



# CATFISH PRODUCTION PROGRAM

## Challenges

- The catfish industry faces significant challenges, including increasing input prices, few government support programs, lack of price level controls, and lower-priced import competition.
- Long-term consequences of these conditions include reductions in production acreage, inflation-adjusted prices, farm equity positions, and number of operations producing food-size catfish.
- The number of Mississippi farms engaged in food-fish operations declined by 43.5% from 2013 to 2023. From 2015 to 2024, Mississippi food-size production acreage declined by 12.4% and inflation-adjusted price declined by 15.6%.

## EXTENSION RESPONSE

The Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center embodies the partnership between Extension and research, including USDA-ARS research. Center personnel provide quality educational resources and assistance to increase catfish production sustainability in Mississippi and across the United States.

- Personnel develop new technologies in areas such as pond systems, aeration and oxygen monitoring, vaccination, and production-oriented hybrid species development to increase operation sustainability.
- Extension provides educational resources, including demonstrations and in-service training, to Mississippi's catfish producers, infrastructure personnel, and government officials to increase sustainability and profitability.
- Specific Extension programming activities include presentations at field days and other events, on-farm consultations, educational publications, and in-service training sessions for government officials and Extension agents.
- From 2015 to 2024, Extension programming facilitated a 15% increase in the efficiency of food-size fish production in Mississippi.

## ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- The increase in production efficiency for Mississippi producers from 5,742 pounds per acre in 2015 to 6,606 pounds per acre in 2024 resulted in an additional 5.3 million pounds of catfish produced in 2024 with a value of **\$22.7 million**.
- This revenue increase could support **159 jobs** in the Mississippi economy earning **\$7.7 million**, generate **\$12.9 million** in value-added, and result in **\$38.2 million** in total output.
- This economic activity could generate increases of **\$229,942** for municipalities, **\$574,125** for special districts, and **\$465,442** for counties (a total increase in local taxes of **\$1.3 million**).
- In addition, state taxes could increase by **\$3.4 million** and federal taxes by **\$8.3 million**.



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M2480-24 (10-25)

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