respondents also agreed that in general, meat department employees have less meal preparation knowledge about seafood than about other meats (fig. 16).

Merchandising and Marketing

Merchandising and marketing techniques (promotions, displays, etc.) have an important bearing on product sales in retail chain stores. The following is a summary of how the surveyed firms approach the merchandising and marketing of fresh and thawed seafood.

o Most responding firms use only a small amount of display space for fresh and thawed seafood.

o Few store units have a fresh seafood service counter.

o On the average, respondents believe that service seafood counters require more than three times the staffing of self-service displays to be properly maintained.

o Most respondents believe that customers prefer to purchase fresh seafood rather than frozen seafood.

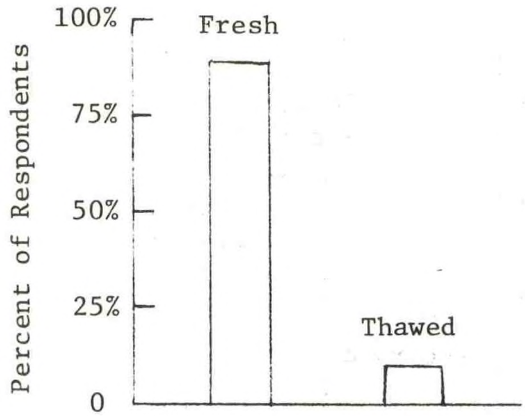

Figure 2.--Product form preference (finfish only).

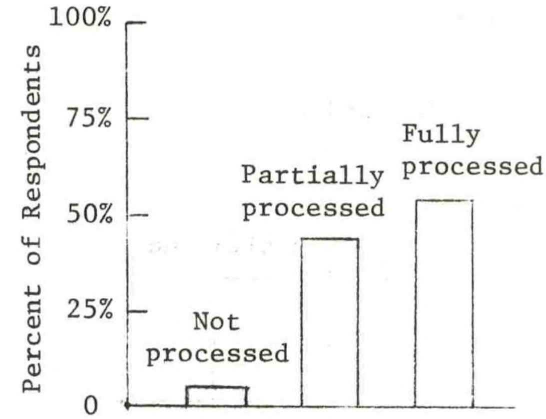

Figure 3.--Degree of processing preferred by chain (finfish only)

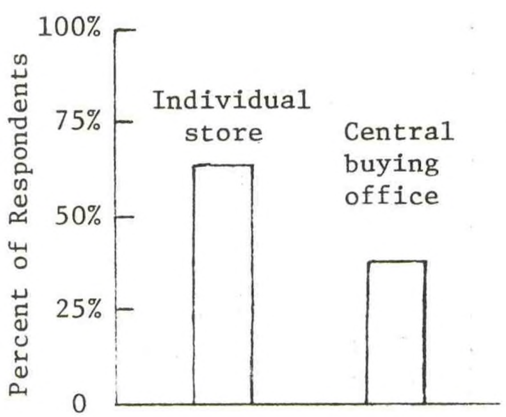

Figure 4.--How fresh seafood orders are placed for chain stores.

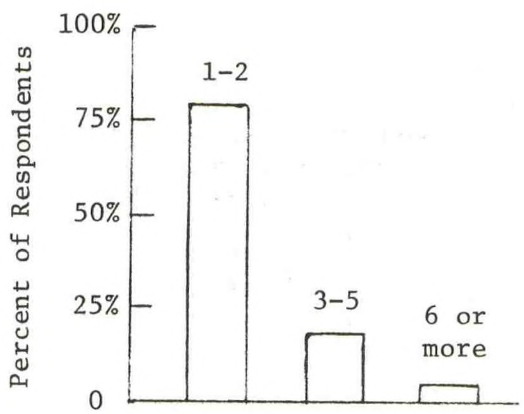

Figure 5.--Number of fresh seafood distributors supplying a typical store.

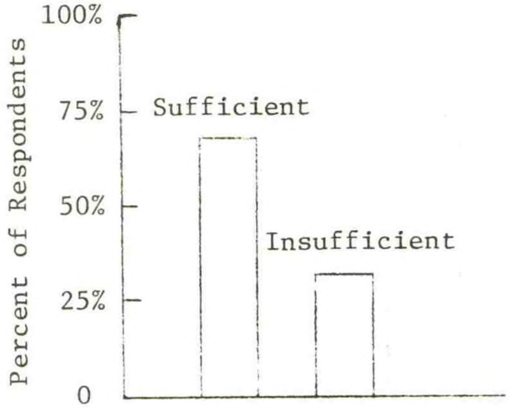

Figure 6.--Quantities of fresh seafood provided by suppliers.

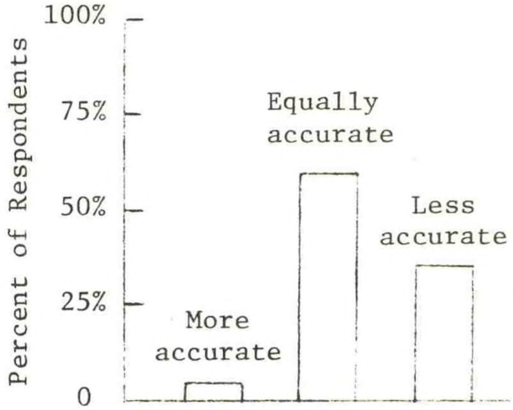

Figure 7.--Accuracy of claims of seafood suppliers compared to other food suppliers.

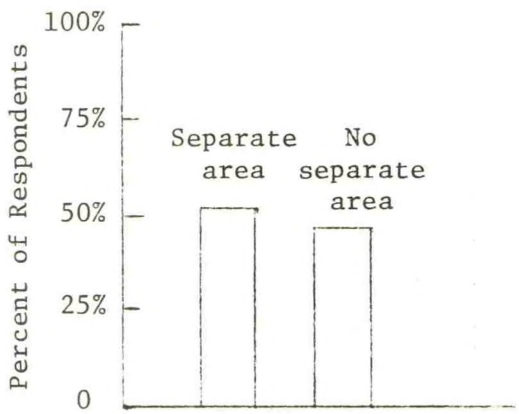

Figure 8.--Percent of stores providing separate area for processing seafood.

