



# U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish Production and Processing Industry

Q1 2021:  
Market Check-In

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## Q1 2021: MARKET CHECK-IN

The end of 2020 saw a lower-than-usual supply of U.S. farm-raised catfish industry-wide, which is not unheard of, but did pose challenges entering Lent in Q1 2021. Heartland Catfish Company predicted the first half of 2021 to maintain a similar tight supply of live fish, and this first quarter of the year has proven the prediction to be accurate.



## INDUSTRY-WIDE PRODUCT SHORTAGE CONTINUES

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The industry continues to see a shortage of catfish, and those fish that are coming out of the ponds to be processed are smaller in size. Additionally, the labor shortage persists, so processors are working with more standard cuts and relevant substitutions for customers. The labor shortage seems to be a problem with no real solution. This will pose greater challenges as fish supply loosens, and the production cannot keep up with supply.

In addition to the challenges those in the U.S. farm-raised catfish industry have been facing for the past year, a few deep freezes across the Southeast led to days-long stalls in production due to dangerous conditions. With warmer spring weather on the way, Heartland Catfish Company anticipates a more productive growing and harvesting season and shouldn't see many impacts from the cold spell.





## HIGHER PRICING STILL EXPECTED

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A smaller inventory of fish available to kill paired with the labor shortage and rising costs of standard production and processing supplies indicates that Heartland's prediction of higher prices for U.S. farm-raised catfish is still expected through the remainder of 2021.

Transparency and communication with our customers is always priority, especially when inventory is tighter than during a typical year and as unknown variables loom. We look forward to supporting our customers through whatever is to come throughout the remainder of 2021, and will navigate industry shifts with them as our priority.

