

Notes:

General

USDA-NASS (U.S. Department of Agriculture - National Agricultural Statistical Service) provides to the public information on the production and processing sectors of the U.S. catfish industry. Over the years this data has been printed and distributed. More recently, data from 1995 to present have been put onto the Internet for easy access at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/>, then search for 'catfish'. However, pre-1995 data are not available on-line. Thus the reason for this publication is to put the longer time series together in one place. In some presented tables and graphs, time series have been shortened, but data for the longer series is available upon request. All data in this publication, except for catfish feed prices, comes from USDA-NASS or the state equivalent MASS (Mississippi Agricultural Statistics Service). The following notes are the notes that accompany USDA's reports, "Catfish Production," "Catfish Processing," and MASS annual reports.

Producer Level Notes:

Catfish Production Estimation and Survey Procedures:

States used every available source of producer names to make their list as complete as possible. Great care was exercised to ensure that all operations were accounted for in the estimates.

Estimation Procedures:

Sound statistical methodology is employed to derive the estimates from reported data. All data are analyzed for unusual values. Data from each operation are compared to their own past operating profile and to trends from similar operations. Data for missing operations are estimated based on similar operations or historical data.

Reliability:

Catfish production estimates are based on a census of all known active producers and, therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

Revision policy:

Estimates for the previous year are subject to revision when current estimates are made. Revisions are the result of late or corrected data.

Definitions Used for Catfish Production:

Broodfish - Fish kept for egg production, including males. Broodfish produce the fertilized eggs which go to hatcheries. The most desirable size is 3 to 10 pounds or 4 to 6 years of age.

Large Foodsize - Fish weighing over 3 pounds.

Medium Foodsize - Fish weighing over one and one-half pounds to 3 pounds.

Small Foodsize - Fish weighing over three-fourths pound to one and one-half pounds.

Large Stockers - Fish weighing over 180 pounds to 750 pounds per 1,000 fish.

Small Stockers - Fish weighing over 60 pounds to 180 pounds per 1,000 fish.

Fingerlings/Fry - Fish weighing 60 pounds or less per 1,000 fish.

Processing Level Notes:

Catfish Processing Estimation and Survey Procedures:

Survey data for catfish processing are collected monthly from approximately 24 processors. All participating processors must meet the minimum criteria of having a capacity to process at least 2,000 pounds live weight of catfish per 8-hour shift. The survey is conducted entirely by NASS Headquarters' staff in Washington, D.C. NASS field offices, however, are responsible for keeping Headquarters informed of any new processing operations in their state to ensure that the survey coverage is as complete as possible. Processors are contacted either by mail or telephone. Diligent effort is made to ensure that all operations are accounted for in the estimate.

Estimation Procedures:

The "Catfish Processing" report refers strictly to farm-raised fish and excludes wild capture fish. Prior to summarization, questionnaires are compared with the previous month's reports for comparable placement of data, reasonable price levels, and reasonable inventory carryover given the sales and processing totals reported. Estimates are made for those processors whose reports are not available in time to be included in the release. These plants are identified by an asterisk on page 5 of each release of the "Catfish Processing" report. Estimates are normally based on the processor's previous report and current conditions. Published totals are a straight summation of the individual reports and estimated data. Price items are weighted by the associated volumes to compute weighted average prices. The published price for total whole fish, however, reflects an adjustment to the round and gutted only price to bring it to an equivalent dressed weight price. If a plant uses a fiscal accounting system, proration is used to convert reported data to a calendar month basis. Only national level estimates are published due to the limited number of plants involved. Generally, individual items are not published if there are less than three plants reporting, or if any one plant has 60 percent or more of the total. One unique feature of the "Catfish Processing" report is the listing of cooperating processors by name on each month's release. This feature originally was used to solicit industry cooperation in maintaining coverage, but it has continued because of the processors' overall acceptance of this policy.

Reliability:

Catfish processing estimates are based on a census of all known active processors and, therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness. Revision Policy: Revisions may be necessary following a review of late reports received from plants. Revisions of less than two percent of the existing published levels of any category will normally not be made.

Definitions Used For Catfish Processing:

Average Price Paid to Producers - Refers to the price of fish delivered to the processing plant door. Price includes charges for any services provided by the processing plant, such as seining and hauling, but does not include any adjustments based on year-end settlements.

Filletts - Boned sides of the fish, cut lengthwise away from the backbone. Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets and excludes any breaded product.

Fresh Fish - Fish intended for immediate consumption. Also referred to as "ice-packed."

Frozen Fish - Fish which are individually quick-frozen and glazed (IQF) or individually bagged and bulk frozen.

Nuggets - Small fillets cut from below the rib section of the fish. Usually includes breading or added ingredients.

Round and Guttled Only - Fish with no processing done or viscera only removed.

Round Weight - A term for fish live weight.

Steaks - Cross-section cuts from larger dressed fish.

