

TASMANIAN WILD SEAFOOD

ROCK LOBSTER 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 rock lobster (*Jasus edwardsii*) 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 Southern Rock Lobster thrive.

Tasmania is the southernmost part of Australia. Its main island is about the same size as the Japanese island of Hokkaido and of Taiwan. 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 rock lobster (*Jasus edwardsii*). Whilst wild fisheries are in serious decline around the world, in Tasmania the State Government has maintained rigorous measures to ensure a reliable supply of premium quality Southern Rock Lobster.

The Tasmanian rock lobster fishery has been sustainably managed for over 120 years and has been an important component of the State's fishing industry for over 150 years. Throughout that time fishermen and their boats have needed to be licenced.

From 1884 fishermen were required to observe a minimum size and to fish only in prescribed seasons with specified gear. Since 1926 the number of traps that could be used from a boat was also limited. Following World War II fishermen began to build bigger boats and use the most modern technology to find and catch lobsters and as a result landings increased.

In 1967 the number of fishing licences was limited to restrain excessive development. However fishing pressure soon increased again as more sophisticated technology was introduced and in 1998 individual transferable quotas were introduced under a total allowable catch, while size limits, limited entry and gear restrictions were also retained. Stocks have already rebuilt under these new regulations and the future of the fishery is very secure.

Members

Company	Address

Harvesting and Handling

The lobster is harvested by skilled fishermen from boats around the entire Tasmanian coastline. 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 rock lobster that may be harvested by each fisherman is fixed by law and on landing the quantity of fish and the place of fishing must be reported to the Government.

All rock lobsters 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.

Rock lobster that carry our brand have been harvested by fishermen and fishing boats that not only meet these Government standards but also comply with our own code of quality assurance. The traps used to take lobsters must conform with approved design standards that release undersized animals and ensure the catch can be stored in the vessels circulating tanks in prime condition.

After harvesting, the premium lobster 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 lobsters 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 lobsters 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

Rock lobsters have been exported alive from Tasmania for over 100 years, consequently the principles are well understood and the techniques for handling them refined through long practice. When intercontinental exports began in 1950 the industry was able to upgrade these techniques to provide prime quality products for the new markets.

Prior to packing lobsters are chilled to 4°C for 24 hours. This slows the metabolic processes and allows the animals to survive out of water for at least 72 hours. The lobsters are packed in polystyrene containers that meet airline standards for seafood transport. These containers contain an ice pack to maintain a low temperature and chemically inert wood shavings to maintain humidity.

The standard container usually holds 25kg of lobsters. The minimum guaranteed weight, the size grade of lobsters and the number of animals is specified on the container and in the accompanying documentation. The full specifications of each consignment will include the following –

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 lobsters are packed as close to scheduled flight departure times as possible allowing for transport from factory to airport. This transport is undertaken in carefully loaded temperature controlled vehicles. 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 Receival

This Code of Quality Assurance specifies the commitment of the members of Wild Tasmanian Seafood to only ship live rock lobster 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 rock lobsters 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 rock lobsters and the container in which they arrived.
- The rock lobsters 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 ROCK LOBSTERS ALIVE ALL ANIMAL S 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 ROCK LOBSTERS 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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