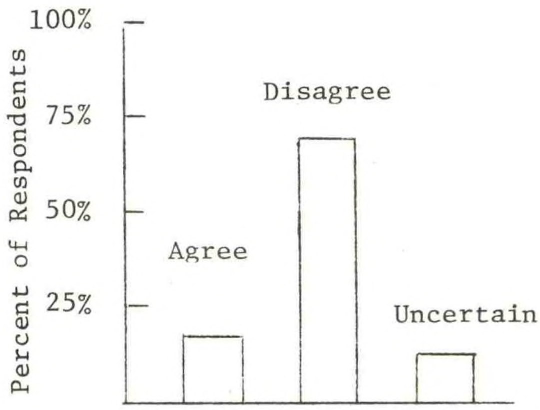

Figure 9.--Processing seafood and other meats in the same work area can be done as smoothly as in separate work areas.

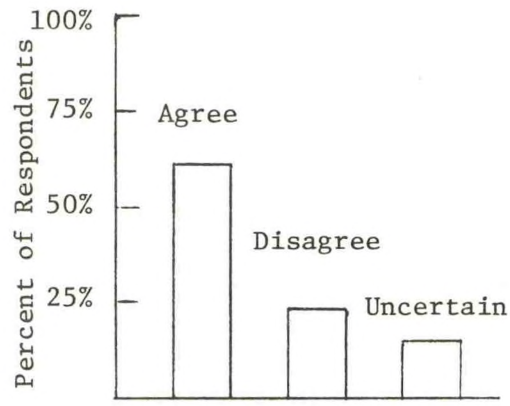

Figure 10.--Greater effort is required to maintain sanitary seafood processing facilities than other meat processing facilities.

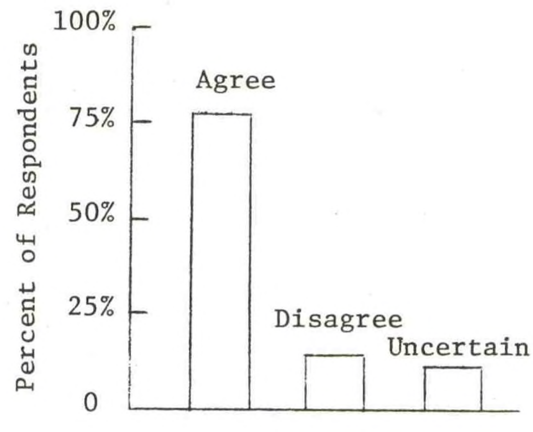

Figure 11.--Odor control is more a problem with fresh seafoods than with other fresh meats.

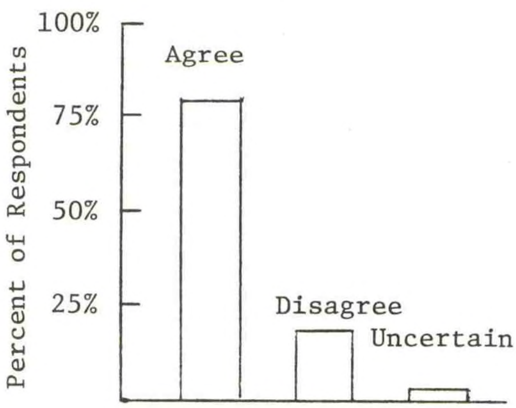

Figure 12.--At the retail level different skills are required for handling seafood than for handling other meats.

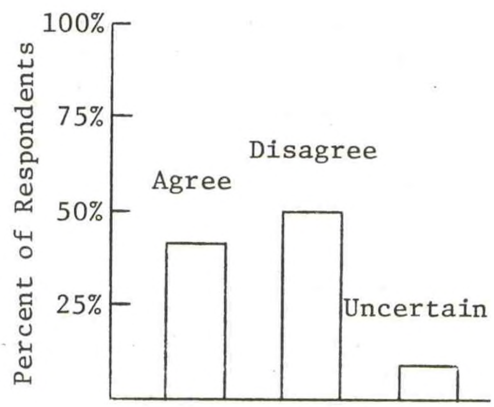

Figure 13.--Retail meat department employees have no more difficulty in judging the freshness of seafood than the freshness of other meats.

o Respondents generally believe that seafood suppliers lack marketing skills.

o Respondents are not taking advantage of all of the tools available for marketing fresh seafoods.

o Less than a third of the surveyed chains designate an employee specialist to merchandise fresh seafood (fig. 17).

Space Allocation

Chain stores as a rule devote little space to fresh seafood (figs. 18 and 19). About half the respondents who market tray packed fresh and thawed fish devote 5 linear feet or less of space for this purpose. Service counters for fresh and thawed seafood, however, require more display space. Among stores using fresh fish service counters, about three-fourths indicated that they used up to 13 linear feet of space for this activity (fig. 20). Estimates given by respondents in the Western region were slightly lower than the national average while respondents in the New England and Mid-Atlantic States gave estimates which were slightly above the national average.

Types of Display

Chain stores market fresh or thawed seafoods through self-service tray pack displays, and full service counters. The tray pack display is the more prevalent method. Nearly a fourth of the chains surveyed (24 percent) stated that all stores in their respective chains used the tray pack displays (fig. 21). An additional 15 percent of the chains noted that self-service tray packs were used for fresh seafoods in at least half their stores. The frequency of tray packs was well above average in the Western and New England regions. In contract, full service fresh seafood counters are relatively rare. Nationwide, only 4 percent of the respondents indicated that service counters were installed in all stores, and only an additional 5 percent had service counters in at least half the stores (figs. 22 and 23). Thus, more than 90 percent of chains reported that less than half their respective stores market seafoods through a full service counter.

Staffing Requirements

Respondents were asked how many weekly work hours must be committed for the typical store to adequately merchandise fresh seafoods. Self-service tray pack displays for fresh or thawed seafood required an average of 16 hours weekly, while full service seafood counters required an average of 53 hours per week (figs. 24 and 25). This result is not surprising, since full service counters require an employee to service orders for customers during the store's business hours.

