

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Chile

**Post:** Santiago

### **New Market Opens for U.S. Live Lobsters**

**Report Categories:**

Export Accomplishments - Other

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**Report Highlights:**

In September 2012 the Chilean Fisheries Agency (SERNAPESCA) officially cleared off on import requirements for U.S. live lobsters. Given the current exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the strong Chilean peso, which continues to favor U.S. sales, and the U.S.-Chile Free trade Agreement which gives the U.S. zero tariff on seafood, this market access opening offers an opportunity for U.S. lobster sales in Chile.

### General Information:

The Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Chile had been working closely with NOAA, USDA's APHIS and our Chilean counterparts, on appropriate certificate language for importing live U.S. lobsters. In September 2012 the Chilean Fisheries Agency (SERNAPESCA) officially cleared off on import requirements. Given the current exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the strong Chilean peso, which continues to favor U.S. sales, and the U.S.-Chile Free trade Agreement which gives the U.S. zero tariff on seafood, this market access opening offers an opportunity for U.S. lobster sales in Chile.

### Chilean Import Requirements for U.S. Lobsters:

1. The Chilean importer must request an import permit from the "Subsecretaria de Pesca"; contact points are Eugenio Zamorano ([ezamorano@subpesca.cl](mailto:ezamorano@subpesca.cl)) or Alejandro Barrientos ([abarrientos@subpesca.cl](mailto:abarrientos@subpesca.cl))
1. Meanwhile, the U.S. exporter can prepare the shipment. Each shipment must be accompanied by a sanitary certificate from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with the following declaration:

"These live lobsters have been inspected by the competent authority of the United States within 72 hours prior to export and show no clinical sign of disease, especially White Spot Disease."

### The Chilean Market:

With a coastline stretching three thousand miles, Chileans have access to a wide-variety of fresh seafood. Local favorites include mussels, barnacles, king crab, sea urchins and of course the ubiquitous "Chilean sea-bass" or conger eel. Chileans consume just over fifteen pounds of seafood per year compared to the one hundred and sixty five pounds per person per year of chicken, pork and beef. While Chileans consume relatively less seafood than other proteins, they are used to eating a wide variety of seafood and chefs know how to prepare crustaceans.

The clawless lobster of the Juan Fernandez Islands, located off Chile's southern coast, is the primary lobster species consumed in Chile. In 2011, Chile exported \$3,926,471 of this crustacean.

The destinations were:

Destination	US\$ FOB
CHINA	1,678,633
FRANCE	936,537
HONG KONG	780,029
ITALY	401,546
SPAIN	95,722
U.S.A.	15,369
TAIWAN	12,566
SINGAPORE	6,065
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,926,471</b>

About ten percent of Chilean lobsters are consumed domestically, primarily in restaurants. Chileans do not

have a tradition of cooking lobsters at home. Prices for a half lobster (about a pound) fall between \$30-\$45, while a whole, two-pound lobster can retail for up to \$80 at a seafood restaurant. The local lobster fishing season runs from October to May (spring, summer and fall in the southern hemisphere). This time-frame covers the period of greatest demand when Chileans celebrate Christmas and New Years by eating lobster at the beach.

### Chilean lobster imports in pounds

Country	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
USA					80,124*	44,966*
Canada	2,013	8,914	12,036	5,029	163	4,860
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>8,914</b>	<b>12,036</b>	<b>5,029</b>	<b>80,287</b>	<b>49,826</b>

\*frozen lobster tails

Source: Chilean customs

This chart demonstrates that, over time, there is an upward trend in volume of imported lobster consumption in Chile. Because of the extremely volatile price of lobster it was difficult to draw conclusions in consumption trends by analyzing the value of imports.

Despite the global economic recession, Chile has demonstrated its ability to maintain a growth perspective through its solid fundamentals, in particular, its fiscal solvency. Based on market growth rate and the overall U.S. competitive position in the market, U.S. lobster exporters could find a reliable and lucrative market in Chile.

Please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs at the American Embassy in Santiago, Chile for additional information and export support:

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