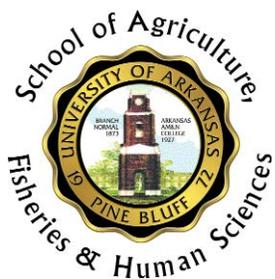
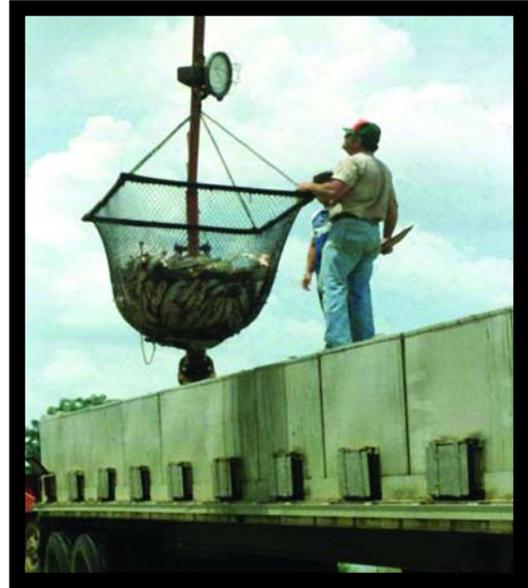


CHICOT COUNTY, ARKANSAS: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CATFISH INDUSTRY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	1
ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY	3
THE CATFISH INDUSTRY IN CHICOT COUNTY	4
Impact on Economic Output	6
Impact on Value Added	7
Impact on Employment	8
Impact on Tax Generation	9
Economic Multipliers	10
Flow of Economic Benefits Generated by the Catfish Industry Through the Chicot County Economy	11
REFERENCES	13

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Catfish farming represents a major economic activity in Arkansas.

SUMMARY

Chicot County, Arkansas, is a predominantly rural, sparsely populated county located in the Mississippi Delta region of Arkansas. This region of the United States is generally characterized by low income, high poverty rates and high unemployment rates. The economy of Chicot County is based primarily on agricultural production. Textile and catfish processing companies are the major manufacturing industries in the county.

Catfish processing created more economic activity than any other sector, including row crop farming and textiles. Catfish farms and processing plants, including both direct and indirect employment, created more jobs in Chicot County than any other economic activity with the exception of state and local government agencies. Catfish processing plants have a substantial direct impact on economic output and employment. Catfish farms also have an important effect on economic output and employment, but catfish farming has a much greater effect on economic value added and employment in support sectors.

The catfish industry generated \$384 million in total economic output and 2,665 jobs to the Chicot County economy in addition to \$22 million in tax revenue in 2001. Catfish farming has resulted in substantial development and expansion of support businesses that creates additional jobs, economic activity and tax revenue.

INTRODUCTION

Chicot County is located in the southeast corner of Arkansas within the Mississippi Delta Region. Chicot County is named after Lake Chicot, a large oxbow lake created when the Mississippi River changed course. It is predominantly rural and sparsely populated. There are four incorporated cities in the county: Dermott, Eudora, Jennie and Lake Village, the county seat. The total population of Chicot County was 13,943 in 2001.

Agricultural mechanization has reduced the need for field laborers and has resulted in out-migration of population and high unemployment rates. The civilian labor force in 2001 included 6,125 individuals with

an unemployment rate of 10%. The per capita personal income of \$18,072 in 2000 was 18% lower than the state average and 39% lower than the national average (BEA 2001), ranking Chicot County 50th out of 74 counties in Arkansas. The poverty rate in Chicot County (29%) was nearly double the statewide average (16%) (FEDSTAT, 2001).

Chicot County is primarily a farming area. The only manufacturing in the county is catfish processing and textiles. Total economic output in Chicot County in 2000 was \$451 million (MIG, 2001). Catfish processing created more economic output (14.8% of total output) than any other economic activity (Figure 1). Row crop farming (11.5% of output) was second with textiles (9.2% of output), state and local government (8.7%), housing/real estate (8.1%) and catfish farming (7.2% of total output) following closely behind. State and local government agencies provided the greatest numbers of jobs (19.2%), but the catfish industry (14.9% combining farms and processing plants) was second. The next most important sources of jobs were retail businesses (11.1%), textiles (6.5%), secondary businesses (6.2%) and then row crop farming (6.0%).



Channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) is the major species farmed in the U.S.

**CHICOT COUNTY, ARKANSAS:
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CATFISH INDUSTRY**

Figure 1a. Output by Sector (%)

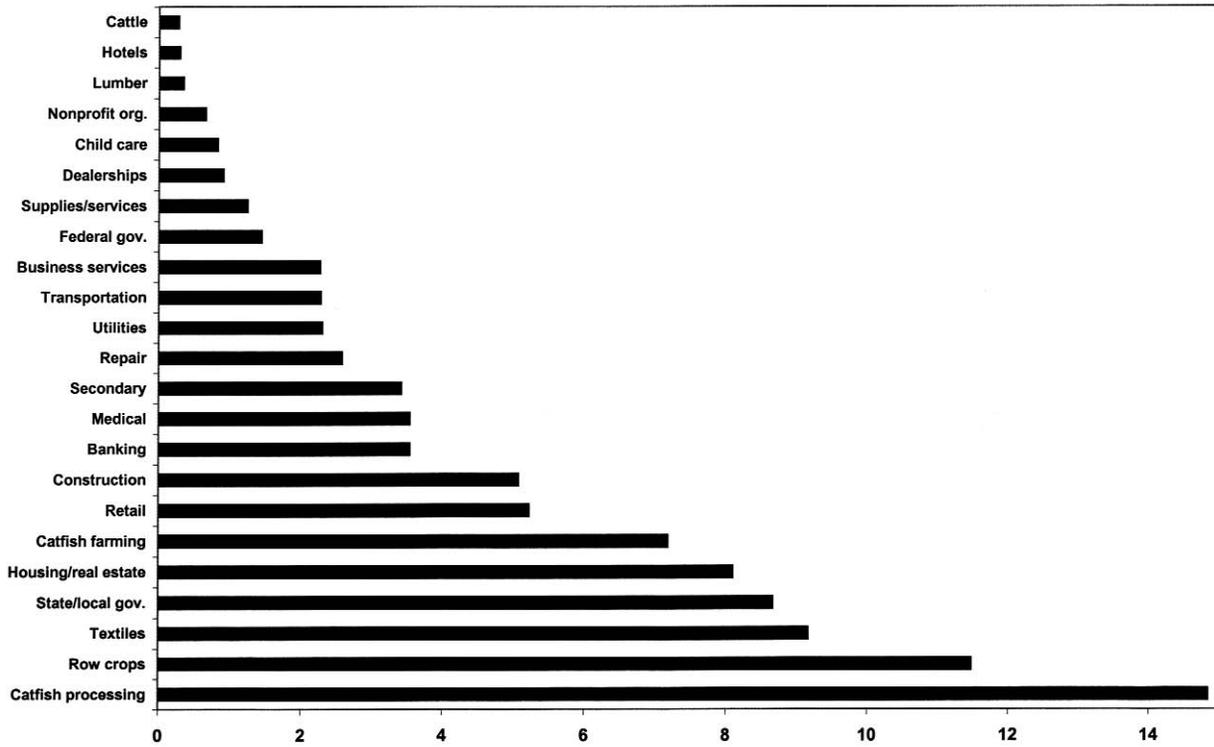
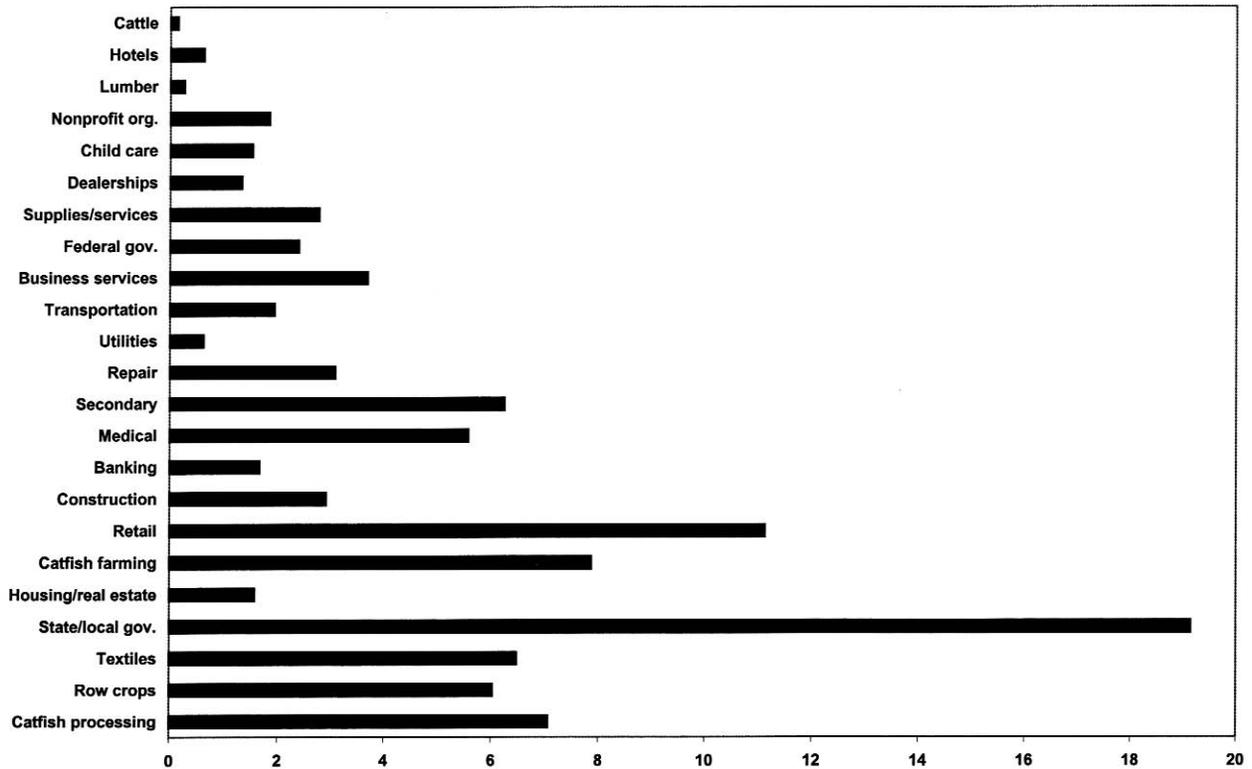


