

# Catfish Processing

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Released January 19, 2010, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture. For information on *Catfish Processing* call Chris Hawthorn at (202) 720-0585, office hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET.

## Catfish Processing Up 3 Percent from Last Year

Farm-raised catfish processed during December 2009 totaled 33.8 million pounds round weight, up 3 percent from December 2008. The average price paid to producers was 76.3 cents per pound for December 2009, down 0.2 cent from last month and 5.8 cents below a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during December 2009 totaled 16.4 million pounds, up 3 percent from the comparable month in 2008. The total end of the month inventory increased slightly from last month but was down 7 percent from a year ago. Sales of fresh fish, at 6.09 million pounds, were down 1 percent from December 2008 and represented 37 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 10.3 million pounds, were up 6 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 63 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 18 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 61 percent, and the remaining 21 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The December 2009 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.38 per pound, down 10 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.57 per pound, down 9 cents from December 2008. Prices for fresh fillets were down 13 cents from a year ago at \$3.18 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.51 per pound, down 9 cents from December 2008. Prices for frozen whole dressed fish were up 2 cents at \$2.22 and frozen fillets at \$2.91 per pound were down 13 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports for consumption of *Ictalurus* spp., *Pangasius* spp., and other catfish of the order Siluriformes for November 2009 totaled 12.8 million pounds, up 106 percent from the amount imported in November 2008. Imports were from Cambodia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Thailand and Vietnam. The *Ictalurus* spp. imports totaled 2.14 million pounds, which were from Canada, China and Mexico.

Fresh, boneless catfish fillet exports totaled 59.1 thousand pounds, with 58.1 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest going to Equatorial Guinea. Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for November 2009 totaled 30.2 thousand pounds, going to the British Virgin Islands, Kuwait, Mexico, the Netherlands Antilles and Trinidad and Tobago.

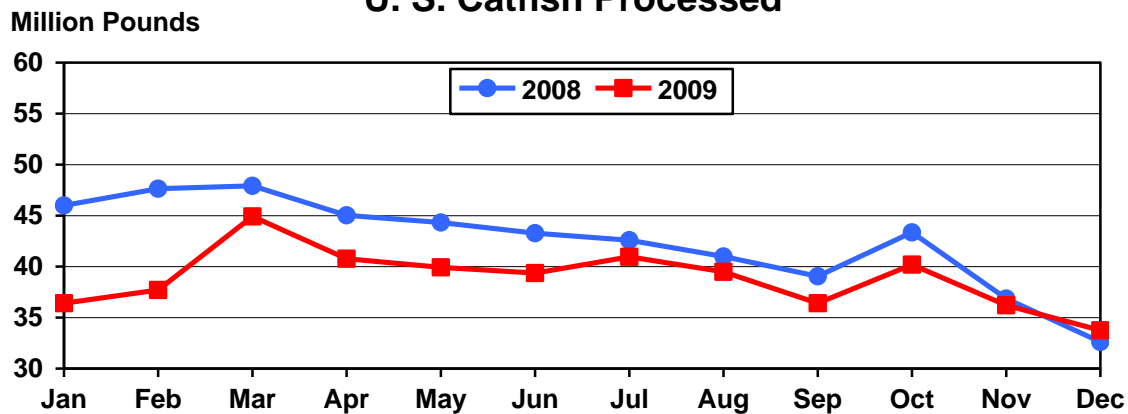
Import and export data are compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Farm-Raised Catfish: Quantity Processed and Prices  
Received by Producers, by Month, United States, 2008-2009**

