

TASMANIAN WILD SEAFOOD

ABALONE CUSTOMER CODE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Contents Page

Introduction 2

Members 3

Harvesting and Handling 4

Packing and Transport 5

Buyer Receival 6

Customer Service 7

Policy Statement

The members of the Tasmanian Wild Seafood program are committed to supplying to you the highest quality of what we believe to be the world's best abalone (*Haliotis rubra*) and to promote the sustainable future of the industry.

Introduction

Tasmania's remote location, adjacent to the vast expanses of the Southern Ocean, provides some of the world's cleanest air and the purest cool climate waters where abalone thrive.

Tasmania is the southernmost part of Australia. Its main island is about the same size as the Japanese island of Hokkaido. Together with its surrounding islands it has a coastline of 2000 km. It is surrounded by the cold clean waters of the Southern Ocean and Tasman Sea.

This pristine environment provides the ideal habitat for the highly prized species of abalone (*Haliotis rubra*). They occur on rocky reefs, mainly along the west south and east coasts of the island within the littoral zone in depths of 5–30 metres, although they are found from the shallows down to 40 metres.

The Tasmanian abalone fishery is the largest wild abalone fishery in the world, providing approximately 25% of the annual world harvest and is a major contributor to the Tasmanian economy.

In marked contrast to almost all abalone fisheries in the world the Tasmanian fishery has been sustainably managed by the State Government since it began over 40 years ago. Laws regulating how divers may take abalone and the minimum size of each abalone have ensured continuous sustainable production. Annual catches reached a peak in 1984 and since then the total landings have been limited by quota. There are 3500 quota units and a maximum of 125 licensed divers. Divers are contracted by quota holders to harvest the abalone and deliver them to licensed processing factories.

In 1990, the Tasmanian commercial abalone fishery catch was set at 2,100 tonnes, where it remained until 1997, when there was a 20% increase to 2,520 tonnes. The total allowable catch is set each year based on scientific research and in the past ten years has ranged between 2100 and 2800 tonnes.

Smaller abalone fisheries exist in four other Australian States.

Members

Company	Address

Harvesting and Handling

The abalone is harvested by skilled divers from boats around the entire Tasmanian coast line. Fishing is regulated and supervised by the Government of Tasmania to ensure the sustainability of the resource. The management plan that sets out how fishing is to be carried out has also been approved by the Australian Government in accordance with the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC). All fishermen are licensed by the Tasmanian Government and their fishing activities are supervised by Tasmanian Marine Police. The amount of abalone that may be harvested by each diver is fixed by law and on landing the quantity of fish and the place of fishing must be reported to the Government.

We guarantee that all abalone that carry our brand have been harvested by divers and fishing boats that meet Government standards and also comply with our own code of quality assurance. Divers carefully remove abalone of a size greater than that prescribed by law and bring them to the surface. Divers operating from larger boats hold the catch alive in circulating seawater tanks. Smaller boats hold the catch in cool shaded containers that are sprayed with sea water until they are landed.

At the point of landing documentation recording details of the fishing area, fishing time and amount caught are completed. All abalone must be delivered alive to processing premises approved by both the Government of Tasmania and the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS). These premises must be operated in accordance with a formal 'approved arrangement' certificate issued by AQIS. On transfer to the processors truck the documentation is confirmed and the catch taken to the factory. In winter the time between harvest and arrival in the factory is usually less than 10 hours. In warmer weather the time is kept as short as possible in order not to stress the abalone.

After harvesting, the abalone is carefully processed through operations that are meticulously controlled to ensure the very highest standards of health, hygiene and quality, to ensure that product reaches its destination in perfect condition and in line with customers' requirements.

On arrival at the processing factory abalone are visually inspected for vitality and damage and stored in temperature controlled circulating seawater systems. Oxygen and salinity levels are monitored to ensure that the abalone to be exported remain in prime conditions. Weak animals or those that fail to meet our export standard are removed and transferred to alternative production chains.

The AQIS monitoring system ensures complete records are kept of all stages along the handling chain. This monitoring allows both complete traceability of every animal exported and feedback that promotes continuous upgrading of production processes by both fishermen and processors.