Consumer Preferences

It seems that in spite of the handling and merchandising problems encountered by the chain stores, consumer preferences are dictating involve-

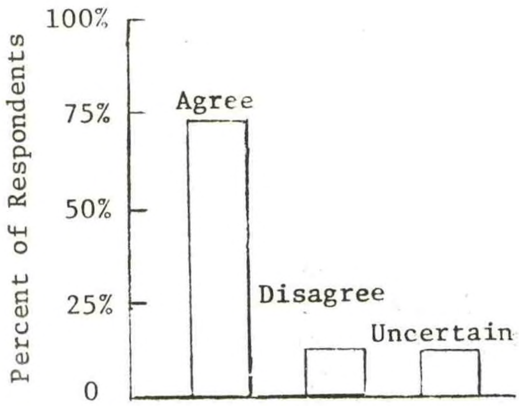

Figure 14.--Retail meat department employees prefer not to work with fresh seafood.

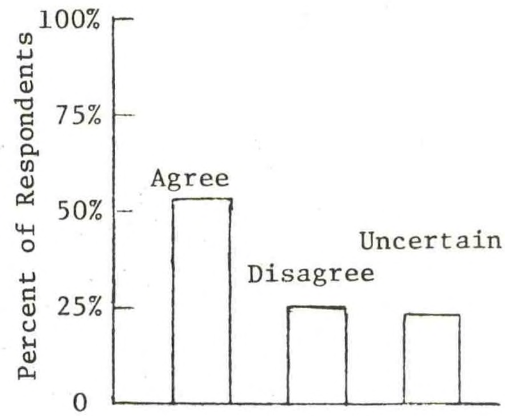

Figure 15.--Most employees perceive working with seafood as a lower status job than working with other meats.

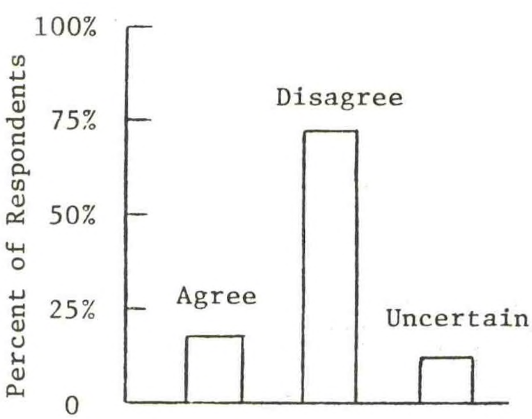

Figure 16.--Employees in the meat department have as much meal preparation knowledge about seafood as about other meats.

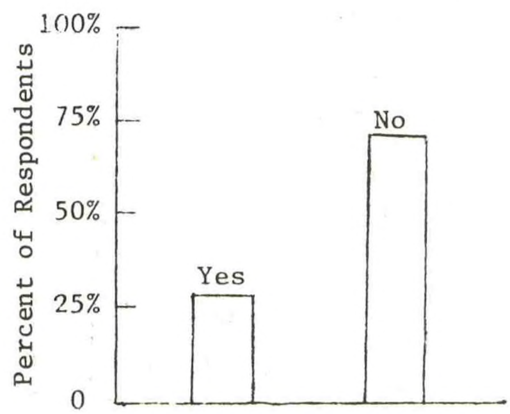

Figure 17.--Instore employee to purchase and/or merchandise only fresh seafood.

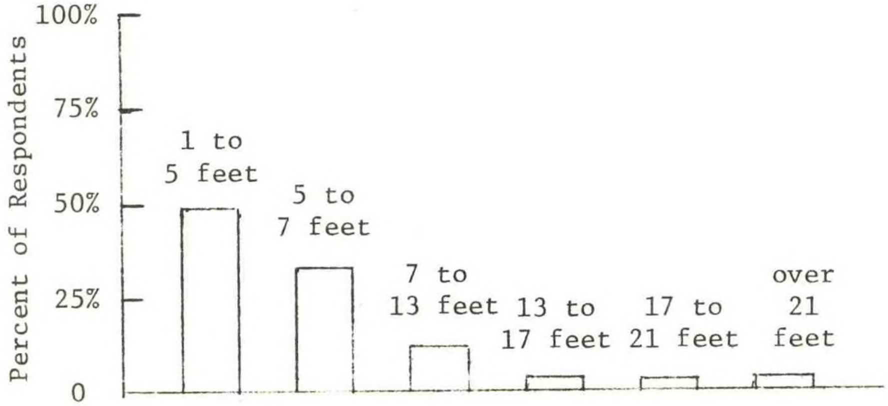

Figure 18.--Linear feet of self-service tray pack display.

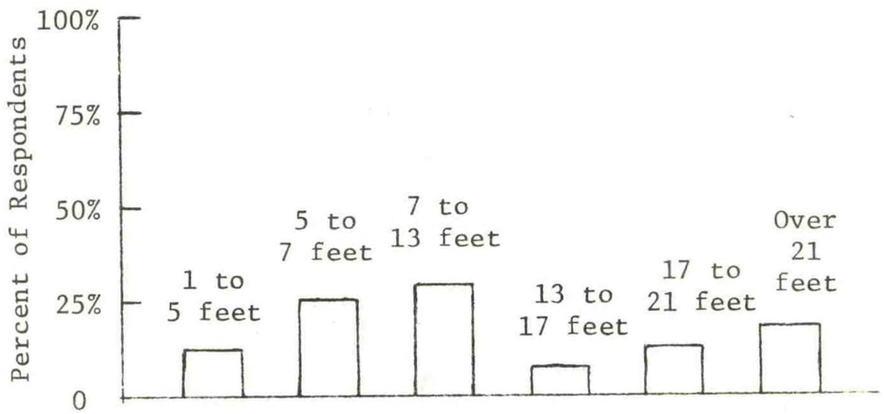

Figure 19.--Linear feet of self-service frozen display.

