

# CATFISH PROCESSING



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## Catfish Processing Down 1 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during December 2004 totaled 48.2 million pounds round weight, down 1 percent from December 2003. The average price paid to producers was 69.0 cents per pound for December 2004, up 0.1 cent from last month and 6.1 cents above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during December 2004 totaled 22.7 million pounds, up 1 percent from the comparable month in 2003. Total end of the month inventory increased 7 percent from last month and was up 12 percent from a year ago. Sales of fresh fish, at 7.96 million pounds, were down 7 percent from December 2003 and represented 35 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 14.8 million pounds, were up 6 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 65 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 16 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 60 percent, and the remaining 24 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The December 2004 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.22 per pound, an increase of 15 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.57 per pound, up 14 cents from last year. Prices for fresh fillets were up 23 cents at \$2.77 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.24 per pound, up 14 cents from December 2003. Prices for frozen whole fish were up 5 cents at \$1.96, and frozen fillets at \$2.62 per pound were up 19 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports of frozen, boneless, *Ictalurus*, *Pangasius* and *Siluriformes* catfish fillets for November 2004 totaled 1.58 million pounds, substantially above last year. Seventy-three percent of all imports were from Vietnam with the remainder coming from Cambodia and China. The *Ictalurus* (channel catfish) imports totaled 85.5 thousand pounds.

Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for November 2004 totaled 5.71 thousand pounds. Of the frozen fillets, 2.71 thousand pounds went to Canada and the remainder to the Bahamas. Fresh fillet exports totaled 50.2 thousand pounds, with 35.4 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest to the United Kingdom.

Import and export data are compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Census.

**Farm-Raised Catfish: Quantity Processed by Major Processors,  
United States, 2003-2004**

Month	Round Weight Processed					Percent of Previous Year  Percent
	Monthly		Percent of Previous Year  Percent	Cumulative		
	2003 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>	2004 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>		2003 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>	2004 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>	
Jan	55,523	53,849	97	55,523	53,849	97
Feb	55,461	54,173	98	110,984	108,022	97
Mar	65,007	60,272	93	175,991	168,294	96
Apr	57,105	53,896	94	233,096	222,190	95
May	58,424	52,324	90	291,520	274,514	94
Jun	52,441	50,155	96	343,961	324,669	94
Jul	54,089	51,055	94	398,050	375,724	94
Aug	54,153	53,295	98	452,203	429,019	95
Sep	51,885	51,329	99	504,088	480,348	95
Oct	57,652	52,396	91	561,740	532,744	95
Nov	51,246	49,536	97	612,986	582,280	95
Dec	48,518	48,170	99	661,504	630,450	95

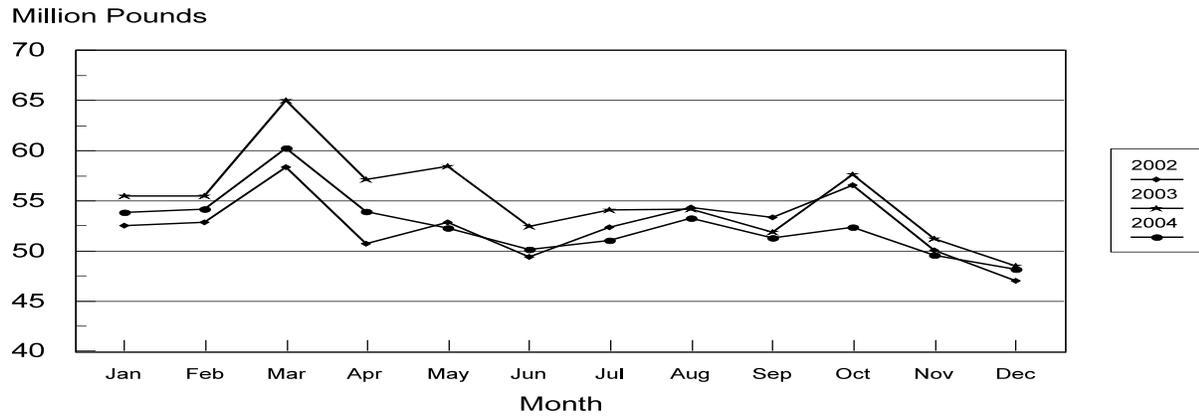
**Farm-Raised Catfish: Prices Paid to Producers by Processors  
and Imports, United States, 2003-2004**

