

VERTICAL INTEGRATION AT CALADERO

Miriam Delgado Verde
Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Caladero is an Aragonese company located in Zaragoza and founded in 1990 with the aim of importing fresh fish at different countries. At that time, problems of Spanish fishing firms on limitation of European Union and neighbouring countries, especially Morocco, for capturing fishes was decisive. In 2008, the firm had 10 productive plants in Spain and 23 abroad, manufacturing 170,000 tonnes of fishes, with a personnel of almost 1,000 people in Spain and 500 abroad, which involved a turnover of around 500 million euros.

In order to achieving these figures, firm spread its activities out from mere original import to have its own sources of fish supply, first, in North European countries, and, then, other North American and South African countries. In 2009, the firm had a wide fishing fleet extended by the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Indian Oceans.

The productive cycle is completed with treatment and preservation of fish within production plants. After carrying out captures, they are prepared in productive centres located in different countries; they are transported in refrigerated trucks up to the most nearby airport, heading Zaragoza's Headquarters, from where they are distributed to the supermarkets of the country. All this with the aim of attaining that fish is available for customers the following day from its capture.

This firm was pioneer regarding fish packing technique by which the product is offered in trays. This technique provides, on the one hand, information on product traceability (point of origin, processing, and manipulation) and, on the other hand, guarantee of hygiene and healthiness conditions, being very interesting for this kind of product which is highly perishable. Thus, the life of product is extended until 8 or 10 days in the point of sale. If fish is cooked, its life is prolonged until 21 days.

The packaging system of trays is derived from a high technology of fluid ice utilization, which allows an appropriate atmosphere for keeping sea-products. In 2009, Caladero was commercializing approximately 70 references of different types of fish and shellfish.

At the beginning of 2000, the firm signed a supply agreement with Mercadona, and after a proof period, in 2003, Caladero became "inter-supplier" (an agreement of long-term stable relationship). Thus, firm could develop a better planning of its strategic investments in the long term, especially regarding the improvement of trays' packing technique because it has almost guaranteed the sale of its production due to the fact that Mercadona absorbs practically 90% of its production.