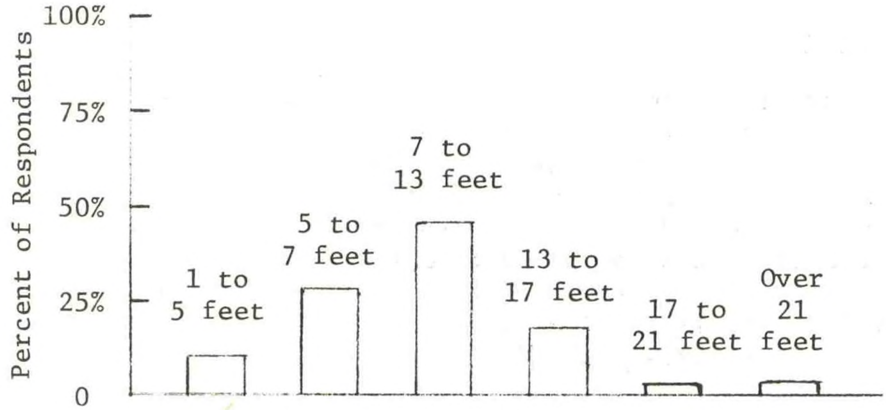

Figure 20.--Linear feet devoted to seafood service counters.

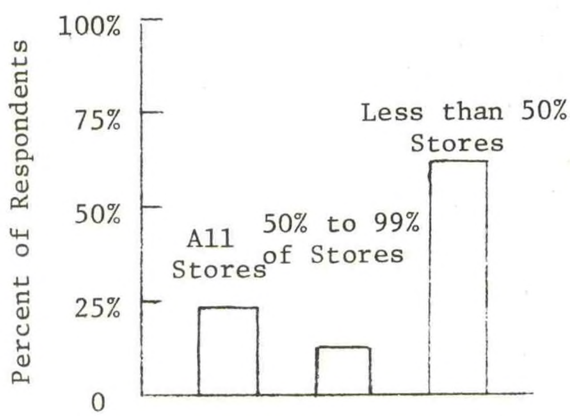

Figure 21.--Percent of stores in each chain using self-service tray pack for fresh or thawed seafood.

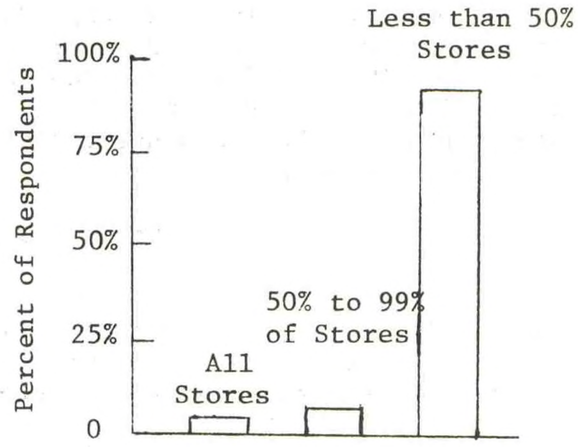

Figure 22.--Percent of stores in each chain using a seafood service counter.

ment in fresh seafood products. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents believe that customers would prefer to purchase fresh seafood rather than frozen seafood (fig. 26). Ninety percent of respondents in the Western region agreed with this statement.

Promoting Seafoods

Wholesale suppliers provide a variety of seafood promotional aids to retailers. Ad-mat services were at the top of the list of these aids, followed in order by point of sale materials, promotional discounts, and quantity discounts. However, marketing skills may be lacking among seafood suppliers, according to survey respondents. Asked to compare the marketing skills of seafood suppliers with those of other food suppliers, a majority (57 percent) responded that the marketing skills of seafood suppliers were inferior to those of other food suppliers (fig. 27). This lack of skill is particularly apparent in the Midwest/Great Lakes/Central region and also in the Gulf and Southeast region. Nationally only 4 percent of the respondents felt that seafood suppliers had superior marketing skills.

Chain stores use a variety of promotional aids for marketing seafoods. Of the 12 different aids listed in the questionnaire, respondents frequently used 7. However, some obviously important aids are neglected. For example, point of sale material and recipe cards are used infrequently by the majority of respondents. Also, the majority rarely promote seafoods through price reductions.

Instore location of seafood counters can also be used to aid in promoting seafood items. In most responding stores, seafood displays are not normally viewed by customers until they have passed the fresh meat counters (fig. 28). This finding was true for 57 percent of the stores surveyed nationally. The percentage was above the national average in the New England/Mid-Atlantic and Gulf/Southeast regions, and below the national average in the other two regions.

Sales and Profitability

The volume of fresh seafoods sold in the retail chains surveyed is small compared to other meats, although this result does not necessarily rule out profits from seafood sales. The following statements summarize answers to questions about the sales and profitability of fresh seafoods:

o Most respondents stated that fresh seafood sales are between 1 and 5 percent of total fresh meat sales in a typical store.

o More than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that their seafood operation is profitable.

o Most respondents do not believe sufficient market demand exists to enable a seafood service counter to pay for itself. Top management's interest in fresh seafood is limited (fig. 29).

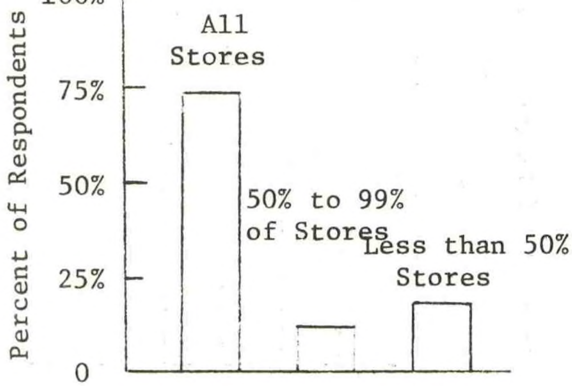

Figure 23.--Percent of stores in each chain using self-service frozen seafood display cases.

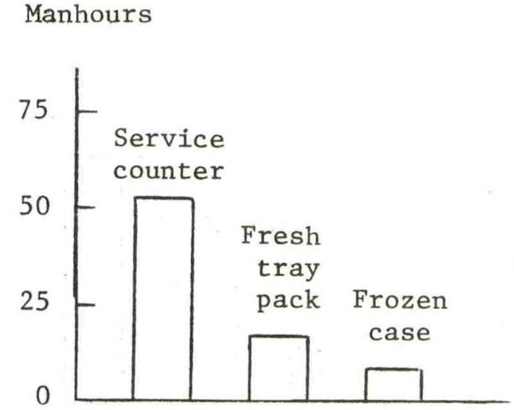

Figure 24.--Average weekly manhours required for adequate staffing of seafood displays.

