

THE ISRAELI MARKET FOR CULTURED GILTHEAD SEA BREAM (*SPARUS AURATA*)

Daniel Conijeski*, Noam Mozes

*Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research, National Center for Mariculture,
PO Box 1212, Eilat 88112, Israel*

Arieh Sheskin

Israel Ministry of Agriculture, Agriculture Center, Beit Dagan 50250, Israel

(Received 10.6.01, Accepted 4.7.01)

Abstract

With average annual growth at 38%, sea bream production is the main growth factor in Israel's fisheries industry. It is estimated that cultured sea bream constituted over 10% of the volume and 20% of the value of domestic fisheries in 2000. Per capita consumption of sea bream grew from 0.11 kg in 1995 to an estimated 0.39 kg in 2000. Rapid industry development lowered market prices but, in general, farm-gate prices in Israel are higher than in major Mediterranean producing countries. Price elasticity of sea bream denotes an elastic demand, where the percentage that sales have increased is greater than the percentage that prices have decreased. Cultured sea bream in Israel lacks competition from wild or imported sources. Increasing supplies of sea bream will come from the local mariculture industry, but growth is slowing and several constraints must be overcome. Intensive recirculating aquaculture systems may enhance inland marine farm production. The sea bream market in Israel has not reached saturation level, as indicated by the continuation of increasing consumption without significant improvements in marketing strategies. Demand could increase to 4,500 tons (0.7 kg per capita) by 2005. Whether this forecast is overly optimistic or not, it reveals potential for further mariculture development.

* Corresponding author.