



Catfish Processing

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Catfish Processing Down 9 Percent from Last Year

Farm-raised catfish processed during March 2012 totaled 27.7 million pounds round weight, down 9 percent from March 2011. The average price paid to producers was \$1.20 per pound for March 2012, down 2.8 cents from last month but 12.6 cents above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during March 2012 totaled 14.8 million pounds, down 18 percent from the comparable month in 2011. Sales of fresh fish, at 5.26 million pounds, were down 13 percent from March 2011 and represented 36 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 9.49 million pounds, were down 21 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 64 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 20 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 57 percent, and the remaining 23 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products. The total end of the month inventory decreased 4 percent from last month but was up 77 percent from a year ago.

The total fresh and frozen average price for March 2012 was \$3.45, up 24 cents from a year ago. The March 2012 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$3.41 per pound, up 29 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$2.42 per pound, up 25 cents from March 2011. Prices for fresh fillets were up 50 cents from a year ago at \$4.68 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$3.47 per pound, up 21 cents from March 2011. Prices for frozen whole dressed fish were up 38 cents at \$3.06 and frozen fillets at \$4.22 per pound were up 47 cents from a year ago.

Imports for consumption of *Ictalurus* spp., *Pangasius* spp., and other catfish of the order Siluriformes for February 2012 totaled 15.1 million pounds, up 9 percent from the amount imported in February 2011. Imports were from Canada, China, the Netherlands, Mexico, and Vietnam. The *Ictalurus* spp. imports totaled 1.32 million pounds, which were from China.

Fresh catfish fillet exports totaled 120 thousand pounds, with 37.1 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest going to the Bahamas, Mexico, and Vietnam. Exports of frozen catfish fillets reported for February 2012 totaled 11.1 thousand pounds, going to the Bahamas, Canada, and the Islands of Turks and Caicos.

Import and export data are compiled by the United States Census Bureau.

Farm-Raised Catfish Processed and Prices Paid to Producers by Month – United States: 2011-2012

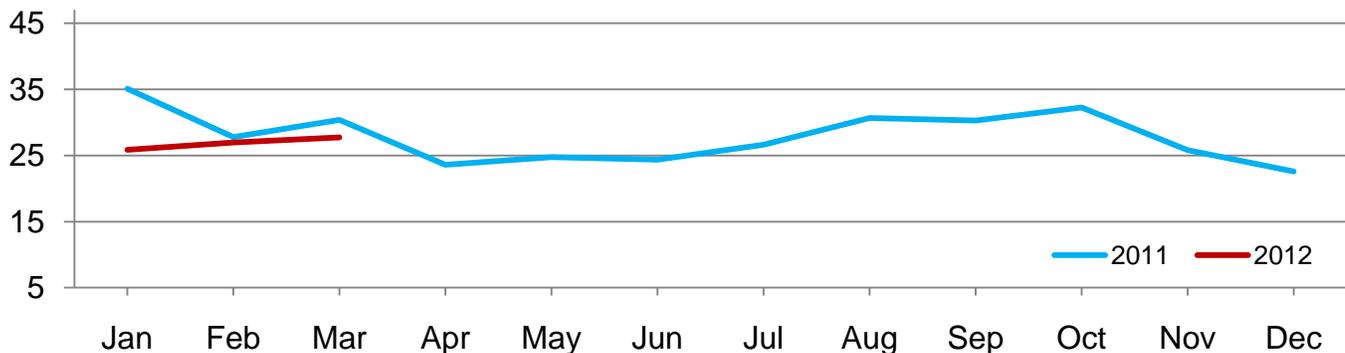
[Blank cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun.]

Month	Round weight processed								
	Monthly			Cumulative			Price per pound ¹		
	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	Change from 2011
(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(dollars)	(dollars)	(dollars)	
January	35,076	25,843	74	35,076	25,843	74	0.931	1.248	0.317
February	27,782	26,950	97	62,858	52,793	84	1.003	1.229	0.226
March	30,372	27,709	91	93,230	80,502	86	1.075	1.201	0.126
April	23,605			116,835			1.141		
May	24,749			141,584			1.169		
June	24,337			165,921			1.231		
July	26,595			192,516			1.252		
August	30,680			223,196			1.277		
September	30,271			253,467			1.275		
October	32,264			285,731			1.262		
November	25,814			311,545			1.257		
December	22,598			334,143			1.251		

¹ Quantity processed by major processors and the prices paid 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. Price also includes any discounts or premiums for size or quality, but does not include adjustments based on year-end settlements.