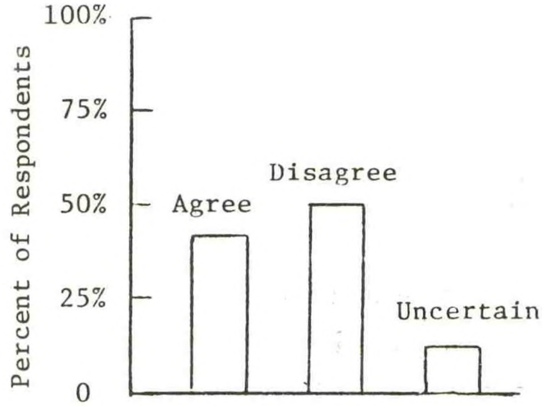

Figure 25.--Fresh seafood does not lend itself to self-service merchandising as do other meats.

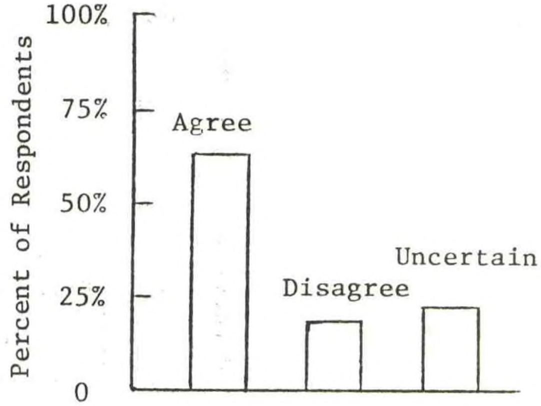

Figure 26.--Consumers would prefer to purchase fresh seafood rather than frozen seafood.

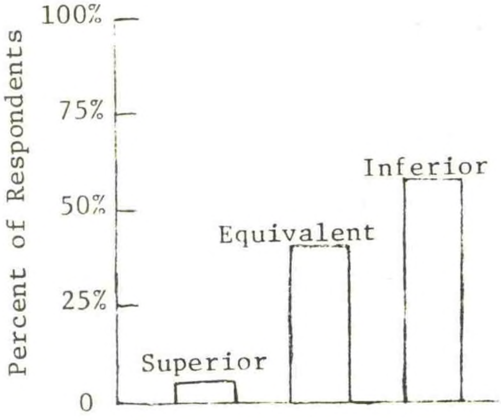

Figure 27.--Marketing skills of sea-food suppliers compared to other food suppliers.

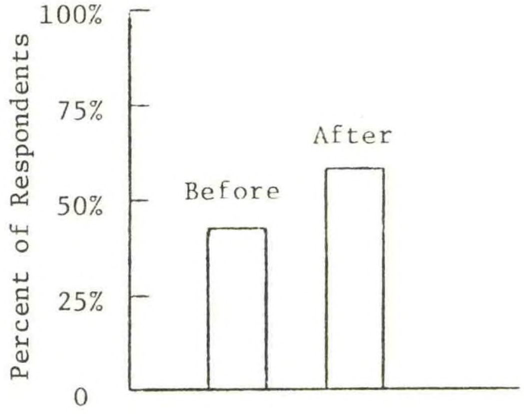

Figure 28.--Do customers pass by the fresh or thawed seafood before or after they pass by the fresh meats?

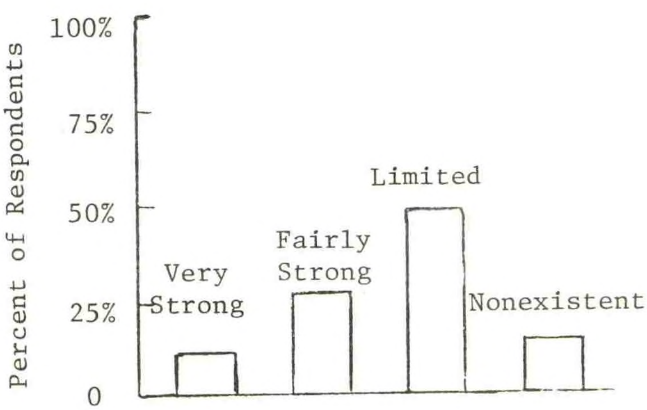

Figure 29.--How would you describe top management's enthusiasm for or interest in fresh seafood?

Sales Volume

The large majority of respondents (80 percent) stated that fresh seafood sales were between 1 and 5 percent of total meat sales (fig. 30 and 31). Only 4 percent cited fresh seafood sales on the order of 15 percent or more of fresh meat sales. The lowest ratios of fresh seafoods to fresh meat sales occurred in the New England/Mid-Atlantic region; the highest ratios were in the Western region.

Profits

Retail chain stores profit from handling fresh or thawed seafood, even though there are difficulties associated with handling these products. Nationally, 73 percent of respondents felt that fresh or thawed seafood was a profitable operation; in fact, 12 percent of respondents characterized the chain's fresh seafood operation as very profitable (fig. 32). There were some regional differences in the response, however. Only 8 percent of respondents in the New England and Mid-Atlantic region felt that fresh seafood was very profitable. This percentage was slightly below the national average.

Respondents were also asked whether sufficient market demand existed for a seafood service counter to pay for itself (fig. 33). Overall, 81 percent of the responding chains said that the counter would not pay for itself. However, 45 percent of the respondents felt that a service counter could pay for itself in some market areas (fig. 34). Further, 57 percent of the respondents said that even though not profitable, a service counter could attract additional customers to increase total store profits (fig. 35).

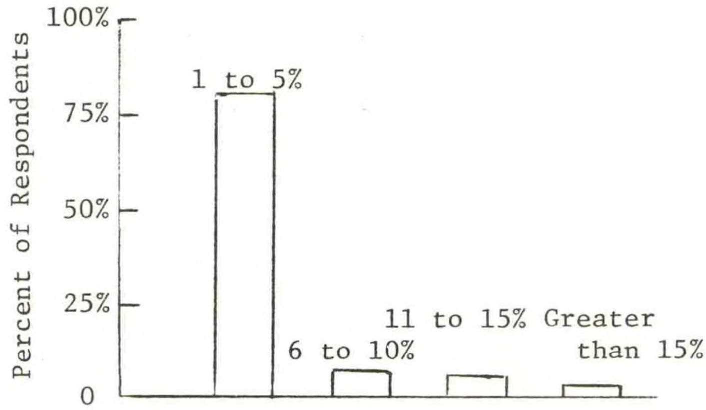

Figure 30.--Fresh and thawed seafood sales as a percent of total fresh meat sales.