Figure 1b. Employment by Sector (%)



ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The economic impact of the catfish industry on the Chicot County economy was analyzed using the IMPLAN system. The IMPLAN system is a computerized database and modeling software that is used to construct regional input-output tables based upon the Bureau of Economic Analysis' national input-output tables (MIG, 2000). The IMPLAN database contains 528 sectors. Catfish farms are classified in sector 9, "miscellaneous livestock," in the IMPLAN model. Catfish processing falls under sector 98, "prepared fresh or frozen fish or seafood."

Three types of economic effects, direct, indirect and induced, were measured. Direct effects represent direct produc-

tion and employment by catfish farms and catfish processing plants. Indirect effects are measured as changes in sales by supporting businesses that result from the sale of inputs and services to catfish farms and processing plants. Induced economic effects result from purchases of consumer goods and services by employees of catfish farms, processing plants and supporting businesses. For example, restaurant and grocery store sales fall in this category.

In addition to the types of economic effects, three economic indicators were compared. *Economic output* is the total value of production (sales plus or minus inventory). *Value added* is the amount of money available for employee salaries and wages, returns to business owners and indirect taxes to federal and local governments. Employment measures the number of full-time and part time jobs created through direct, indirect and induced economic effects.

Economic multipliers were calculated. An economic multiplier summarizes the total economic benefits resulting from a change in the local economy or change in economic output. It is calculated as the sum of direct, indirect and induced economic effects divided by the direct economic effect. For example, a catfish farming output multiplier estimates the total change in local economic output that results from an increase in output in catfish farms. Similarly, a catfish farming employment multiplier measures the change in total employment that results from a change in employment on catfish farms.