Strips - Finger size pieces of fish cut from fillets. Usually includes breading or added ingredients.

Whole Dressed - Weight of whole fish with only head, viscera, and skin removed. Generally, 60 percent of the live weight remains as dressed fish.

Other catfish - Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets and excludes any breaded product.

Whole - Includes round and gutted and whole dressed fish

Other - Differs from "other" category used by USDA-NASS. Includes steaks, nuggets, and all products not already reported, including weight of breading and added ingredients.

Total Fresh - Includes whole, fillet, and other forms of fresh catfish.

Total Frozen - Includes whole, fillet, and other frozen catfish.

Total - Includes all fresh and total frozen catfish product forms.

Processing data were compiled in cooperation with the following processors:

America's Catch	Harvest Select Catfish, Inc.
Carolina Classics Catfish, LLC	Heartland Catfish
Consolidated Catfish Producers, LLC	Lake's Farm Raised Catfish, Inc.
*Delta Supreme Processing	Pride of the Pond
Farm Catch Catfish Processors, Inc.	Prime Line Inc.
Fish Breeders of Idaho, Inc.	Seabrook Seafood, Inc.
Freshwater Farms Products, LLC	Simmons Farm Raised Catfish, Inc.
Guidry Catfish, Inc.	Southern Pride Catfish, LLC
Haring's Pride Catfish	SouthFresh Farms
	Superior Fish Processors

* Estimated
(as of the Jan., 2009 Issue of NASS Catfish Processing)

Catfish Feed Deliveries

Survey Procedures: Survey data for catfish feed are collected from feed mills by the USDA-NASS Mississippi Field Office, who is responsible for ensuring survey coverage is as complete as possible. Mills are contacted by mail, telephone, fax, or internet. All cooperating feed mills have allowed NASS to publish data at the State, Regional, and National level.

Estimation Procedures: The "Catfish Feed Deliveries" report refers strictly to catfish feed delivered to bonafide catfish producers and excludes catfish feed delivered to producers of other species. The totals include both bagged and bulk feed. Prior to summarization, questionnaires are compared to previous reports for comparability. Estimates are made for feed mills whose reports are not available in time to be included in the release. Estimates are based on the mill's previous reports and current conditions. Published totals are a straight summation of the individual reports and estimated data.

If a mill uses a fiscal accounting system, proration is used to convert reported data to a calendar month basis.

Two unusual features of this report are worthy of note: (1) cooperating feed mills are listed by name, and (2) it is impossible for the public to infer the amount of catfish feed produced in each state. Since many mills deliver feed to more than one state and to growers of other species, any inferences about overall production per state or per mill are not valid.

Reliability: Catfish Feed estimates are based on a census of all known active and cooperating catfish feed mills, and therefore have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

Revision Policy: Revisions may be necessary in the following month's publication pending a review of late reports received from mills. Revisions to previous estimates are made to improve month to month relationships. Estimates for the previous month are subject to revision in all States each month when current estimates are made. In February, all monthly estimates for the previous year are reviewed and subject to revisions. The review is primarily based on data that may have been received after the original estimates were made.

Definitions Used for Catfish Feed Sales

Broodfish - Fish kept for egg production, including males.

Catfish Feed - For the purposes of this report catfish feed is defined as feed delivered to bonafide catfish producers. Thus, it is not the absolute total amount of feed produced or even sold by a mill. (Some catfish feed is sold to producers of other species of fish.) The definition includes medicated feed.

Catfish Feed for Foodsize Fish - Feed containing pellets larger than 1/8 of an inch.

Catfish Feed for Fingerlings/Broodfish - Feed containing pellets 1/8 of an inch or smaller.

Fingerlings - Smaller fish about 2 to 6 inches in length.

Foodsize Fish - Fish being grown commercially for human consumption. Optimum sizes at harvest depend on the market but are generally no lower than 3/4 pound but near one pound.

Data were compiled in cooperation with the following feed mills:

Alabama Feed Mill LLC	Land O' Lakes
Arkat Feeds	Melick Aqua Feed LLC
Cargill Animal Nutrition	Rangen, Inc.
Carolina Fish Feeds	Silver Cup
Delta Western	Southfresh Feeds
Fishbelt Feeds, Inc.	Star Milling Co.
Flint River Mills, Inc.	Topwater Feed Mill

Mississippi Catfish

Mississippi data was obtained from Mississippi Agricultural Statistics Supplements.

Methods for gathering data: Much of the data used to calculate statistics published by the NASS is collected by a part-time staff of telephone and field enumerators. This enumerator staff is employed by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and serves as outside contract workers for the USDA. The National Agricultural Statistics Service is recognized as one of the premier statistical organizations in the world. That

reputation rests in large part on the efforts of enumerators in every state in the U.S. The Mississippi Agricultural Statistics Service gratefully acknowledges the work and integrity of its own enumerators.