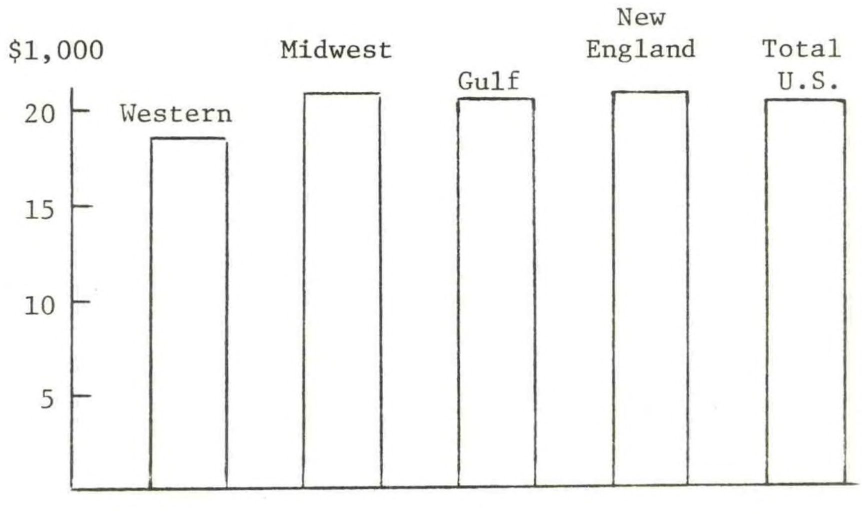

Figure 31.--Average weekly dollar sales volume for all fresh meats (including fresh or thawed seafood).

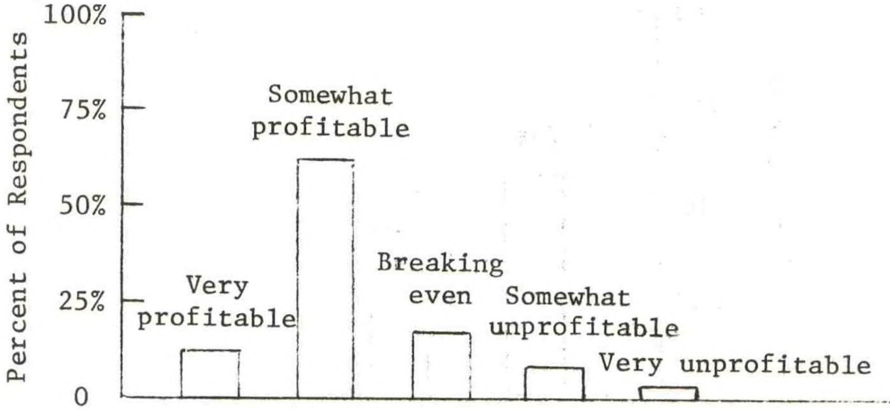

Figure 32.--Profitability of fresh or thawed seafood.

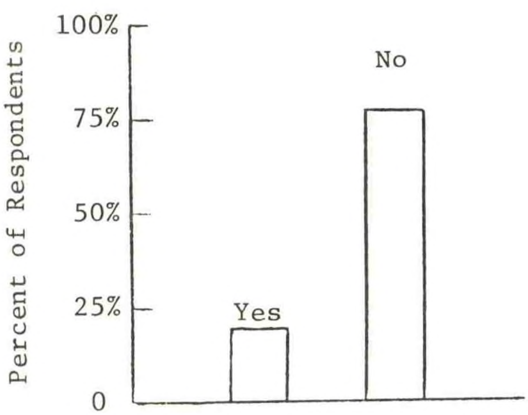

Figure 33.--For the typical store, does sufficient market demand exist to allow a service counter to pay for itself?

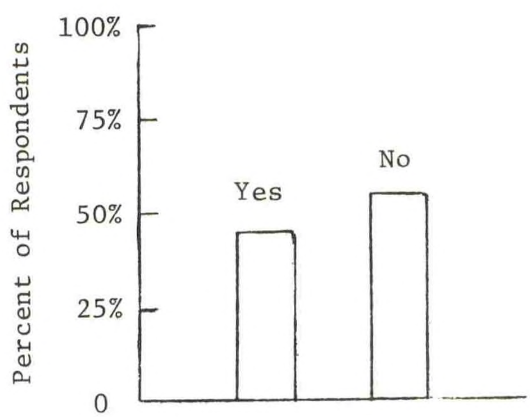

Figure 34.--Even if not profitable for the typical store, would a service counter pay for itself in some market areas?

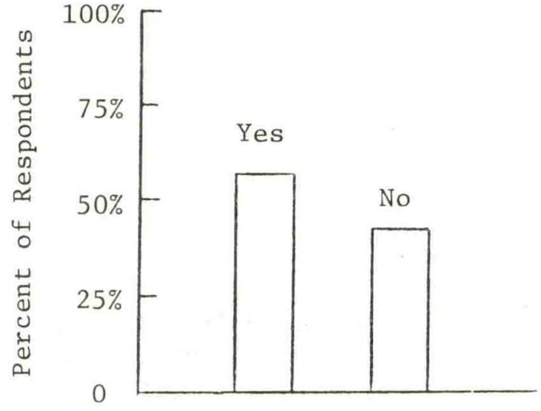

Figure 35.--Even if not profitable would a service counter attract additional customers to increase total store profits?

APPENDIX

Table 1.--Geographic Regions

Region	States	Number of respondents
Western	California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico	71
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	Texas (Inland), Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee	103
Gulf and Southeast	Texas (Coastal), Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida	47
New England and Mid-Atlantic	Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York City, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia	106
Total		327

PURCHASING

Table 2.--Seafood product types, by region

Region	Sell fresh	Sell frozen	Sell thawed
	--Percent of respondents--		
Western	82	93	73
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	51	100	39
Gulf and Southeast	63	96	23
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	65	95	39
Total United States	64	96	44

Table 3.--For your chain, are fresh or thawed seafood orders normally placed directly from the individual store to the fresh seafood supplier or from the central buying office?

