

# Catfish Processing

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Released April 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 4 Percent from Last Year

Farm-raised catfish processed during March 2010 totaled 46.7 million pounds round weight, up 4 percent from March 2009. The average price paid to producers was 78.5 cents per pound for March 2010, up 2.0 cents from last month and 1.2 cents above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during March 2010 totaled 22.4 million pounds, down 1 percent from the comparable month in 2009. Sales of fresh fish, at 8.46 million pounds, were up 4 percent from March 2009 and represented 38 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 14.0 million pounds, were down 4 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 62 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 21 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 59 percent, and the remaining 20 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products. The total end of the month inventory increased 2 percent from last month and was up 9 percent from a year ago.

The total fresh & frozen average price for March 2010 was \$2.42, down 13 cents from a year ago. The average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.29 per pound, down 18 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.50 per pound, down 15 cents from March 2009. Prices for fresh fillets were down 6 cents from a year ago at \$3.18 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.50 per pound, down 10 cents from March 2009. Prices for frozen whole dressed fish were up 4 cents at \$2.22 and frozen fillets at \$2.87 per pound were down 12 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports for consumption of *Ictalurus* spp., *Pangasius* spp., and other catfish of the order Siluriformes for February 2010 totaled 10.4 million pounds, up 60 percent from the amount imported in February 2009. Imports were from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Mexico, Spain, Thailand, and Vietnam. The *Ictalurus* spp. imports totaled 2.15 million pounds, which were from China, Indonesia, and Mexico.

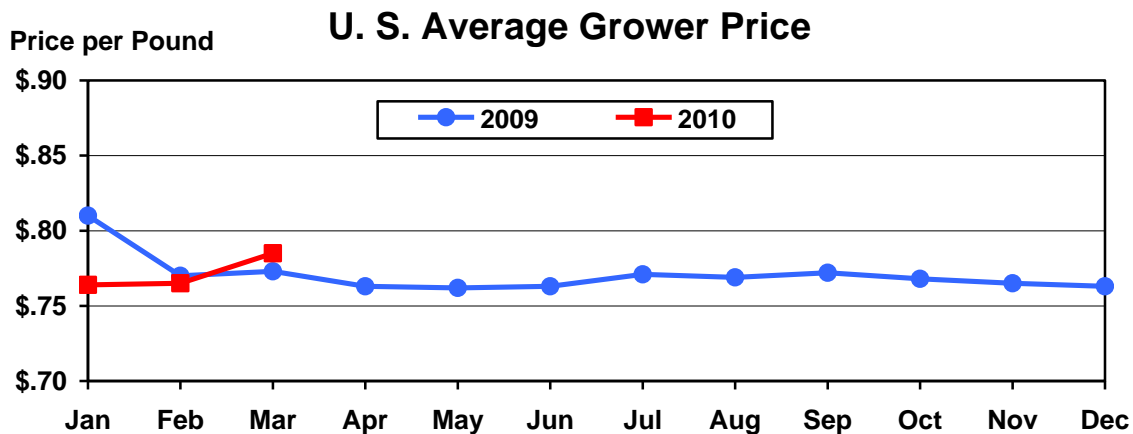
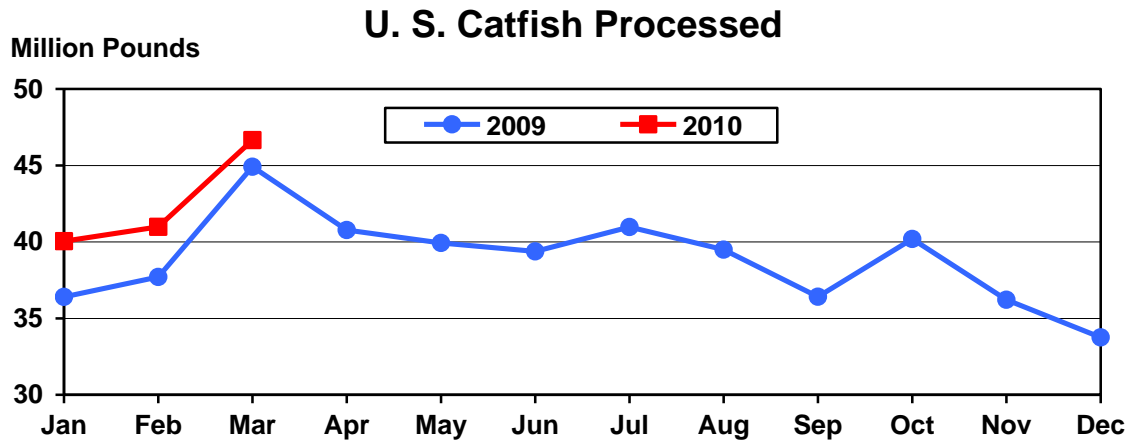
Fresh, boneless catfish fillet exports totaled 58.2 thousand pounds, with 45.0 thousand pounds going to Canada and the rest going to China and Equatorial Guinea. Exports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets reported for February 2010 totaled 33.8 thousand pounds, going to the British Virgin Islands, China-Taipei, the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Uruguay.