The IMPLAN system database does not include enough detail to separate the effects of the catfish industry from other economic sectors. To do this, three questionnaires were developed to collect 2001 information from all catfish farmers, processors and businesses that support catfish production and processing. The catfish farm survey included both a mail survey and personal interviews. Out of 85 farmers in the county, 44 farmers completed the survey with usable responses, yielding a response rate of 52%. The catfish processor questionnaire was mailed to both processors in Chicot County. Data requested from catfish processors included employment, production costs and sales.

The 59 businesses in Chicot County that depended directly or indirectly on the catfish industry were interviewed personally. Information was collected from these support businesses on employment, sales and the percentage of sales that came from catfish.



Growth of the catfish industry has increased demand for restaurant services.

THE CATFISH INDUSTRY IN CHICOT COUNTY

The catfish industry in Chicot County began in the early 1960s. A suitable climate, large tracts of heavy clay soil, an available workforce and an abundance of ground water made Chicot County an ideal area for the industry to develop.

Pioneer catfish producers relied on livehaul markets as a means to sell fish. As the industry grew, processing plants opened in Dumas and in McGehee, Arkansas. The development of processing plants further spurred development of additional acreage into catfish production.

An economic downturn in the 1970s, combined with a worldwide shortage of fishmeal, caused substantial increases in feed prices. Production technologies resulted in seasonal supplies of fish to plants. The combination of economic shocks and seasonal supplies of fish resulted in closure of processing plants and a contraction of the overall industry.

The catfish industry re-emerged in the 1980s. Technologies had been developed that allowed for year-round harvest of marketable fish, a new processing plant was built in Chicot County and acreage in the county climbed to over 3,000 acres. A second processing plant opened in Chicot County in the 1990s, and acreage increased to over 16,000 by the end of the decade of the 1990s.

There were about 156 catfish farms in Arkansas in 1998 (NASS 2001). Of these, more than 55% were located in Chicot County. These 85 catfish farms in Chicot County directly employed 510 individuals in both part-time and full-time positions in 2001.

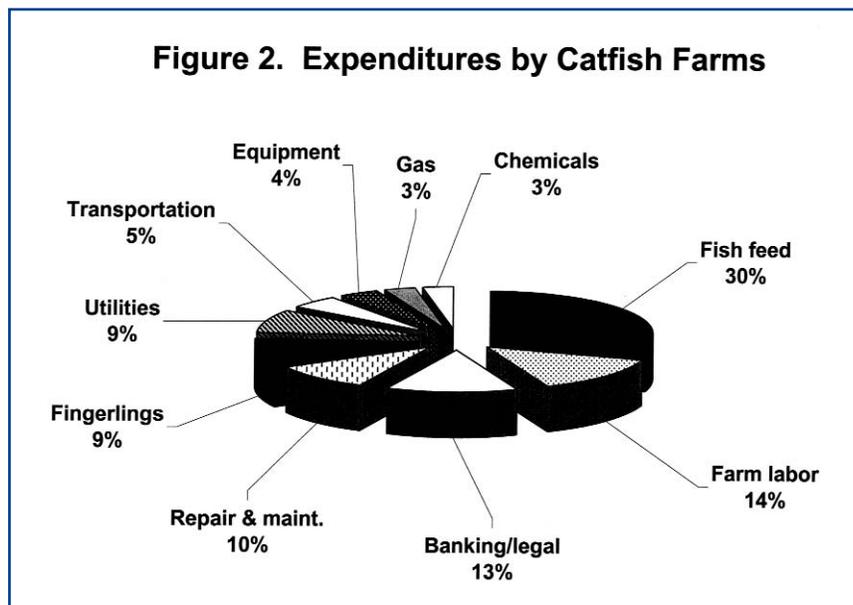
Sales of live catfish to processors were \$63 million in 2001 (Table 1). Total operating expenses by all catfish farms in Chicot County were estimated to be about \$61 million in 2001. These operating expenditures were made to purchase goods and services from other, support businesses.

Catfish seining and harvesting companies have developed due to the growth of catfish farming.



