

Nigeria imports US\$ 280M mackerel fish

Despite import restriction, importation of chilled and frozen mackerel has reached N128.8billion (\$280million) or 40 per cent of the total annual \$700million fish imports into Nigeria in one year.

The country's major suppliers are Norway, Chile, Albania and United States, as fish deficit in the country stands at 2.5million tonnes, while production is less than 1.1 million tonnes.

According to the United States Department of Trade (USDT), imports into the country were dominated by essentially fresh, chilled and frozen mackerel, accounting for 40 per cent.

It noted that while fresh, chilled and frozen fish also accounted for the largest share of import values, while imports of dried, salted and smoked fish remained low.

This month, data obtained by New Telegraph from the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)'s shipping position revealed that no fewer than eight vessels have berthed at the Lagos Port complex to offload 24,813.95 tonnes of fish valued at N17.3billion (\$37.46million) as Norwegian fish price reached \$1,509.55 per tonne

At the terminal C and D of the port, Green Honduras has arrived with 2,743.95 tonnes; Yun Der, 4500 tonnes; Prince Of Sea, 4,200 tonnes; Green Costa Rica, 4,200 tonnes and Boyang Capella, 4,200 tonnes

Also, Green Klipper with 4,000 tonnes, Green Crystal, 3,850 tonnes, Don Reefer, 1,320 tonnes have offloaded.

He explained that the ministry was pursuing a holistic approach to the development of the fisheries subsector through the diversification programme along the value chain process.

Nanono said: “In line with the theme of this conference, the ministry has developed various programmes to increase domestic food/fish production and the main target is the empowerment of the youth and other groups especially the women.”

Last year, Nigeria cut duties on imports of dried stock fish from 20 per cent to 10 per cent for Norway, because of the increased demand for foreign dried fish heads.

According to the Federal Department of Fishery (FDF), the country’s demand for fish had reached 3.2million tonnes as Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) listed fish and other seafood among items not valid for forex from the official interbank market.

The Federal Government has announced plans to end fish importation in the next two years as it asked fish importers to consider producing fish locally.

Import quota and restriction and coronavirus pandemic has affected the annual projected 4.5million tonnes fish imports into the country between February and August this year.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Sabo Nanono, had said in Abuja at the 35th Annual Conference of the Fisheries Society of Nigeria (FISON) that over 12 million Nigerians were actively engaged in primary and fish production, saying that contribution of fisheries to the national Gross Domestic Products was about 4.5 per cent.

“All these programmes are Abeokutatailored towards wealth and jobs creation, arrest and prevention of youth restiveness.”

The minister said currently, the total demand for fish is 3.6 million tonnes annually while Nigeria is producing 1.1 million tonnes, leaving a deficit of about 2.5 million tonnes to be supplemented by importation.

The minister, who was represented by the Director of Federal Department of Fisheries, Mr. Imeh Umoh, said that fisheries was one of the value chains in the ministry, adding that it was the driving force for wealth and jobs creation, contribution to food and nutrition security, poverty reduction as well as the creation of numerous investments for the teeming Nigerians, especially during the economic recession which is occasioned by the COVID-19.

Also, the President of FISON, Mr. Adegoke Agbabiaka, noted that government in the last decade had made a paradigm shift under the agricultural transformation agenda and was considering agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture as a business in order to achieve self-sufficiency in food fish production.

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