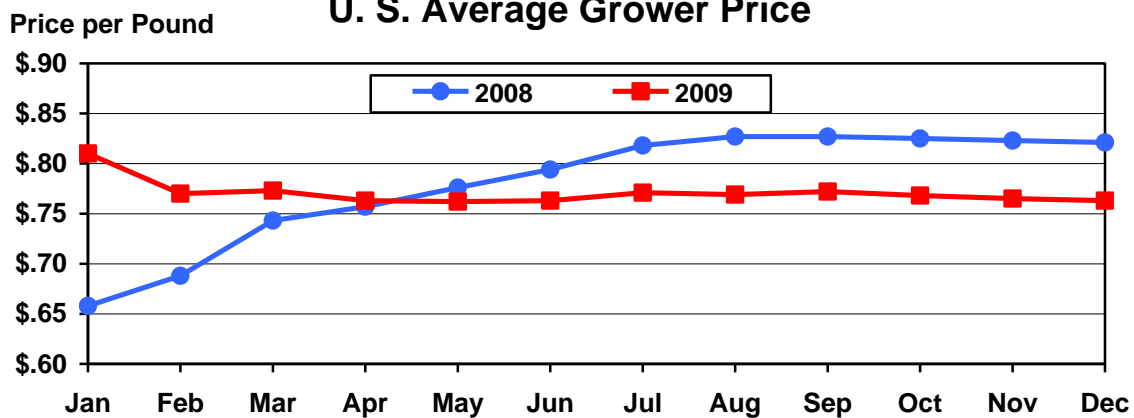
Month	Round Weight Processed								
	Monthly			Cumulative			Price per Pound <sup>1</sup>		
	2008	2009	Pct of 2008	2008	2009	Pct of 2008	2008	2009	Change from 2008
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>
Jan	45,992	36,406	79	45,992	36,406	79	0.658	0.810	0.152
Feb	47,634	37,702	79	93,626	74,108	79	0.688	0.770	0.082
Mar	47,908	44,912	94	141,534	119,020	84	0.743	0.773	0.030
Apr	45,018	40,768	91	186,552	159,788	86	0.757	0.763	0.006
May	44,326	39,925	90	230,878	199,713	87	0.776	0.762	-0.014
Jun	43,265	39,370	91	274,143	239,083	87	0.794	0.763	-0.031
Jul	42,583	40,966	96	316,726	280,049	88	0.818	0.771	-0.047
Aug	40,985	39,490	96	357,711	319,539	89	0.827	0.769	-0.058
Sep	39,057	36,408	93	396,768	355,947	90	0.827	0.772	-0.055
Oct	43,344	40,191	93	440,112	396,138	90	0.825	0.768	-0.057
Nov	36,869	36,211	98	476,981	432,349	91	0.823	0.765	-0.058
Dec	32,616	33,751	103	509,597	466,100	91	0.821	0.763	-0.058

<sup>1</sup> Quantity processed by major processors and the prices received for fish delivered to the processing plant's 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.

### U. S. Catfish Processed



### U. S. Average Grower Price



**Catfish Processors: Sales Volume and Average Price  
by Month, United States, 2008-2009**

Item <sup>1</sup>	Sales Volume			Average Price <sup>2</sup>		
	Dec 2008	Nov 2009	Dec 2009	Dec 2008	Nov 2009	Dec 2009
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>	<i>Dollars per Pound</i>
Fresh Fish						
Whole						
Round & Guttled	1,158	1,132	1,153	1.17	1.09	1.10
Whole Dressed	1,359	1,220	1,305	2.02	1.95	1.93
Total	2,517	2,352	2,458	1.66	1.57	1.57
Other						
Steaks	71	80	82	2.46	2.44	2.41
Nuggets	471	487	474	1.38	1.36	1.35
Other	26	49	52	3.76	3.37	3.38
Total	568	616	608	1.62	1.66	1.67
Fillet	3,075	2,989	3,020	3.31	3.18	3.18
Total Fresh	6,160	5,957	6,086	2.48	2.39	2.38
Frozen Fish						
Whole Dressed	576	640	503	2.20	2.18	2.22
Other						
Steaks	56	45	48	2.29	2.33	2.36
Nuggets	1,983	1,811	2,117	1.15	1.18	1.12
Other	670	706	613	3.03	3.08	2.93
Total	2,709	2,562	2,778	1.64	1.72	1.54
Fillet	6,472	6,584	7,065	3.04	2.95	2.91
Total Frozen	9,757	9,786	10,346	2.60	2.58	2.51
Fresh & Frozen Fish						
Whole						
Round & Guttled	1,158	1,132	1,153	1.17	1.09	1.10
Whole Dressed	1,935	1,860	1,808	2.07	2.03	2.01
Total	3,093	2,992	2,961	1.76	1.70	1.68
Other						
Steaks	127	125	130	2.39	2.40	2.39
Nuggets	2,454	2,298	2,591	1.19	1.22	1.16
Other	696	755	665	3.06	3.10	2.97
Total	3,277	3,178	3,386	1.64	1.71	1.56
Fillet	9,547	9,573	10,085	3.13	3.02	2.99
Total Fresh & Frozen	15,917	15,743	16,432	2.55	2.51	2.46