Figure 2 presents a summary of expenditures by catfish farms in Chicot County. Most of the expenditures (30%) were for purchasing feed. Other important expenditures were for hired farm labor (14%); legal, accounting and financial expenses (including book-keeping and payment to capital borrowed from banks) (13%) and repair and maintenance of farm equipment used in catfish production (10%). Other

Figure 2. Expenditures by Catfish Farms



**CHICOT COUNTY, ARKANSAS:
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CATFISH INDUSTRY**

Table 1. Selected survey data used for assessing the impact of the catfish industry in Chicot County, Arkansas, 2001

	Survey results					Data used in IMPLAN	
	Total no. of firms	No. dependent on catfish	No. of employees	Sales (\$ 000)	%	No. of employees	Sales (\$ 000)
Catfish industry sector (IMPLAN classification)							
Basic industries							
Catfish farms (miscellaneous livestock)	85	85	510	63,406	100	510	63,406
Catfish processing (prepared fresh or frozen fish or seafood)	2	2	680	103,652	100	680	103,652
Support businesses							
Seining and hauling (transportation services)	5	5	30	511	100	30	511
Pond construction (new highways and streets)	5	5	35	2,750	90	32	2,475
Equipment and dealership (farm machinery and equipment)	2	2	62	50,000	30	19	15,000
Feed bin manufacturing (sheet metal work)	2	2	30	708	80	24	566
Plumbing fixtures (plumbing fixture fitting and trim)	2	1	24	2,500	50	12	1,250
Input supply companies (agricultural chemicals)	2	2	6	4,000	75	5	3,000
Auto repairs and services (automotive repair and services)	22	11	55	5,500	70	39	3,850
Electricity supply (state and local electric utilities)	1	1	4	6,000	25	1	1,500
Banks (banking)	6	6	150	21,000	50	75	10,550
Electricians (electrical repair services)	8	2	22	3,600	70	15	2,520
Gas stations (electric, gas and sanitation services)	22	17	68	62,192	50	34	31,097
Consulting (management and consulting services)	3	3	9	1,800	50	5	900
Bookkeeping (accounting and bookkeeping)	6	2	6	1,500	90	5	1,350
Subtotal support business	86	59	510	162,000		296	74,569
TOTAL	173	146	1,691	329,218		1,486	241,627

expenditures, in order of importance, were purchases of fingerlings from hatcheries (9%), expenditures on telephone and electricity (9%), harvesting and transporting live catfish to processors (5%), purchase of new farm equipment (4%), expenditures on farm chemicals (3%) and gas for vehicles (3%).

The two processing plants in the county had approximately 680 employees, and the annual sales for all catfish products produced were about \$104

million. Primary expenditures for catfish processing were purchase of live catfish (54.6%), direct labor (12.2%), purchase of processed fish (11.7%), direct production costs that included

water and utility bills (8.7%), marketing and promotion (6.6%) and general administration (6.2%).

Some farms have specialized in hatching eggs and producing fingerlings.



**CHICOT COUNTY, ARKANSAS:
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CATFISH INDUSTRY**



Seining catfish ponds requires purchase of boats, motors and nets, which increases demand for these goods and creates jobs.

The growth and development of the catfish industry in Chicot County created opportunities for new businesses to develop. Custom harvesters are businesses that seine, harvest and transport fish from catfish farms to processing plants. Several businesses began to specialize in the construction of ponds for catfish farmers. Companies set up stores in towns in Chicot County to sell fish farming supplies or inputs to catfish farmers in the area. Tractor and equipment dealers, feed bin manufacturers, banks, fertilizer and chemical companies, input supply companies, auto shops, electricians, book-keeping firms and consulting firms do business with catfish farmers and processors, in addition to other firms. Other types of businesses were able to grow due to the expansion of catfish farming.