Region	Individual store	Central buying office
	--Percent of respondents--	
Western	79	21
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	49	51
Gulf and Southeast	78	22
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	62	38
Total United States	64	36

Table 4.--Your chain may not buy fresh finfish but generally, in which of the following forms does or would your chain, as a whole, prefer to buy fresh finfish?

Region	Prefer unprocessed	Prefer partially processed	Prefer fully processed
	--Percent of respondents--		
Western	0	29	71
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	4	39	57
Gulf and Southeast	8	63	29
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	3	52	45
Total United States	3	43	54

Table 5.--In the store units which sell fresh or thawed seafood, are there any employees whose responsibilities involve the purchase and/or merchandising of only fresh or thawed seafood?

Region	Yes	No
	--Percent of respondents--	
Western	25	75
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	41	59
Gulf and Southeast	17	83
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	26	74
Total United States	29	71

Table 6.--For the typical store in your chain, about how many distributors normally supply it with fresh seafood?

Region	1-2	3-5	6 or more
	--Percent of respondents--		
Western	82	15	3
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	73	25	2
Gulf and Southeast	87	13	0
New England and Mid-Atlantic	77	17	6
Total United States	79	17	4

Table 7.--In general, would you say your suppliers provide quantities of fresh seafood sufficient or insufficient to meet your normal sales needs?

Region	Sufficient	Insufficient
	---Percent of respondents---	
Western	59	41
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	65	27
Gulf and Southeast	74	26
New England and Mid-Atlantic	75	25
Total United States	67	33

Table 8.--Compared to other food suppliers with whom you do business, would you say that fresh seafood suppliers possess "superior," "equivalent," or "inferior" marketing skills?

Region	Superior	Equivalent	Inferior
	---Percent of respondents---		
Western	5	51	44
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	0	35	65
Gulf and Southeast	0	30	70
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	7	35	58
Total United States	4	39	57

IN-STORE HANDLING

Table 9.--In the stores selling fresh or thawed seafood do you typically allocate a work area strictly for the processing of seafood?

Region	Yes	No
	--Percent of respondents--	
Western	47	53
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	51	49
Gulf and Southeast	43	57
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	64	36
Total United States	53	47

Table 10.--Processing seafood and other meats in the same work area can be done as smoothly as processing them in separate work areas.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncer-tain
		--Percent of respondents--			
Western	4	18	29	28	21
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	3	11	47	33	6
Gulf and Southeast	2	18	38	38	4
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	4	14	33	33	17
Total United States	3	14	37	33	12

Table 11.--At the retail level different skills are required for handling and displaying seafood than for handling and displaying other meats.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncer-tain
Western	43	42	9	2	4
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	28	53	11	5	3
Gulf and Southeast	30	37	17	1	13
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	36	42	9	4	9
Total United States	34	45	7	11	3

Table 12.--Greater effort is required to maintain sanitary seafood processing facilities than other meat processing facilities.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncer-tain
		---Percent of respondents---			
Western	28	32	22	9	9
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	23	41	18	6	13
Gulf and Southeast	16	48	28	2	14
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	25	32	21	0	22
Total United States	24	37	20	4	15

Table 13.--Odor control in the store is more a problem with fresh seafood than with other fresh meats.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	49	34	10	1	6
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	33	44	11	3	9
Gulf and Southeast	42	33	16	2	7
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	46	29	12	2	11
Total United States	42	35	12	2	9

Table 14.--Retail meat department employees have no more difficulty in judging the freshness of seafood than the freshness of other meats.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	10	35	32	13	10
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	5	31	34	22	8
Gulf and Southeast	13	24	36	18	9
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	10	33	36	12	10
Total United States	9	32	34	16	9

Table 15.--In general, retail meat department employees prefer not to work with fresh seafood.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	26	41	16	1	15
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	16	63	9	2	11
Gulf and Southeast	13	60	13	0	13
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	22	54	7	0	18
Total United States	20	55	11	1	14

Table 16.--Most employees perceive working with seafood as a lower status job than working with other meats.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	13	26	31	9	21
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	9	39	23	5	25
Gulf and Southeast	4	53	24	4	13
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	18	45	9	3	26
Total United States	12	40	20	5	22

MERCHANDISING AND MARKETING

Table 17.--Employees in the meat department generally have as much meat preparation knowledge about seafood as about other meats.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	1	18	37	31	13
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	3	10	53	25	10
Gulf and Southeast	2	31	49	9	9
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	3	10	59	14	14
Total United States	3	15	51	20	12

Table 18.--For the stores in your chain, about how many linear feet are devoted to selling seafood in each of the following ways?

Linear feet	1 to 5 feet	5 to 7 feet	7 to 13 feet	13 to 17 feet	17 to 21 feet	Over 21 feet
	----Percent of respondents----					
Self-service frozen display case	11	25	29	7	11	17
Self-service tray pack fresh thawed	49	33	12	2	2	2
Service counter	10	26	44	16	1	2

Table 19.--What percentage of stores in your chain sell seafood in self-service frozen seafood display cases?

Region	All stores	50 to 90 percent of stores	Less than 50 percent of stores
	---Percent of respondents---		
Western	61	9	30
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	81	12	7
Gulf and Southeast	71	6	23
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	72	9	19
Total United States	72	10	18

Table 20.--What percentage of the stores in your chain sell seafood in self-service fresh or thawed seafood counters?

Region	All stores	50 to 90 percent of stores	Less than 50 percent of stores
	---Percent of respondents---		
Western	35	26	39
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	17	11	72
Gulf and Southeast	13	12	75
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	28	14	58
Total United States	24	15	61

Table 21.--What percentage of stores in your chain have a fresh fish service counter?

Region	All stores	50 to 90 percent of stores	Less than 50 percent of stores
	---Percent of respondents---		
Western	6	9	85
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	4	2	94
Gulf and Southeast	4	0	96
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	2	9	89
Total United States	4	5	91

Table 22.--Fresh seafood does not lend itself to self-service merchandising as do other meats.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	11	9	43	26	11
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	17	31	25	15	13
Gulf and Southeast	9	38	36	13	4
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	12	29	35	13	11
Total United States	13	28	33	16	11

Table 23.--In your opinion, about how many weekly manhours must be committed for the typical store to adequately staff and operate each of the following types of seafood counters?