<sup>1</sup> For further detail, please refer to the terms and definitions section of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Gross value f.o.b. plant.

**Catfish Processors: Ending Inventory  
by Month, United States, 2008-2009**

Item <sup>1</sup>	Ending Inventory		
	Dec 2008	Nov 2009	Dec 2009
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>
Fresh Fish			
Whole			
Round & Gutted	*	*	*
Whole Dressed	*	*	*
Total	149	181	114
Other			
Steaks	*	*	*
Nuggets	61	47	42
Other	*	*	*
Total	66	55	44
Fillet	311	428	356
Total Fresh	526	664	514
Frozen Fish			
Whole Dressed	668	568	713
Other			
Steaks	*	*	*
Nuggets	1,685	2,106	2,200
Other	*	*	*
Total	2,997	3,137	3,014
Fillet	11,329	9,964	10,125
Total Frozen	14,994	13,669	13,852
Fresh & Frozen Fish			
Whole			
Round & Gutted	*	*	*
Whole Dressed	*	*	*
Total	817	749	827
Other			
Steaks	*	*	*
Nuggets	1,746	2,153	2,242
Other	*	*	*
Total	3,063	3,192	3,058
Fillet	11,640	10,392	10,481
Total Fresh & Frozen	15,520	14,333	14,366

\* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

<sup>1</sup> For further detail, please refer to the terms and definitions section of this report.

**Catfish: Imports, by Month, United States, 2008-2009**

Month	Imports <sup>1</sup>					
	Ictalurus spp.			Total <sup>2</sup>		
	2008	2009	Percent of 2008	2008	2009	Percent of 2008
	<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	2,944	2,344	80	9,666	9,819	102
Feb	2,575	1,225	48	9,603	6,527	68
Mar	2,040	972	48	7,884	8,942	113
Apr	3,040	1,364	45	10,492	8,548	81
May	2,864	1,659	58	10,151	11,592	114
Jun	1,758	1,088	62	11,299	10,577	94
Jul	1,202	1,849	154	8,674	10,765	124
Aug	1,315	1,210	92	6,994	11,711	167
Sep	987	1,385	140	6,462	12,541	194
Oct	579	1,584	274	7,188	13,857	193
Nov	1,374	2,144	156	6,198	12,783	206
Dec	2,425			7,817		

<sup>1</sup> Data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>2</sup> Includes freshwater imports for consumption of *Ictalurus* spp., *Pangasius* spp., and other catfish of the order Siluriformes.

**Catfish: Exports, by Month, United States, 2008-2009**

Month	Exports <sup>1</sup>					
	Fresh			Frozen		
	2008	2009	Percent of 2008	2008	2009	Percent of 2008
	<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	134.6	87.0	65	23.1	0.0	
Feb	71.6	65.1	91	0.0	0.0	
Mar	106.3	65.1	61	11.9	50.6	425
Apr	72.3	47.5	66	1.2	12.8	1,067
May	57.0	79.1	139	0.0	14.2	
Jun	71.0	63.8	90	10.9	21.4	196
Jul	52.1	68.6	132	14.6	20.5	140
Aug	62.9	91.8	146	12.0	12.4	103
Sep	62.6	50.6	81	3.5	17.7	506
Oct	74.6	138.0	185	8.0	43.4	543
Nov	122.6	59.1	48	1.2	30.2	2,517
Dec	74.4			7.3		

<sup>1</sup> Data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.

