

Catfish Processing



**USDA/NASS
ARKANSAS
FIELD OFFICE**

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**USDA/NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS SERVICE**

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Catfish Processing Down 1 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during March 2006 totaled 56.3 million pounds round weight, down 1 percent from March 2005. The average price paid to producers was 74.5 cents per pound for March 2006, up 1.6 cents from last month and 1.2 cents above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during March 2006 totaled 29.4 million pounds, up 7 percent from the comparable month in 2005. Total end of the month inventory decreased 8 percent from last month and was down 27 percent from a year ago. Sales of fresh fish, at 11.3 million pounds, were up 7 percent from March 2005 and represented 39 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 18.0 million pounds, were up 7 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 61 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 18 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 60 percent, and the remaining 22 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The March 2006 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.28 per pound, a decrease of 3 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.54 per pound, down 7 cents from last year. Prices for fresh fillets were up 4 cents at \$2.89 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.38 per pound, up 3 cents from March 2005. Prices for frozen whole fish were up 5 cents at \$2.03 and frozen fillets at \$2.75 per pound were up 5 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports of frozen, boneless, *Ictalurus*, *Pangasius* and *Siluriformes* catfish fillets for February 2006 totaled 2.49 million pounds, more than twice the amount imported last year. Thirty two percent of all imports were from China, 24 percent from Vietnam, with the remainder coming from Cambodia and Malaysia. The *Ictalurus* (channel catfish) imports totaled 417 thousand pounds.

Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for February 2006 totaled 15.3 thousand pounds, of which 12.4 thousand pounds went to Canada. Fresh fillet exports totaled 63.7 thousand pounds, with 42.2 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest to Mexico and 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, 2005-2006**

Month	Round Weight Processed					Percent of Previous Year
	Monthly		Percent of Previous Year	Cumulative		
	2005	2006		2005	2006	
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Jan	53,856	49,666	92	53,856	49,666	92
Feb	51,720	49,145	95	105,576	98,811	94
Mar	57,117	56,315	99	162,693	155,126	95
Apr	50,306			212,999		
May	51,552			264,551		
Jun	49,626			314,177		
Jul	47,241			361,418		
Aug	50,686			412,104		
Sep	47,151			459,255		
Oct	49,034			508,289		
Nov	46,674			554,963		
Dec	45,707			600,670		

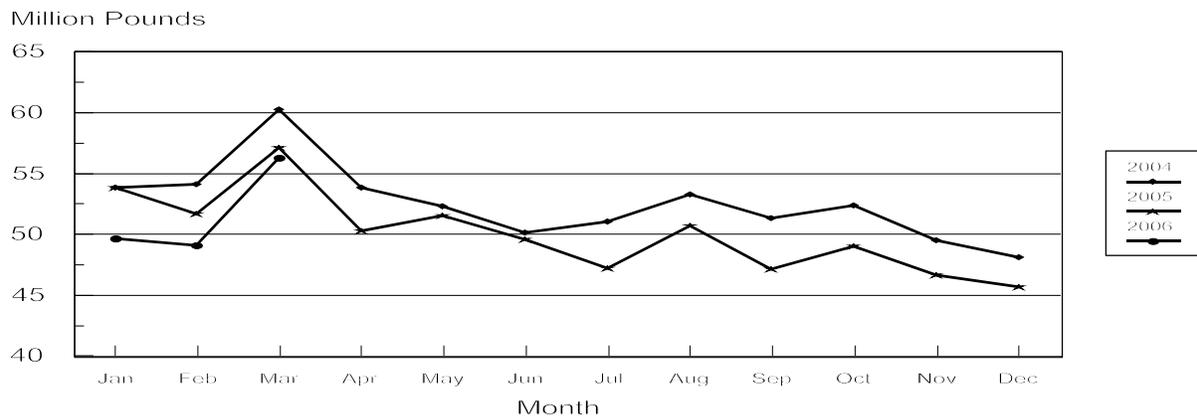
**Farm-Raised Catfish: Prices Paid to Producers by Processors
and Imports, United States, 2005-2006**

Month	Price per Pound ¹		Change from Previous Year	Imports ²		Percent of Previous Year
	2005	2006		2005	2006	
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Jan	0.725	0.726	0.001	1,383	2,644	191
Feb	0.731	0.729	-0.002	1,230	2,491	203
Mar	0.733	0.745	0.012	1,161		
Apr	0.725			2,198		
May	0.722			2,695		
Jun	0.721			2,538		
Jul	0.723			2,048		
Aug	0.724			2,684		
Sep	0.724			2,219		
Oct	0.724			4,062		
Nov	0.724			4,648		
Dec	0.726			3,239		

¹ 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.

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

**Catfish Processed
United States 2004-2006**



Catfish Processors: Sales Volume, Average Price, and Ending Inventory, United States, March 2005-2006

Item	Sales Volume		Average Price		Ending Inventory	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
	<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 & Gutted	1,570	2,205	1.26	1.20	*	*
Whole Dressed	1,832	1,819	1.85	1.87	*	*
Total	3,402	4,024	1.61	1.54	187	212
Other						
Steaks	103	89	2.15	2.17	*	*
Nuggets	973	908	1.30	1.26	136	111
Other ¹	294	217	3.05	3.09	*	*
Total	1,370	1,214	1.74	1.65	153	121
Fillets ²	5,795	6,090	2.85	2.89	632	363
Total Fresh	10,567	11,328	2.31	2.28	972	696
Frozen Fish						
Whole Dressed	1,166	1,331	1.98	2.03	1,213	1,047
Other						
Steaks	133	110	1.94	2.02	97	115
Nuggets	3,103	3,033	1.05	1.00	2,176	1,529
Other ¹	1,680	1,946	2.81	2.58	940	995
Total	4,916	5,089	1.68	1.63	3,213	2,639
Fillets ²	10,824	11,619	2.70	2.75	8,654	5,881
Total Frozen	16,906	18,039	2.35	2.38	13,080	9,567
Fresh & Frozen Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	1,570	2,205	1.26	1.20	*	*
Whole Dressed	2,998	3,150	1.90	1.94	*	*
Total	4,568	5,355	1.71	1.66	1,400	1,259
Other						
Steaks	236	199	2.03	2.09	*	*
Nuggets	4,076	3,941	1.11	1.06	2,312	1,640
Other ¹	1,974	2,163	2.85	2.63	*	*
Total	6,286	6,303	1.69	1.63	3,366	2,760
Fillets ²	16,619	17,709	2.75	2.80	9,286	6,244
Total Fresh & Frozen	27,473	29,367	2.34	2.34	14,052	10,263

* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

¹ Includes all products not already reported including weight of breadding and added ingredients.

² Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

Catfish Processing Estimates

Survey Procedures: Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 22 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.