



Catfish Production

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Water Surface Acres Down 1 Percent from Last Year

The water surface area to be used for catfish production in the three major producing States (Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi) during July 1 through December 31, 2017, totaled 54.2 thousand acres, down 1 percent from a year ago. Acres used for foodsize fish totaled 44.1 thousand acres, up 1 percent from the same time period in 2016. Acres used for fingerling production are down 9 percent to 6.98 thousand acres, and acres for broodfish are up 12 percent to 1.77 thousand acres. Of the total acres in production, 1.83 thousand were scheduled to be renovated from July 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017, while acres taken out of production during the January 1, 2017, through June 30, 2017, period totaled 0.94 thousand acres.

Foodsize Inventory Numbers up 17 Percent from a Year Ago

Catfish operations in the three major producing States had 104 million foodsize fish on hand on July 1, 2017, up 17 percent from the July 1, 2016, total of 88.5 million foodsize fish. The breakouts of foodsize fish inventory numbers on July 1, 2017, with their respective percent change from the previous year were: large foodsize, 2.4 million fish, up 41 percent; medium foodsize, 28.4 million fish, up 36 percent; and small foodsize, 72.7 million fish, up 10 percent. The three major States also had 445 thousand broodfish on hand on July 1, 2017, up 6 percent from last year's 420 thousand broodfish.

Catfish operations in the three major producing States had 293 million stockers on hand on July 1, 2017, up 1 percent from the July 1, 2016, total of 290 million stockers. The breakouts of stocker fish inventory numbers on July 1, 2017, with their respective change from the previous year were: large stockers, 140 million fish, down 14 percent; and small stockers, 153 million, up 19 percent from last year. Producers had 535 million fingerlings and fry on hand on July 1, 2017.

Water Surface Acres Used for Production – Major States: 2016 and 2017

State	Water surface acres used for production July 1 - December 31	
	2016 (acres)	2017 (acres)
Alabama	14,800	14,600
Arkansas	4,900	4,900
Mississippi	35,000	34,700
Three State total	54,700	54,200

Catfish Water Surface Acres by Use – Major States: 2016 and 2017

State and year	Acres intended for utilization during July 1 - December 31 for					Acres taken out of production during January 1 - June 30 (acres)
	Foodsize (acres)	Fingerlings (acres)	Broodfish (acres)	Currently under or scheduled for		
				Renovation (acres)	New construction (acres)	
2016						
Alabama	14,500	75	45	290	(D)	660
Arkansas	3,300	1,300	230	180	-	35
Mississippi	25,700	6,300	1,300	1,700	(D)	1,400
Three State total	43,500	7,675	1,575	2,170	430	2,095
2017						
Alabama	14,300	75	45	260	320	620
Arkansas	3,300	1,300	220	270	100	270
Mississippi	26,500	5,600	1,500	1,300	670	45
Three State total	44,100	6,975	1,765	1,830	1,090	935

- Represents zero.

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

Catfish Inventory by Size Category – Major States: July 1, 2016 and 2017

Size category and State	Number of fish		Live weight			
	2016 (1,000)	2017 (1,000)	Total		Average	
			2016 (1,000 pounds)	2017 (1,000 pounds)	2016 (pounds per fish)	2017 (pounds per fish)
Large foodsize						
Alabama	870	970	3,000	3,450	3.4	3.6
Arkansas	195	290	645	1,000	3.3	3.4
Mississippi	640	1,140	2,300	3,850	3.6	3.4
Three State total	1,705	2,400	5,945	8,300	3.5	3.5
Medium foodsize						
Alabama	9,690	10,900	18,700	20,500	1.9	1.9
Arkansas	1,600	1,780	2,900	3,650	1.8	2.1
Mississippi	9,650	15,700	17,500	29,400	1.8	1.9
Three State total	20,940	28,380	39,100	53,550	1.9	1.9
Small foodsize						
Alabama	28,300	27,000	27,300	26,300	1.0	1.0
Arkansas	4,640	6,340	5,000	5,950	1.1	0.9
Mississippi	32,900	39,400	33,900	38,700	1.0	1.0
Three State total	65,840	72,740	66,200	70,950	1.0	1.0
All foodsize						
Alabama	38,860	38,870	49,000	50,250	(X)	(X)
Arkansas	6,435	8,410	8,545	10,600	(X)	(X)
Mississippi	43,190	56,240	53,700	71,950	(X)	(X)
Three State total	88,485	103,520	111,245	132,800	(X)	(X)
Broodfish						
Alabama	10	10	31	44	3.1	4.4
Arkansas	70	45	291	164	4.2	3.6
Mississippi	340	390	1,890	2,050	5.6	5.3
Three State total	420	445	2,212	2,258	5.3	5.1

