

## Sardines to market

Researchers are growing the South Australian sardine industry by focusing on value-adding sardines for the developing human consumption market.

The sardine fishery is Australia's largest wild fishery by volume, with the majority of its catch used to provide quality feed for the tuna ranching industry. With set annual quota, there is significant potential to increase its value by developing human consumption of sardines for domestic and export markets, in addition to continuing the supply of tuna feed.

The small number of sardines that are currently sold in fresh and frozen formats for human consumption provide returns several times higher than that for tuna feed. However, there is the further potential to substantially increase this with value adding.

The industry is committed to increasing its value by developing a continual supply of value-added products to these markets with an aim of dedicating 10 percent of its catch for this purpose. Year round supply will also increase job opportunities within this otherwise seasonal vocation.



High quality sardines suitable for value-adding and the human consumption market.

SARDI researchers and the South Australian sardine industry hope to achieve this through an Australian Seafood CRC funded project by combining a process optimisation program and a new product development program.

Building on previous work that focused on increasing the value of sardines, this research will optimise processes

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Vacuum packed sardines for the human consumption market.

and quality as well as develop value-added products that will be evaluated in test markets. Pivotal in achieving this ambitious target is consumer/market intelligence that allows barriers to sardine acceptability to be overcome in the development of these products, a key to growing this sector. Researchers are focusing on the first stage of this project by investigating the shelf-life of chilled and frozen products for whole, head and gutted, and fillets.

Shelf-life trials are being completed on chilled and frozen sardine products in various types of packaging formats to provide baseline technical information of the sardine quality.

In parallel to these trials, process and packaging reviews are also being evaluated at each of the value-add sardine processors.

From these results, further validation trials will be completed to determine what process and packaging conditions produce the optimum quality sardine raw material.

This research will provide the results to commence the development of new products.

Developing the human consumption market for sardines would add another dimension to the industry, working alongside the role of sardines as tuna feed.

Optimisation of processes, to ensure quality all year round supply, will be beneficial to all the industry as well as other small pelagic industries in Australia.

## Key Points

The South Australian sardine fishery is Australia's largest by volume, with the majority of its catch used to provide quality feed for the tuna ranching industry.

Industry and researchers are committed to increasing the value of the industry by developing the human consumption market, alongside the tuna feed market.

Researchers aim to achieve this by combining a process optimisation program and a new product development program.

The first stage of this project is underway, focusing on shelf-life trials and reviewing processes and packaging at each of the value-add sardine processors.

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