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, 2009-2010**

| Month | Round Weight Processed |                     |                |                     |                     |                |                              |                |                  |
|-------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
|       | Monthly                |                     |                | Cumulative          |                     |                | Price per Pound <sup>1</sup> |                |                  |
|       | 2009                   | 2010                | Pct of 2009    | 2009                | 2010                | Pct of 2009    | 2009                         | 2010           | Change from 2009 |
|       | <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   | 36,406                 | 40,042              | 110            | 36,406              | 40,042              | 110            | 0.810                        | 0.764          | -0.046           |
| Feb   | 37,702                 | 40,977              | 109            | 74,108              | 81,019              | 109            | 0.770                        | 0.765          | -0.005           |
| Mar   | 44,912                 | 46,650              | 104            | 119,020             | 127,669             | 107            | 0.773                        | 0.785          | 0.012            |
| Apr   | 40,768                 |                     |                | 159,788             |                     |                | 0.763                        |                |                  |
| May   | 39,925                 |                     |                | 199,713             |                     |                | 0.762                        |                |                  |
| Jun   | 39,370                 |                     |                | 239,083             |                     |                | 0.763                        |                |                  |
| Jul   | 40,966                 |                     |                | 280,049             |                     |                | 0.771                        |                |                  |
| Aug   | 39,490                 |                     |                | 319,539             |                     |                | 0.769                        |                |                  |
| Sep   | 36,408                 |                     |                | 355,947             |                     |                | 0.772                        |                |                  |
| Oct   | 40,191                 |                     |                | 396,138             |                     |                | 0.768                        |                |                  |
| Nov   | 36,211                 |                     |                | 432,349             |                     |                | 0.765                        |                |                  |
| Dec   | 33,751                 |                     |                | 466,100             |                     |                | 0.763                        |                |                  |

<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.



**Catfish Processors: Sales Volume and Average Price  
by Month, United States, 2009-2010**

| Item <sup>1</sup>    | Sales Volume        |                     |                     | Average Price <sup>2</sup> |                          |                          |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                      | Mar 2009            | Feb 2010            | Mar 2010            | Mar 2009                   | Feb 2010                 | Mar 2010                 |
|                      | <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      | 1,380               | 1,580               | 1,919               | 1.10                       | 1.06                     | 1.04                     |
| Whole Dressed        | 1,757               | 1,576               | 1,824               | 2.02                       | 1.87                     | 1.92                     |
| Total                | 3,137               | 3,156               | 3,743               | 1.65                       | 1.49                     | 1.50                     |
| Other                |                     |                     |                     |                            |                          |                          |
| Steaks               | 91                  | 106                 | 112                 | 2.45                       | 2.39                     | 2.38                     |
| Nuggets              | 652                 | 590                 | 629                 | 1.34                       | 1.33                     | 1.34                     |
| Other                | 54                  | 39                  | 66                  | 3.49                       | 3.59                     | 3.38                     |
| Total                | 797                 | 735                 | 807                 | 1.61                       | 1.60                     | 1.65                     |
| Fillets              | 4,196               | 4,221               | 3,905               | 3.24                       | 3.10                     | 3.18                     |
| Total Fresh          | 8,130               | 8,112               | 8,455               | 2.47                       | 2.34                     | 2.29                     |
| Frozen Fish          |                     |                     |                     |                            |                          |                          |
| Whole Dressed        | 953                 | 822                 | 935                 | 2.18                       | 2.20                     | 2.22                     |
| Other                |                     |                     |                     |                            |                          |                          |
| Steaks               | 80                  | 58                  | 98                  | 2.23                       | 2.35                     | 2.11                     |
| Nuggets              | 2,832               | 2,819               | 2,753               | 1.20                       | 1.23                     | 1.21                     |
| Other                | 1,217               | 1,076               | 859                 | 3.14                       | 3.13                     | 2.94                     |
| Total                | 4,129               | 3,953               | 3,710               | 1.79                       | 1.76                     | 1.63                     |
| Fillets              | 9,448               | 9,730               | 9,338               | 2.99                       | 2.92                     | 2.87                     |
| Total Frozen         | 14,530              | 14,505              | 13,983              | 2.60                       | 2.56                     | 2.50                     |
| Fresh & Frozen Fish  |                     |                     |                     |                            |                          |                          |
| Whole                |                     |                     |                     |                            |                          |                          |
| Round & Guttled      | 1,380               | 1,580               | 1,919               | 1.10                       | 1.06                     | 1.04                     |
| Whole Dressed        | 2,710               | 2,398               | 2,759               | 2.08                       | 1.98                     | 2.02                     |
| Total                | 4,090               | 3,978               | 4,678               | 1.77                       | 1.64                     | 1.65                     |
| Other                |                     |                     |                     |                            |                          |                          |
| Steaks               | 171                 | 164                 | 210                 | 2.35                       | 2.38                     | 2.25                     |
| Nuggets              | 3,484               | 3,409               | 3,382               | 1.23                       | 1.25                     | 1.23                     |
| Other                | 1,271               | 1,115               | 925                 | 3.15                       | 3.15                     | 2.97                     |
| Total                | 4,926               | 4,688               | 4,517               | 1.76                       | 1.74                     | 1.64                     |
| Fillets              | 13,644              | 13,951              | 13,243              | 3.07                       | 2.97                     | 2.96                     |
| Total Fresh & Frozen | 22,660              | 22,617              | 22,438              | 2.55                       | 2.48                     | 2.42                     |

