



FISHERIES SERIES

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Agriculture & Natural Resources

EXTENSION FISHERIES, SWINGLE HALL, AUBURN UNIVERSITY, AL 36849-5628

U.S. CATFISH INDUSTRY REVIEW AND OUTLOOK – March 2008

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- ▶ U.S. farm-raised catfish was sixth in the “Top 10” Seafoods Americans eat, with each American consuming an average of 0.87 pounds in 2007.
- ▶ The U.S. catfish industry has been on a contracting course during 2003 to 2007 but 2008 saw a halt in processing decline with a small increase over 2007 levels.
- ▶ Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi catfish water acres decreased in 2008 by 16,700 acres or -11% from 2007, to 133,600 acres.
- ▶ The number of catfish operations in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi decreased in 2008 by 75 operations or -10.5% from 2007, to 638 operations.
- ▶ Catfish round weight processing in 2008 was 510 million pounds, up 13.4 million pounds or +2.7% from 496 million pounds processed in 2007.
- ▶ The 2008 average price received by producers was 78.0 cents/lb, up 1.3 cents/lb from the 2007 average price. While the 2007 price began high and declined throughout the year, the 2008 price began low and increased until August when it leveled off for the rest of the year.
- ▶ Producer’s income in 2008 (\$399 million) was up \$19 million from 2007 (\$380 million).
- ▶ Foodsize fish inventories for January 2009 (+0.5%) were similar to those of January 2008 suggesting a similar pond bank price to producers. Stocker and fingerling inventories for January 2009 were lower than in January 2008, indicating that foodfish supply to processors may be low in late 2009 and 2010, which may pressure prices upward in late 2009 and 2010.
- ▶ Catfish feed prices (32% protein) in 2008 averaged \$388/ton, up \$99/ton or +34.2% over the 2007 average feed price (\$289/ton). In July 2008 feed prices peaked at \$440/ton and dropped by 19% to \$355/ton by December 2008.
- ▶ Imports of frozen catfish fillets increased by 21.1% in 2008 and imports now account for 49.8% of all sales of this product form in the U.S.

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