## Reliability of Catfish Processing Estimates

**Survey Procedures:** Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 18 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 Headquarters staff in Washington, D.C. However, NASS field offices are responsible for informing Headquarters staff of any new processing operations in their state to ensure complete survey coverage. Processors are contacted either by mail, telephone, fax or internet. 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 a 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 6 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, prorating 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.

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 catfish, which are compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, are also included in this report.

**Revision Policy:** Revisions may be necessary in the previous month's publication based on late reports received from plants. These revisions are made to improve month to month relationships. In February, all monthly estimates for the previous year are reviewed and subject to revision. This review is primarily based on data that may have been received after the original estimates were published.

**Reliability:** 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.

### Processing data were compiled in cooperation with the following processors:

America's Catch, Inc.  
Carolina Classics Catfish, LLC  
Consolidated Catfish Producers, LLC  
Delta Supreme Fish Processors  
Fish Breeders of Idaho, Inc.  
Farm Catch Catfish Processors, Inc.  
Freshwater Farms Products, LLC  
Guidry Catfish, Inc.  
Haring's Pride Catfish

Harvest Select Catfish, Inc.  
Heartland Catfish  
Lake's Farm Raised Catfish Inc.  
Pride of the Pond  
Prime Line Inc.  
Seabrook Seafood, Inc.  
Simmons Farm Raised Catfish, Inc.  
SouthFresh Farms  
Superior Fish Products

## Terms and Definitions Used for Catfish Processing Estimates:

**Average Price Paid to Producers** - Refers to the price of 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 any adjustments based on year-end settlements.

**Fillets** - Boned sides of the fish, cut lengthwise away from the backbone. Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

**Fresh Fish** - Fish intended for immediate consumption. Also referred to as ice-packed.

**Frozen Fish** - Fish which are individually quick frozen and glazed (IQF) or individually bagged and bulk frozen.

***Ictalurus spp.*** - All species under this genus, which includes channel catfish, blue catfish, and other catfish species.

**Nuggets** - Small fillets cuts from below the rib section of the fish and usually includes weight of breading and added ingredients.

**Other Products** - Includes steaks, nuggets, and all other products not separately reported including the weight of breading and added ingredients.

***Pangasius spp.*** - All species under this genus, which includes basa, tra, stuchi catfish, and other catfish species.

**Round & Guttled Only** - Fish with no processing done or viscera only removed.

**Round Weight** - The term for a fish's live weight.

**Siluriformes** - The scientific order which contains all families of catfish.

**Steaks** - Cross-section cuts from larger dressed fish.

**Strips** - Finger size pieces of fish cut from fillets and usually includes breading or added ingredients.

**Whole Dressed** - Weight of whole fish with only head, viscera, and skin removed. Generally, 60 percent of the live weight remains as dressed fish.

## Information Contacts

Listed below are the commodity specialists in the Livestock Branch of the National Agricultural Statistics Service to contact for additional information.

Dan Kerestes, Chief, Livestock Branch .....(202) 720-3570

Bruce Boess, Head, Poultry and Specialty Commodities Section.....(202) 720-4447

Doug Bounds - Poultry Slaughter, Turkey Hatchery, Turkeys Raised.....(202) 690-3237

David Colwell - Cold Storage .....(202) 720-8784

Chris Hawthorn - Catfish Processing, Catfish Production, Trout Production,  
Census of Aquaculture, Egg Products, Mink.....(202) 720-0585

Kim Linonis - Layers, Eggs .....(202) 690-8632

Troy Marshall - Broiler Hatchery, Chicken Hatchery, Honey .....(202) 720-3244

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