

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** July 29, 1998

**FROM:** Robert E. Croonenberghs, PhD, Director  
Division of Shellfish Sanitation

**THROUGH:** Eric H. Bartsch, PE, Director  
Office of Water Programs

**SUBJECT:** Plants C – Policy – Certification – Zip Lock Type Bags for Packing Crab Meat

**Introduction**

From time to time small crab meal dealers ask whether they can pack their product into Zip Lock type bags as a final container. Such a bag would be cheaper for them to use. This working memo establishes as policy that such bags will not be approved for use as a final container of crab meat from certified plants.

**Discussion**

Zip Lock type bags do not present the same degree of product protection as a more rigid cup with a snap lid. These baggies can easily pop open under moderate pressure, especially if the integrity of the seal is compromised by the presence of crab meat in the “zipper”. In a packing house, crab meat is quite likely to be caught in the zipper. As such, this type of bag cannot provide adequate protection to the consumer, and therefore cannot be approved for use as a final container for the sale of crab meat.

However, when we are in the field and see clams on a dock that are obviously intended for bait purposes, we will not enforce NSSP requirements at this time. If the sale of hard clams as bait begins to pose potential problems with the supply for human consumption, then we may have to reconsider this policy.

Whelks (conchs) are not a part of the NSSP, and when sold as bait do not need to be certified.