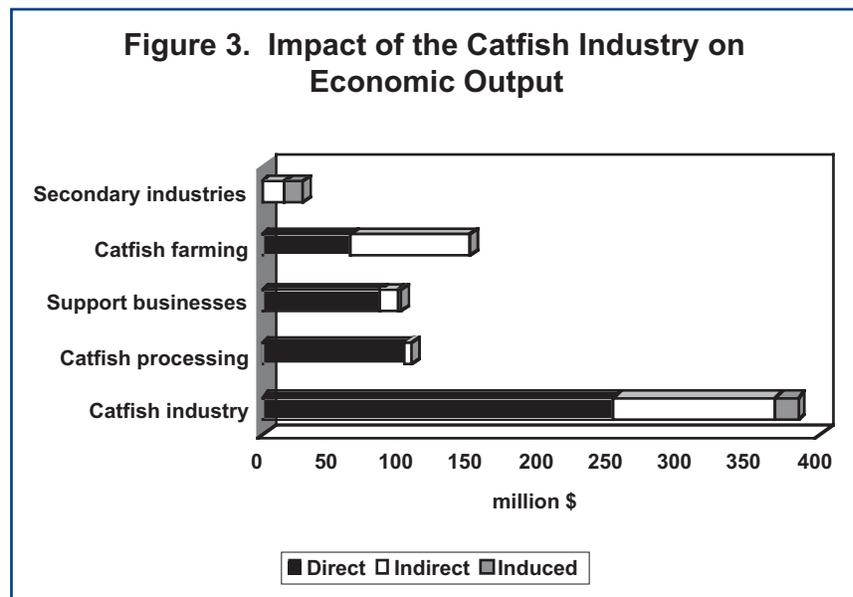
Custom harvesting businesses depended entirely and directly on catfish farms. Pond builders and three book-

keeping firms had 90% of their businesses related to the catfish industry. Seventy-five percent of the sales of the input supply businesses was from the catfish industry. Businesses that included plumbing, banks, gas stations and consulting firms indicated that half of their business sales were from the catfish industry. The least dependent sector was that of

state and local utilities, for which the catfish industry generated 25% of annual sales, followed by equipment and farm machinery dealerships with 30% of their business from the catfish industry. In all, support services directly generated 296 jobs, producing goods and services valued at about \$75 million.

Impact on Economic Output

Figure 3 depicts the impact of the catfish industry on economic output. For 2001, the catfish industry and corresponding support services in Chicot County produced economic output valued at \$384 million. The catfish farming and processing sectors contributed 39% and 28%, respectively, to the total economic output of the catfish industry. Moreover, about \$252 million (66%), \$117 million (31%) and \$15 million (4%) were generated through direct, indirect and induced effects, respectively.



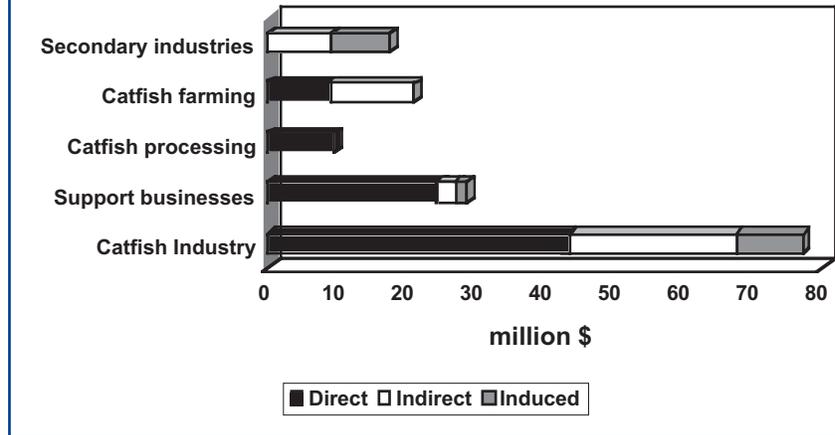
Note that the indirect effects of catfish farming are higher than those of processing because most of the inputs and services used in catfish farming are purchased locally. In addition, other secondary industries related to the catfish industry through indirect and induced effects contributed 8% of the catfish industry total economic output. Indirect economic effects from these industries were mainly from wholesale trade (\$7 million) and motor freight transport and warehousing (\$2 million). The induced economic effect was mainly from housing (\$3 million), doctors and dentists (\$2 million) and miscellaneous retail business (\$1 million).

