U.S. farm-raised catfish was sixth in the 2010 “Top 10” fish and seafood consumption list for Americans, who consumed 15.8 pounds of fish and seafood per year in total and 0.80 pound per year of catfish.

The U.S. catfish industry has been on a contracting course since a high mark in 2003 when 662 million pounds of round weight catfish was processed. In 2011, 334 million pounds were processed, down 138 million pounds (-29%) from 472 million pounds processed in 2010; and a 49% decrease since the peak 2003 level.

Imports of frozen catfish fillets increased by 66 million pounds (+48%) to 204 million pounds in 2011; and imports now account for 74% of all U.S. sales of frozen catfish fillet product.

Total U.S. water acreage in catfish production was 89,390 acres in Jan. 2012, down 10% from 2011. Current production acreage for the top three catfish producing states, Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi was down 8,500 acres (-9.7%) to 79,400 acres.

The number of U.S. catfish operations decreased by 191 operations (-21%) from Jan. 2010 to Jan. 2011 and is now at 718 operations.

In 2011, the average price received by producers was $1.177 per pound, up $0.375 per pound from the 2010 average price of $0.802 per pound. In 2011 there was a $0.274 per pound difference between high (August, $1.277 per pound) and low (January, $0.931 per pound) pond bank price received during the year.

Even with the reduction in processing volume, the higher prices received by producers increased the total producer income in 2011 ($393 million) by $14.9 million (+3.9%) over the 2010 ($378 million) level.
U.S. Farm-raised Catfish Industry – 2011 Highlights (Continued)...

► In-pond inventories of foodsize fish in Jan. 2012 was up 1.5% from Jan. 2011 levels. Stocker inventory was down 25% from Jan. 2011 levels. Fingerling weight inventory was down 38% from Jan. 2011 levels. Broodfish pounds were up 10%. These inventory levels indicate that foodfish supply to processors will be short for 2012 and 2013 if the 2011 round weight processing quantity level is to be maintained.

► Catfish feed prices (32% protein) in 2011 averaged $421/ton, up $67/ton (+19%) over the 2010 average feed price ($353/ton). In September 2011 feed prices peaked ($441/ton) while the low feed price in 2011 occurred in December ($399/ton).

For more detailed information go to: