

CATFISH PROCESSING



**USDA/NASS
ARKANSAS
FIELD OFFICE**

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**USDA/NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS SERVICE**

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Catfish Processing Down 5 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during February 2006 totaled 49.1 million pounds round weight, down 5 percent from February 2005. The average price paid to producers was 72.9 cents per pound for February 2006, up 0.3 cent from last month but 0.2 cent below a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during February 2006 totaled 27.3 million pounds, up 3 percent from the comparable month in 2005. Total end of the month inventory decreased 17 percent from last month and was down 16 percent from a year ago. Sales of fresh fish, at 9.46 million pounds, were down 6 percent from February 2005 and represented 35 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 17.9 million pounds, were up 9 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 65 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 17 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 60 percent, and the remaining 23 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The February 2006 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.25 per pound, a decrease of 1 cent from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.49 per pound, down 15 cents from last year. Prices for fresh fillets were up 12 cents at \$2.87 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.31 per pound, down 1 cent from February 2005. Prices for frozen whole fish were unchanged at \$2.01, while frozen fillets at \$2.69 per pound were up 3 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports of frozen, boneless, *Ictalurus*, *Pangasius* and *Siluriformes* catfish fillets for January 2006 totaled 2.64 million pounds, almost twice the amount imported last year. Fifty-one percent of all imports were from Vietnam with the remainder coming from China, Malaysia and Thailand. The *Ictalurus* (channel catfish) imports totaled 415 thousand pounds.

Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for January 2006 totaled 33.9 thousand pounds, of which 15.5 thousand pounds went to Canada. Fresh fillet exports totaled 73.5 thousand pounds, with 59.0 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest to Mexico.

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

Note: GAF Fisheries were added to the survey beginning February 2006.

**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 | | | 162,693 | | |
| 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 | | |

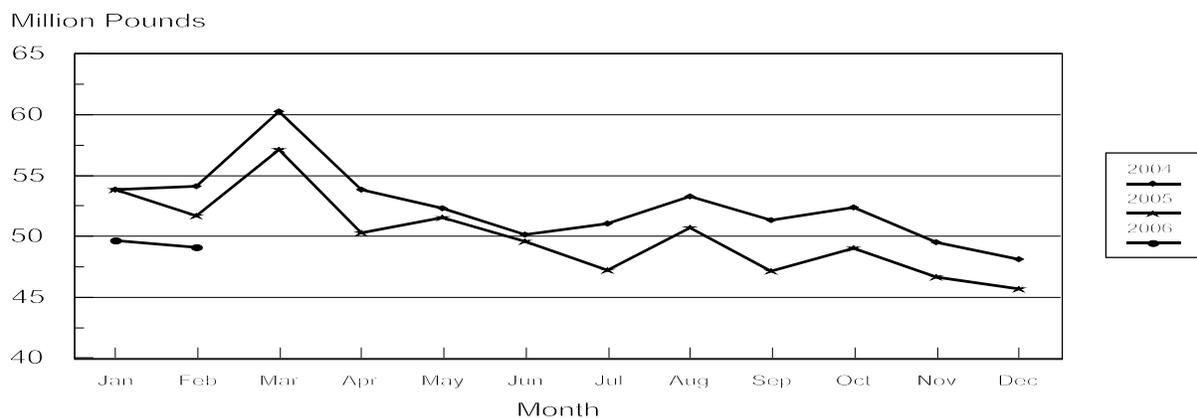
**Farm-Raised Catfish: Prices Paid to Producers by Processors
and Imports, United States, 2005-2006**

| 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 | | |
| Mar | 0.733 | | | 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 Silurformes 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, February 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 | 1,267 | 1,774 | 1.27 | 1.13 | * | * |
| Whole Dressed | 1,910 | 1,557 | 1.83 | 1.83 | * | * |
| Total | 3,177 | 3,331 | 1.64 | 1.49 | 170 | 209 |
| Other | | | | | | |
| Steaks | 97 | 79 | 2.12 | 2.17 | * | * |
| Nuggets | 961 | 781 | 1.29 | 1.27 | 107 | 109 |
| Other ¹ | 237 | 164 | 3.03 | 3.09 | * | * |
| Total | 1,295 | 1,024 | 1.67 | 1.63 | 130 | 126 |
| Fillets ² | 5,615 | 5,109 | 2.75 | 2.87 | 520 | 501 |
| Total Fresh | 10,087 | 9,464 | 2.26 | 2.25 | 820 | 836 |
| Frozen Fish | | | | | | |
| Whole Dressed | 1,117 | 1,256 | 2.01 | 2.01 | 800 | 1,058 |
| Other | | | | | | |
| Steaks | 108 | 103 | 1.96 | 2.06 | 73 | 87 |
| Nuggets | 3,068 | 3,214 | 1.03 | 0.91 | 1,977 | 1,245 |
| Other ¹ | 1,677 | 1,894 | 2.78 | 2.57 | 692 | 1,044 |
| Total | 4,853 | 5,211 | 1.66 | 1.54 | 2,742 | 2,376 |
| Fillets ² | 10,469 | 11,418 | 2.66 | 2.69 | 8,911 | 6,838 |
| Total Frozen | 16,439 | 17,885 | 2.32 | 2.31 | 12,453 | 10,272 |
| Fresh & Frozen Fish | | | | | | |
| Whole | | | | | | |
| Round & Gutted | 1,267 | 1,774 | 1.27 | 1.13 | * | * |
| Whole Dressed | 3,027 | 2,813 | 1.90 | 1.91 | * | * |
| Total | 4,294 | 4,587 | 1.74 | 1.64 | 970 | 1,267 |
| Other | | | | | | |
| Steaks | 205 | 182 | 2.04 | 2.11 | * | * |
| Nuggets | 4,029 | 3,995 | 1.09 | 0.98 | 2,084 | 1,354 |
| Other ¹ | 1,914 | 2,058 | 2.81 | 2.61 | * | * |
| Total | 6,148 | 6,235 | 1.66 | 1.55 | 2,872 | 2,502 |
| Fillets ² | 16,084 | 16,527 | 2.69 | 2.75 | 9,431 | 7,339 |
| Total Fresh & Frozen | 26,526 | 27,349 | 2.30 | 2.29 | 13,273 | 11,108 |

* 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.