Month	Price per Pound <sup>1</sup>		Change from Previous Year  Dollars	Imports <sup>2</sup>		Percent of Previous Year  Percent
	2003	2004		2004	2004	
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>		<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	
Jan	0.529	0.668	0.139	1,322	215	16
Feb	0.544	0.703	0.159	260	204	78
Mar	0.585	0.723	0.138	332	295	89
Apr	0.630	0.728	0.098	272	328	121
May	0.618	0.720	0.102	703	248	35
Jun	0.586	0.689	0.103	893	270	30
Jul	0.564	0.682	0.118	435	123	28
Aug	0.552	0.683	0.131	135	1,637	1,213
Sep	0.560	0.683	0.123	150	1,801	1,201
Oct	0.567	0.695	0.128	384	1,104	288
Nov	0.610	0.689	0.079	331	1,579	477
Dec	0.629	0.690	0.061	213		

<sup>1</sup> Price for 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 adjustments based on year-end settlements.

<sup>2</sup> Pounds of frozen boneless fillets. Includes Ictalurus, Pangasius and Siluriformes catfish. Data furnished by U.S. Bureau of Census.

### Catfish Processed United States 2002-2004



#### Catfish Processors: Sales Volume, Average Price, and Ending Inventory, United States, December 2003-2004

Item	Sales Volume		Average Price		Ending Inventory	
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>

Fresh Fish						
Whole						
Round & Guttled	817	807	0.90	1.04	*	*
Whole Dressed	1,876	1,897	1.63	1.77	*	*
Total	2,693	2,704	1.43	1.57	111	120
Other						
Steaks	88	84	1.98	2.12	*	*
Nuggets	787	776	1.20	1.27	63	92
Other <sup>1</sup>	259	235	2.84	3.01	*	*
Total	1,134	1,095	1.64	1.71	89	98
Fillets <sup>2</sup>	4,710	4,162	2.54	2.77	343	357
Total Fresh	8,537	7,961	2.07	2.22	543	575
Frozen Fish						
Whole Dressed	958	979	1.91	1.96	1,178	685
Other						
Steaks	146	107	1.80	1.92	91	123
Nuggets	2,798	3,068	0.96	0.96	2,331	1,575
Other <sup>1</sup>	1,128	1,061	2.48	2.78	979	971
Total	4,072	4,236	1.41	1.44	3,401	2,669
Fillets <sup>2</sup>	8,915	9,545	2.43	2.62	8,470	11,243
Total Frozen	13,945	14,760	2.10	2.24	13,049	14,597
Fresh & Frozen Fish						
Whole						
Round & Guttled	817	807	0.90	1.04	*	*
Whole Dressed	2,834	2,876	1.72	1.83	*	*
Total	3,651	3,683	1.55	1.67	1,289	805
Other						
Steaks	234	191	1.87	2.01	*	*
Nuggets	3,585	3,844	1.01	1.02	2,394	1,667
Other <sup>1</sup>	1,387	1,296	2.55	2.82	*	*
Total	5,206	5,331	1.46	1.50	3,490	2,767
Fillets <sup>2</sup>	13,625	13,707	2.47	2.67	8,813	11,600
Total Fresh & Frozen	22,482	22,721	2.09	2.23	13,592	15,172

\* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

<sup>1</sup> Includes all products not already reported including weight of breading and added ingredients.

<sup>2</sup> Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

### Catfish Processing Estimates

**Survey Procedures:** Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 21 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 Headquarter's 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 this release. 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.

Import and export data for frozen catfish fillets, which are compiled by the Department of Commerce, are also included in this report.

**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 2 percent of the existing published levels of any category will normally not be made.