Region	Service counter	Self-service tray-pack counter	Self-service frozen seafood case
	---Average weekly manhours---		
Western	43	14	7
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	57	18	9
Gulf and Southeast	51	15	11
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	58	18	9
Total United States	53	16	9

Table 24.--In general, most consumers would prefer to purchase fresh seafood rather than frozen seafood.

Region	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	53	37	6	0	4
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	20	25	22	2	32
Gulf and Southeast	18	44	18	0	20
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	25	37	15	1	21
Total United States	28	34	15	1	21

Table 25.--Extent to which fresh seafood suppliers provide promotional aids or services.

Promotional aid	Provide a great deal	Provide a limited amount	Provide little or none
	---Number of respondents---		
Ad-Mat Services	154	15	1
Point of sale material	126	44	4
Promotional allowances	126	41	8
General consulting	106	58	11
Promotional discounts	98	63	13
Quantity discounts	96	57	15

Table 26.--Compared to other food suppliers, would you say that fresh seafood suppliers are "more accurate," "equally accurate," or "less accurate" in the claims they make about their products?

Region	More accurate	Equally accurate	Less accurate
	---Percent of respondents---		
Western	1	65	34
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	4	62	34
Gulf and Southeast	4	60	36
New England and Mid-Atlantic	5	53	42
Total United States	5	60	35

Table 27.--Please indicate the extent to which the typical store in your chain uses the following promotional devices in the sale of fresh or thawed seafood.

Promotion device	Used frequently	Used now and then	Used seldom or never
	---Number of respondents---		
Newspaper-line item	20	27	52
Newspaper-drop in cut	53	32	15
Newspaper-seafood ad separate from grocery ad	70	14	16
Radio ad for seafood	87	11	2
Handbills	69	20	11
Special price reduction	21	38	41
Recipes cards or racks	47	30	23
Premium offers	96	2	2
Coupons	82	16	2
Instore demonstration	81	17	2
Point of sale material	24	41	35
Television ad for seafood	1	10	89

Table 28.--Thinking about the customer traffic pattern and store layout in your chain, would you say that customers pass by the fresh or thawed seafood before or after they pass by the fresh meat?

Region	Before the fresh meat	After the fresh meat
	---Percent of respondents---	
Western	45	55
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	47	53
Gulf and Southeast	38	62
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	40	60
Total United States	43	57

SALES AND PROFITABILITY

Table 29.--Weekly dollar sales volume for all fresh meats (including fresh or thawed seafood).

Region	Average weekly sales volume	Range of responses
	---thousand dollars---	
Western	18.4	7 to 85
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	20.9	1 to 85
Gulf and Southeast	20.2	1 to 30
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	20.9	1 to 80
Total United States	20.1	1 to 85

Table 30.--Of total fresh meat sales, what percentage is fresh or thawed seafood sales?

Region	1 to 5 percent	6 to 10 percent	11 to 15 percent	Greater than 15 percent
		---Percent of respondents---		
Western	71	18	6	4
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	80	7	7	6
Gulf and Southeast	73	20	7	0
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	88	8	4	0
Total United States	80	12	6	4

Table 31.--How would you characterize your firm's overall profitability of fresh or thawed seafood right now?

Region	Very profitable	Somewhat profitable	Breaking even	Somewhat unprofitable	Very unprofitable
	---Percent of respondents---				
Western	19	61	16	0	4
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	10	63	16	10	1
Gulf and Southeast	11	56	22	11	0
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	8	62	19	11	0
Total United States	12	61	17	7	3

Table 32.--For the typical store, does sufficient market demand for seafood exist to allow a service counter to pay for itself?

Region	Yes	No
	---Percent of respondents---	
Western	22	78
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	16	84
Gulf and Southeast	16	84
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	24	76
Total United States	19	81

Table 33.--Even if not profitable for the typical store, would a service counter pay for itself in some market areas?

Region	Yes	No
	---Percent of respondents---	
Western	57	43
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	44	56
Gulf and Southeast	43	57
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	46	54
Total United States	45	55

Table 34.--Even though not profitable, would a service counter attract additional customers to increase total store profits?

Region	Yes	No
	---Percent of respondents---	
Western	58	42
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	50	50
Gulf and Southeast	55	45
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	63	37
Total United States	57	43

Table 35.--How would you describe top management's enthusiasm for or interest in fresh seafood?

Region	Very strong	Fairly strong	Limited	Non-existent
	--Percent of respondents--			
Western	4	48	44	4
Midwest/Great Lakes/ Central	12	20	54	14
Gulf and Southeast	7	20	52	21
New England/ Mid-Atlantic	16	25	45	14
Total United States	11	27	48	14

NOAA SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was established as part of the Department of Commerce on October 3, 1970. The mission responsibilities of NOAA are to assess the socioeconomic impact of natural and technological changes in the environment and to monitor and predict the state of the solid Earth, the oceans and their living resources, the atmosphere, and the space environment of the Earth.

The major components of NOAA regularly produce various types of scientific and technical information in the following kinds of publications:

PROFESSIONAL PAPERS — Important definitive research results, major techniques, and special investigations.

CONTRACT AND GRANT REPORTS — Reports prepared by contractors or grantees under NOAA sponsorship.

ATLAS — Presentation of analyzed data generally in the form of maps showing distribution of rainfall, chemical and physical conditions of oceans and atmosphere, distribution of fishes and marine mammals, ionospheric conditions, etc.

TECHNICAL SERVICE PUBLICATIONS — Reports containing data, observations, instructions, etc. A partial listing includes data serials; prediction and outlook periodicals; technical manuals, training papers, planning reports, and information serials; and miscellaneous technical publications.

TECHNICAL REPORTS — Journal quality with extensive details, mathematical developments, or data listings.

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUMS — Reports of preliminary, partial, or negative research or technology results, interim instructions, and the like.

Information on availability of NOAA publications can be obtained from:

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE INFORMATION CENTER (D822)
ENVIRONMENTAL DATA AND INFORMATION SERVICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

6009 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852

NOAA--S/T 78-414