Impact on Value Added

The catfish industry and the service sector generated \$77 million, paid in the form of labor income to employees and business owners and indirect business taxes (i.e., value added) in 2001 (Figure 4). Catfish farming accounted for about 27% of the economic value added. The category that produced the next largest economic value was the aggregated group of the secondary industries related to the catfish industry only through indirect and induced effects (23%). This was followed by the banking industry (14%) and catfish processing (13%).

Overall, catfish farming and processing contributed 40% of the total economic value added attributed to the catfish industry. Direct impacts represented 56% of the total economic value generated, and indirect and induced effects represented 31% and 13% of the value added, respectively.

Figure 4. Impact of the Catfish Industry on Economic Value Added



Processing plants create additional demand for materials, supplies, equipment and jobs.



Transporting catfish to processing plants requires the purchase of trucks, tanks and fuel.

**CHICOT COUNTY, ARKANSAS:
THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CATFISH INDUSTRY**

Catfish processing has low indirect and induced effects relative to its direct effect because most of the products produced are sold outside the county. The banking industry scored high on induced effects, probably due to high paying jobs existing within the industry.

Indirect economic value added by the secondary industries was mainly from wholesale trading (\$5 million) and motor freight transport and warehousing (\$0.6 million). The induced effect from this category of industries was mainly from housing (\$2 million) and doctors and dentists (\$1 million). This was followed, in descending order, by miscellaneous retail businesses (\$9 million), food stores (\$0.6 million), wholesale trade (\$0.5 million), real estate (\$0.5 million) and restaurants (\$0.4 million).

Impact on Employment

The catfish industry created 2,665 jobs through direct (1,461 jobs), indirect (967 jobs) and induced effects (2,376 jobs) (Figure 5). Catfish processing generated the greatest direct employment at 669 jobs. This was followed by 504 jobs in catfish farming. There was direct employment, but at much lower levels, in the banking (72), automobile repair and services (38) and automotive dealers and service (33) industries. Over 70% of the jobs were created within catfish farming and processing sectors.

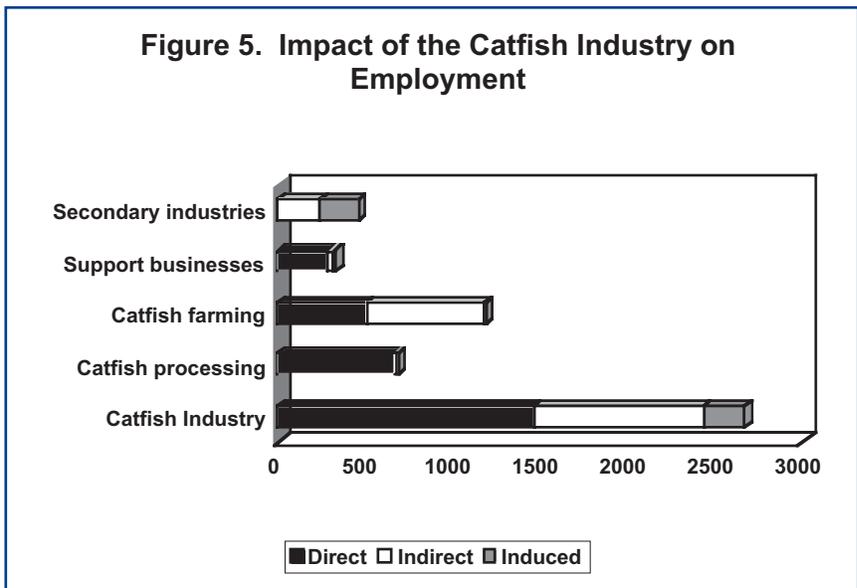
Catfish farming produced the highest number of jobs in the indirect effects category (679), which was almost equal to the number of employees hired directly by catfish farms (679). Thus, catfish



Catfish processing plants also create jobs.



Catfish farms create demand for farm equipment and structures like feed bins.



farming creates large numbers of jobs in backwardly-linked businesses such as aquaculture supply companies, equipment dealerships and hatcheries. Examples of indirect and induced effects, respectively, are jobs created in the maintenance and repair of buildings and facilities and jobs in the health sector due to increased demand for services and income. Most of the jobs created through indirect and induced effects in the secondary industries were in wholesale trading (106 jobs) and restaurants (49 jobs).

