

CHAPTER 6

SHUCKING AND PACKING SHELLFISH

Each registered facility must consider, and where applicable, incorporate the following components in the development and implementation of their Quality Management Program (QMP).

6.1 Facility Requirements

Facilities in which shellfish are shucked and packed or repacked shall be registered in accordance with the appropriate requirements of Sections 14 and 15 of the Fish Inspection Regulations (FIR). Detailed registration compliance requirements are contained in the CFIA's Facilities Inspection Manual, Chapter 5, Subject 1 - Facility Compliance Requirements.

6.2 Heat Shock

The heat shock method of preparing shellfish for shucking is not intended to open, kill, blanch or cook the shellfish but rather to cause the shellfish to relax its adductor muscles and contract its body so it can more easily be shucked. A variety of heat shock processes are currently in use and a large number of techniques are possible. Consequently, the Manual requirements are general in nature and emphasise the use of process schedules developed by or in cooperation with competent individuals. Other aspects of the process that require controls include washing of shellstock, cooling of heat shocked shellfish, refrigeration of heat shocked shucked shellfish, and cleaning of equipment.

6.2.1 Washing of Shellstock

- a) Immediately prior to the heat shock operation all shellstock to be subjected to the heat shock process shall be washed with running water from an approved source of adequate supply and pressure and culled of dead animals and those with broken shells. Washing by immersion is prohibited.
- b) Shellstock shall be handled in a manner which prevents their contamination during the wash cycle.

6.2.2 Heat Shock Process

- a) A scheduled process shall be used in each processing facility utilising heat shocking. Scheduled processes should be developed by qualified or experienced persons. The facility shall incorporate the approved scheduled process into their QMP.
- b) Factors which may affect the process shall have been adequately studied and provided for in establishing the process. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to: type and size of shellfish; time and temperature of exposure; type of process (e.g., hot water immersion, steam tunnel, steam retort); size of the tank, tunnel or retort; water-to-shellfish ratios in tanks; and temperature and pressure recording devices.
- c) The physical and sensory properties of the species shall not be changed by the scheduled process and the shellfish must remain alive until shucked.
- d) The process shall not result in increased microbial deterioration of the shucked shellfish.
- e) Data collected to validate the heat shock process must be incorporated into the facility's QMP.
- f) The scheduled process shall be posted at a conspicuous location in the plant and all responsible persons shall be familiar with the requirements.

6.2.3 Cooling of Heat Shocked Shellstock

- a) All hot dipped shellstock shall be cooled with flowing water from an approved source immediately after the heat shock process.
- b) All heat shocked shellstock shall be handled in such a manner as to preclude contamination during the cooling process.

6.2.4 Cooling of Shucked Shellfish

All shellstock which have been subjected to the heat shock process shall be shucked and the meat cooled to at least 7°C within two hours after the heat shock process and placed in storage at a temperature between -1°C and 4°C.

6.2.5 Changing of Heat Shock Tank Water

If a heat shock water tank is used, it is to be completely drained and flushed at three-hour intervals or less in such a manner that all mud and detritus remaining in the dip tank from previous dippings are eliminated.

6.3 Labelling of Shucked Shellfish

- a) Each individual package of fresh or frozen shellfish meats shall have permanently recorded on the container of the product:
 - i) the common name of the shellfish;
 - ii) net contents as net weight unless, in the case of oyster and clam meats that are not frozen, the container or label is marked with a statement of net contents in terms of fluid measure or by count; and
 - iii) the name and address of the processor or distributor; and
 - iv) if the shucked shellfish originate from depurated shellstock then the label must indicate that they have been depurated.
- b) The principal display panel on each package of fresh or frozen shucked shellfish shall contain the certification number of the packer and a legible BEST BEFORE date except for those packages with a capacity of 64 fluid ounces or more which will show DATE SHUCKED. The date will consist of either the number of the day of the year or the abbreviation for the month and number of the day of the month. For frozen shellfish, the year will be added to the date.
- c) The DATE SHUCKED shall appear on the lid and also the side wall or bottom of durable containers with a capacity of 64 fluid ounces or more. The side wall is considered the principal display panel.
- d) Frozen shellfish shall be labelled as frozen in type of equal prominence immediately adjacent to the name of the shellfish.
- e) All labelling information on shucked shellfish

destined for retail sale in Canada must be in English and French and, if sold fresh must include a "best before" date and the statement "keep refrigerated". The dates must be indicated in a manner demonstrated in section B.01.007(4) (d) and (5) of the Food and Drug Regulations: "the day of the month shall be shown after the month and shall be expressed in numbers".

The use of the Julian calendar is unacceptable.

- f) All required information shall be provided in a legible and indelible form.

6.4 Commingling policy

- a) Shipping containers should be filled with product which represents the same harvest lot (same harvest location/day removed from water); however, if desired in order to fill the last container of a lot, it is permissible to mix 2 lots if the product is identified as such and appropriate records kept.
- b) In the event of product recall, all commingled containers shall be recalled.

6.5 Records

- a) Complete, accurate and legible records must be maintained in accordance with section 15(10)(d) of the Fish Inspection Regulations. These records shall be sufficient to document that shellfish are from an approved source and to permit a container of shellfish to be traced back to the specific harvest lot from which it was taken. Purchases and sales shall be recorded in a permanently bound ledger book or by other means acceptable to the CFIA.
- b) Records covering purchases and sales of fresh and frozen shellfish shall be retained for a period of at least three years.