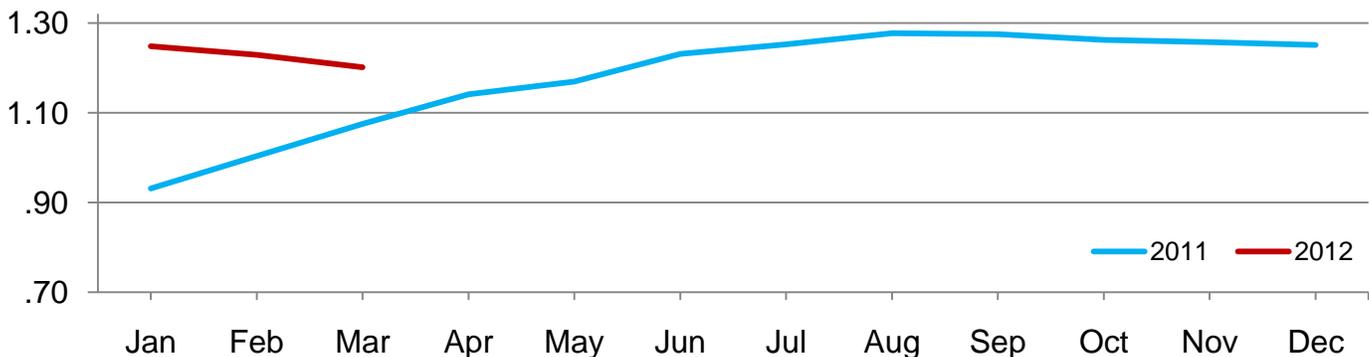
Catfish Processed – United States

Million pounds



Average Catfish Grower Price – United States

Dollars per pound



**Processed Farm-Raised Catfish Sales Volume and Average Price by Month – United States:
2011 and 2012**

Item ¹	Sales volume			Average price ²		
	March 2011	February 2012	March 2012	March 2011	February 2012	March 2012
	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(dollars per pound)	(dollars per pound)	(dollars per pound)
Fresh fish						
Whole						
Round and gutted	1,353	1,136	1,166	1.64	1.80	1.78
Whole dressed	1,261	1,187	1,190	2.63	2.94	2.93
Total	2,614	2,323	2,356	2.17	2.44	2.42
Other						
Steaks	58	45	46	2.92	3.54	3.52
Nuggets	460	446	459	1.78	1.82	1.82
Other	38	24	24	4.28	4.77	4.78
Total	556	515	529	2.07	2.11	2.10
Fillets	2,880	2,349	2,378	4.18	4.68	4.68
Total fresh	6,050	5,187	5,263	3.12	3.42	3.41
Frozen fish						
Whole dressed	816	634	621	2.68	2.94	3.06
Other						
Steaks	71	56	39	2.90	3.15	3.23
Nuggets	2,203	1,943	2,225	1.48	1.39	1.48
Other	1,443	645	546	3.82	4.09	3.83
Total	3,717	2,644	2,810	2.42	2.09	1.96
Fillets	7,401	5,982	6,056	3.75	4.25	4.22
Total frozen	11,934	9,260	9,487	3.26	3.54	3.47
Fresh and frozen fish						
Whole						
Round and gutted	1,353	1,136	1,166	1.64	1.80	1.78
Whole dressed	2,077	1,821	1,811	2.65	2.94	2.97
Total	3,430	2,957	2,977	2.29	2.54	2.55
Other						
Steaks	129	101	85	2.91	3.32	3.39
Nuggets	2,663	2,389	2,684	1.53	1.47	1.54
Other	1,481	669	570	3.83	4.11	3.87
Total	4,273	3,159	3,339	2.37	2.09	1.98
Fillets	10,281	8,331	8,434	3.87	4.37	4.35
Total fresh and frozen fish	17,984	14,447	14,750	3.21	3.50	3.45

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

² Gross value FOB plant.

