

Overcoming the challenge of distance in our food industry

Being so far from our key markets has driven food producers in New Zealand to be innovative in the way we transport high-quality products to consumers.

For example, the first successful shipment of frozen meat to Britain on the Dunedin in 1882 was a turning-point for New Zealand. This paved the way for meat and dairy products to become a cornerstone of our twentieth-century economy. Many other primary sector industries have also relied on science and technology to address these challenges.

Thinking inside the box

In the seafood sector, the most valuable fish is one that is delivered live to the customer. Processes and technologies for stress-free capture, storage and transport have been developed for a number of species. For shipping crayfish, packaging solutions needed to protect against stress factors such as temperature shifts (increasing or decreasing), low humidity, low oxygen, overcrowding and rough handling.

International- and New Zealand-based engineers and scientists, working in partnership with New Zealand's seafood industry, developed an innovative approach to shipping live animals to countries like China. Insulated polystyrene boxes are protected against crushing with a high-strength but low-weight steel casing. Also, these boxes are often lined with wood wool (made from wood shavings) to maintain their temperature at around 5°C.

Such innovations reduce the effects of the distance to international markets while adding significant value to our products.

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Photo: T&J Enderby.



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa