

Will lobster caviar catch on?



By Nicki Holmyard, SeafoodSource contributing editor

30 June, 2010 - Village Bay Sea Products of New Brunswick, Canada, this week launched Lobster Caviar — a sustainable product legally extracted from non-berried female lobsters — at the Summer Fancy Food Show in New York.

“We are really excited about this product and believe it is unique,” said Danny King, the company’s president.

The product was created by development chef Pierre Bouriaud, who has worked on value-added lobster for Village Bay for the past three years. “The caviar took me 18 months to get right, but it has been well received,” he said.

While the exact process is a carefully guarded secret, Bouriaud revealed that a new technique enables him to extract eggs from female lobsters before they are released onto the body. “It is illegal to land a berried female, but we can work with lobsters landed to us for processing at an earlier stage,” he explained.

The eggs are processed with salt, water and sodium alginate, and packed as a shelf-stable product in 50-gram jars that keep for up to five months in a refrigerator. The jars are placed inside small, round black cartons with gold writing, which lend an exclusive appearance. It is expected to retail for USD 25 to 30 (EUR 20.48 to 24.57).

“We have trialled the caviar with our customers in the United States, France, Russia, Dubai and Sweden and have received excellent feedback,” said King.

Bouriaud has also developed a number of other consumer and foodservice lobster products, including lobster butter, lobster pate, lobster oil and lobster spread. A lobster terrine is close to launch.

“The lobster oil is popular with consumers and is made from canola oil infused with lobster, which is filtered before bottling,” said Bouriaud. “It is especially good as a substitute for cooking oil or for drizzling over salads and pasta dishes.”

King said that the new consumer speciality products are selling well and are a good complement for the Village Bay’s wholesale lobster, crab and oyster products.

“There are many lobster processors in Atlantic Canada but few are working on innovative new products, so this gives us a good market advantage,” he said.