Processed Farm-Raised Catfish Ending Inventory by Month – United States: 2011 and 2012

Item ¹	Ending inventory		
	March 2011 (1,000 pounds)	February 2012 (1,000 pounds)	March 2012 (1,000 pounds)
Fresh fish			
Whole			
Round and gutted	(D)	(D)	(D)
Whole dressed	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total	123	155	116
Other			
Steaks	(D)	(D)	(D)
Nuggets	73	48	39
Other	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total	75	56	42
Fillets	313	316	270
Total fresh	511	527	428
Frozen fish			
Whole dressed	529	372	388
Other			
Steaks	(D)	(D)	(D)
Nuggets	1,751	1,274	873
Other	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total	2,142	1,684	1,332
Fillets	3,286	9,298	9,303
Total frozen	5,957	11,354	11,023
Fresh and frozen fish			
Whole			
Round and gutted	(D)	(D)	(D)
Whole dressed	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total	652	527	504
Other			
Steaks	(D)	(D)	(D)
Nuggets	1,824	1,322	912
Other	(D)	(D)	(D)
Total	2,217	1,740	1,374
Fillets	3,599	9,614	9,573
Total fresh and frozen fish	6,468	11,881	11,451

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

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

Catfish Imports by Month – United States: 2011-2012

[Data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Month	Imports					
	Ictalurus spp.			Total ¹		
	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011
	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)
January	1,301	2,028	156	16,276	25,551	157
February	1,015	1,317	130	13,790	15,086	109
March	211			9,133		
April	216			13,325		
May	113			16,314		
June	11			14,643		
July	19			18,034		
August	39			18,383		
September	171			18,576		
October	838			20,335		
November	1,372			22,262		
December	2,113			22,608		

¹ Includes freshwater imports for consumption of *Ictalurus* spp., *Pangasius* spp., and other catfish of the order Siluriformes.

Catfish Exports by Month – United States: 2011-2012

[Data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Month	Exports					
	Fresh			Frozen		
	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011	2011	2012	2012 as percent of 2011
	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)	(1,000 pounds)	(1,000 pounds)	(percent)
January	53.9	85.2	158	10.2	2.7	26
February	56.7	120.2	212	13.2	11.1	84
March	42.3			2.2		
April	38.7			-		
May	41.0			3.0		
June	38.0			1.8		
July	150.0			7.8		
August	72.7			-		
September	29.4			1.1		
October	55.9			3.6		
November	42.7			2.7		
December	51.4			3.6		

- Represents zero.

Statistical Methodology

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 National Agricultural Statistics Service (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.

Estimating 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 United States 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.	Harvest Select Catfish, Inc.
Carolina Classics Catfish, LLC	Heartland Catfish
Consolidated Catfish Producers, LLC	Lake's Farm Raised Catfish, Inc.
Delta Supreme Fish Processors	Pride of the Pond
Fish Breeders of Idaho, Inc.	Prime Line, Inc.
*Farm Catch Catfish Processors, Inc.	Seabrook Seafood, Inc.
Freshwater Farms Products, LLC	Simmons Farm Raised Catfish, Inc.
Guidry Catfish, Inc.	SouthFresh Farms
Harings Pride Catfish	Superior Fish Products

*Estimated

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. E-mail inquiries may be sent to nass@nass.usda.gov

Dan Kerestes, Chief, Livestock Branch	(202) 720-3570
Bruce Boess, Head, Poultry and Specialty Commodities Section	(202) 720-4447
Cody Brokmeyer – Poultry Slaughter, Turkey Hatchery, Turkeys Raised	(202) 690-3237
David Colwell – Cold Storage	(202) 720-8784
LaKeya Jones – Catfish Processing, Catfish Production, Trout Production, Census of Aquaculture, Honey, Egg Products, Mink	(202) 720-0585
Kim Linonis – Layers, Eggs	(202) 690-8632
Miste Salmon – Broiler Hatchery, Chicken Hatchery	(202) 720-3244

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For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Agricultural Statistics Hotline at (800) 727-9540, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, or e-mail: nass@nass.usda.gov.

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