<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, 2009-2010**

| Item <sup>1</sup>    | Ending Inventory    |                     |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                      | Mar 2009            | Feb 2010            | Mar 2010            |
|                      | <i>1,000 Pounds</i> | <i>1,000 Pounds</i> | <i>1,000 Pounds</i> |
| Fresh Fish           |                     |                     |                     |
| Whole                |                     |                     |                     |
| Round & Guttred      | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Whole Dressed        | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Total                | 167                 | 173                 | 222                 |
| Other                |                     |                     |                     |
| Steaks               | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Nuggets              | 51                  | 64                  | 192                 |
| Other                | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Total                | 60                  | 68                  | 202                 |
| Filletts             | 610                 | 340                 | 788                 |
| Total Fresh          | 837                 | 581                 | 1,212               |
| Frozen Fish          |                     |                     |                     |
| Whole Dressed        | 393                 | 952                 | 1,039               |
| Other                |                     |                     |                     |
| Steaks               | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Nuggets              | 769                 | 1,587               | 1,629               |
| Other                | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Total                | 1,752               | 2,431               | 2,425               |
| Filletts             | 7,933               | 7,716               | 7,243               |
| Total Frozen         | 10,078              | 11,099              | 10,707              |
| Fresh & Frozen Fish  |                     |                     |                     |
| Whole                |                     |                     |                     |
| Round & Guttred      | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Whole Dressed        | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Total                | 560                 | 1,125               | 1,261               |
| Other                |                     |                     |                     |
| Steaks               | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Nuggets              | 820                 | 1,651               | 1,821               |
| Other                | *                   | *                   | *                   |
| Total                | 1,812               | 2,499               | 2,627               |
| Filletts             | 8,543               | 8,056               | 8,031               |
| Total Fresh & Frozen | 10,915              | 11,680              | 11,919              |

\* 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, 2009-2010**

| Month | Imports <sup>1</sup> |                     |                 |                     |                     |                 |
|-------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|       | Ictalurus spp.       |                     |                 | Total <sup>2</sup>  |                     |                 |
|       | 2009                 | 2010                | Percent of 2009 | 2009                | 2010                | Percent of 2009 |
|       | <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   | 2,344                | 3,091               | 132             | 9,819               | 14,612              | 149             |
| Feb   | 1,225                | 2,150               | 176             | 6,527               | 10,421              | 160             |
| Mar   | 972                  |                     |                 | 8,942               |                     |                 |
| Apr   | 1,364                |                     |                 | 8,548               |                     |                 |
| May   | 1,659                |                     |                 | 11,592              |                     |                 |
| Jun   | 1,088                |                     |                 | 10,577              |                     |                 |
| Jul   | 1,849                |                     |                 | 10,765              |                     |                 |
| Aug   | 1,210                |                     |                 | 11,711              |                     |                 |
| Sep   | 1,385                |                     |                 | 12,541              |                     |                 |
| Oct   | 1,584                |                     |                 | 13,857              |                     |                 |
| Nov   | 2,144                |                     |                 | 12,783              |                     |                 |
| Dec   | 2,527                |                     |                 | 11,718              |                     |                 |

<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, 2009-2010**

| Month | Exports <sup>1</sup> |                     |                 |                     |                     |                 |
|-------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|       | Fresh                |                     |                 | Frozen              |                     |                 |
|       | 2009                 | 2010                | Percent of 2009 | 2009                | 2010                | Percent of 2009 |
|       | <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   | 87.0                 | 90.4                | 104             | 0.0                 | 26.4                |                 |
| Feb   | 65.1                 | 58.2                | 89              | 0.0                 | 33.8                |                 |
| Mar   | 65.1                 |                     |                 | 50.6                |                     |                 |
| Apr   | 47.5                 |                     |                 | 12.8                |                     |                 |
| May   | 79.1                 |                     |                 | 14.2                |                     |                 |
| Jun   | 63.8                 |                     |                 | 21.4                |                     |                 |
| Jul   | 68.6                 |                     |                 | 20.5                |                     |                 |
| Aug   | 91.8                 |                     |                 | 12.4                |                     |                 |
| Sep   | 50.6                 |                     |                 | 17.7                |                     |                 |
| Oct   | 138.0                |                     |                 | 43.4                |                     |                 |
| Nov   | 59.1                 |                     |                 | 30.2                |                     |                 |
| Dec   | 63.1                 |                     |                 | 56.3                |                     |                 |

<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.  
Harings 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.  
South Fresh 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.

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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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