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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Catfish Inventory by Size Category – Major States: July 1, 2016 and 2017 (continued)

Size category and State	Number of fish		Live weight			
			Total		Average	
	2016 (1,000)	2017 (1,000)	2016 (1,000 pounds)	2017 (1,000 pounds)	2016 (pounds per 1,000 fish)	2017 (pounds per 1,000 fish)
Large stockers						
Alabama	45,500	47,500	16,100	14,300	354	301
Arkansas	12,500	11,300	4,750	3,300	380	292
Mississippi	104,000	81,300	37,600	31,100	362	383
Three State total	162,000	140,100	58,450	48,700	361	348
Small stockers						
Alabama	42,500	43,000	4,900	3,500	115	81
Arkansas	5,500	8,060	619	680	113	84
Mississippi	80,300	102,000	10,300	12,000	128	118
Three State total	128,300	153,060	15,819	16,180	123	106
Total stockers						
Alabama	88,000	90,500	21,000	17,800	(X)	(X)
Arkansas	18,000	19,360	5,369	3,980	(X)	(X)
Mississippi	184,300	183,300	47,900	43,100	(X)	(X)
Three State total	290,300	293,160	74,269	64,880	(X)	(X)
Fingerlings and fry						
Alabama	12,500	11,700	481	270	38.5	23.1
Arkansas	74,400	69,500	1,190	1,100	16.0	15.8
Mississippi	372,000	454,000	5,000	4,150	13.4	9.1
Three State total	458,900	535,200	6,671	5,520	14.5	10.3

(X) Not applicable.

Statistical Methodology

Survey Procedures: All known catfish producers in the three published states are surveyed to collect production data. Individual NASS regional field offices maintain a list of all known catfish producers and use known sources of producers to update their lists. Operators are mailed a questionnaire as close as possible to July 1 and given time to respond by mail. Those that do not respond by mail are telephoned or possibly enumerated in person during the middle of July.

Estimating Procedures: Sound statistical methodology is employed to derive the estimates from reported data. All data are analyzed for unusual values. Data from each operation are compared to their own past operating profile and to trends from similar operations. Missing data for large operations are estimated based on similar operations or historical data. Summary expansions account for the remaining non-response operations. NASS regional field offices prepare these estimates by using a combination of survey indications and historic trends. Individual State estimates are reviewed by the Agricultural Statistics Board for reasonableness.

Revision policy: Estimates for the previous year are subject to revision when current estimates are made. Revisions are the result of late or corrected data. Due to sequestration, NASS did not produce July catfish production estimates in 2013.

Reliability: In the three published states, catfish production estimates are based on a census of all known active producers and therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates are subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing the data. While these errors cannot be measured directly, they are minimized through strict quality controls in the data collection process and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

Terms and Definitions Used for Catfish Production Estimates

Broodfish: Fish kept for egg production, including males. Broodfish produce the fertilized eggs, which go to hatcheries. The most desirable size is 3 to 10 pounds or 4 to 6 years of age.

Fingerlings: Fish weighing 2 to 60 pounds per 1,000 fish or 2 to 6 inches in length.

Foodsize (large): Fish weighing over 3 pounds.

Foodsize (medium): Fish weighing over one and one-half pounds to 3 pounds.

Foodsize (small): Fish weighing over three-fourths of a pound to one and one-half pounds.

Fry: Fish weighing less than 2 pounds per 1,000 fish or less than 2 inches in length.

Stockers (large): Fish weighing over 180 pounds to 750 pounds per 1,000 fish.

Stockers (small): Fish weighing over 60 pounds to 180 pounds per 1,000 fish or over 6 inches in length.

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

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