Packing

Abalone are packed in polystyrene boxes lined with inert plastic sheeting. Prior to packing abalone are held in filtered seawater at 8-10°C. This allows the animals to survive out of water for the time taken to reach overseas markets. The abalone are packed in polystyrene containers that meet airline standards for seafood transport. These containers contain an ice pack to maintain a low temperature.

The standard container holds 12 kg of abalone with an overpack of 400gm to cover weight loss in transit. The minimum guaranteed weight, the size grade of abalone and the number of animals is specified on the container and in the accompanying documentation. Abalone will be graded to suit the requirements of the customer <600gm are classed as small, 600-800 gm medium and 800< gm as large. Customers requesting a mixed large grade will receive 17-20 abalone per standard box.

Mixed small contains more than 20 per box. The full specifications of each consignment will include the following – the number of bins, the grade count [small, medium or large], and the number of abalone in the box. Also provided is the airway bill number and AQIS documentation.

Complete records are maintained by both Wild Seafood Tasmania and the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service and can be used to trace the consignment from catch to customer if required.

Transport

Live abalone are packed as close to scheduled flight departure times as possible allowing for transport from factory to airport.

Exporters will advise buyers of the flight details and expected arrival time through an agreed method of communication. Any unexpected delays will be communicated to the buyer as soon as the exporter receives advice from the airline/ freight forwarder.

Buyer Receiving

This Code of Quality Assurance specifies the commitment of the members of Wild Tasmanian Seafood to only ship live abalone in the best possible condition. In order that this level of quality is enjoyed by the consumer each consignment must be carefully unpacked and cared for by the buyer

The success of this Code of Practice, and the reputation of our product, depends on a commitment by buyers to unpack and hold our abalone in accordance with the following standards.

- The buyer collects the consignment at the airport immediately it has been cleared by customs agents. (Unexpected delays on arrival should be communicated to the exporter.)
- The shipment should be carefully loaded and transported in temperature controlled vehicles to the buyers establishment.
- Immediately on arrival the buyer must supervise the unpacking of the containers and record the condition of the abalone and the container in which they arrived.
- The abalone must then be placed in clean aerated sea water maintained at –
 - Temperature 10-12°C
 - Salinity 3.5%
 - pH 8-8.25
 - Minimum dissolved oxygen level 90%

TO KEEP THE ABALONE ALIVE ALL ANIMALS MUST REMAIN IN THIS SITUATION UNTIL THEY ARE FULLY RECOVERED FROM THE JOURNEY BEFORE FURTHER TRANSPORT.
(Unless the lobsters is directly delivered to the end user.)

UNLESS IT IS INTENDED TO KILL THEM, LIVE ABALONE MUST NEVER BE IMMERSSED IN FRESHWATER.

Any problems with the quality of rock lobsters received must be recorded and dealt with in accordance with the next section.

Customer Service

The companies that make up Tasmanian Wild Seafood undertake to supply customers with the highest quality Tasmanian rock lobster at competitive prices. This Code specifies our commitment to meet the needs and expectations of you our customers. Whilst we can and do ensure the quality of the product from harvest to shipment our consignments must of necessity pass through other hands before they reach you. Consequently problems may occasionally arise along the way. Should you believe that one of our consignments arrive in poor condition please undertake the following steps.

1. Record the details on Form 1.
2. Phone or fax exporter with the details.
3. Retain the consignment in your possession

This Code is your assurance that your concerns will receive immediate attention. The exporter may request further information or appoint an independent accredited inspector to examine the consignment and the circumstances and make a report.

Please make phone contact before faxing this form

Form 1

ROCK LOBSTER RECEIVAL

Receiving Company	
Telephone & Fax numbers	
Receiving person	
Date of received	

SHIPMENT

Airline		Actual arrival time	
Flight number		Time of collection at airport	
Airport		Time of arrival at factory	
Scheduled arrival time		Time of Inspection	

PRODUCT

Producer	
Brand name	
name of phone contact	
Details of query or claim	

CONTAINER

	Pack 1	Pack 2	Pack 3	Pack 4	Pack 5
Brand					
Serial number					
Grade					
Count					
Temperature (before opening)					
Temperature of ice pack					
Number of dead abalone					
Number of weak abalone					

Exporters instructions	
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