Therefore, catfish and related businesses created more than 49% of all jobs available in the county in 2001.

Impact on Tax Generation

Table 2 shows that the catfish industry in Chicot County generated \$22 million of tax revenue (federal, state and local governments) in 2001. Tax revenue was generated primarily from household expenditures (33%), employee compensation (29%), indirect business taxes (22%), enterprise and corporate taxes

(12%) and proprietary income taxes (4%). The federal government received 76% (\$16.4 million) of all taxes generated. Most of the federal tax revenue in the county was from social security taxes (\$7.1 million), personal taxes (\$5.6 million) and corporate profit taxes (\$2.4 million). State and local governments received about 24% (\$5.3 million) of the total tax generated by the catfish industry. State and local tax from the catfish industry was mainly from indirect business taxes (\$3.5 million) and personal taxes (\$1.4 million).

Table 2. Estimated tax revenue generated by the catfish industry in Chicot County, Arkansas, 2001

Source/Type of tax	Employee compensation (\$)	Proprietary income (\$)	Household expenses (\$)	Corporate (\$)	Indirect (\$)	Total (\$)	% (\$)
Federal tax							
Corporate tax transfers	3,000	0	0	0	0	3,000	1
Fed. government non-defense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate profit tax ^a	0	0	0	2,437,000	0	2,437,000	1,123
Indirect business tax ^b	0	0	0	0	1,265,500	1,265,500	583
Personal income tax	0	0	5,650,600	0	0	5,650,600	2,604
Social insurance tax ^c	6,161,800	898,300	0	0	0	7,060,100	3,254
Subtotal federal tax	6,161,800	898,300	5,650,600	2,437,000	1,265,500	16,413,200	7,565
State/local government							
Corporate profits tax	0	0	0	200,400	0	200,400	92
Dividends	0	0	0	1,900	0	1,900	1
Indirect business tax ^d	0	0	0	0	3,532,300	3,532,300	1,628
Personal income tax ^e	0	0	1,446,500	0	0	1,446,500	667
Social insurance tax	102,100	0	0	0	0	102,100	47
Sub total	102,100	0	1,446,500	202,300	3,532,300	5,283,200	2,435
Grand total	6,264,200	898,300	7,097,000	2,639,300	4,797,900	21,696,700	10,000

^a Includes customer duty, excise tax, and federal non-taxes.

^b Includes estate and gift tax, income tax, and personal non-taxes such as fines and fees.

^c Includes employee and employer contribution.

^d Includes motor vehicle license, property tax, sales tax, severance tax, and other taxes.

^e Includes estate and gift tax, income tax, non-taxes such as fines and fees, and other taxes such as fishing and hunting taxes.

Economic Multipliers

Table 3 reports the calculated output, employment and economic value-added multipliers for catfish farming, processing and services. The output multiplier calculated for catfish farming was 6.1. Thus, each \$1 of earnings by catfish farms generated \$6.10 total economic activity in the Chicot County economy. Of this, catfish farms received \$1 and the remaining \$5.1 leaked into the economy. The employment multipliers were 5.3 for catfish farming, 4.0 for catfish processing and 9.3 for support businesses. In other words, for every person employed on catfish farms, more than four jobs were created in other sectors of the county's economy. The value-added multiplier provides an estimate of the additional value added to the product as a result of the economic activity under study. For every \$1 paid by catfish farmers, another \$7.6 was paid as value added to the Chicot County economy. At the industry level, for every \$1 received by the catfish industry, \$0.8 is received by the county economy. The corresponding employment and value added multipliers were both 1.8.

A scaled-up economic multiplier implies that the industry's indirect and induced economic impacts are relatively high. For example, the output multiplier for catfish farming is relatively high (6.1), as compared to catfish processing (4.0). While indirect and induced effects (\$86 million) accounted for about 58% of the total economic output produced by catfish farms (\$149 million) (Figure 3), both effects

combined to contribute 2.8% (\$3 million) to the total economic output from the catfish processing industry (\$107 million). Consequently,

the economic multiplier shows the potential of an industry to create economic activities through direct and induced effects (backward linkages).

Table 3. Estimate of economic multipliers for the catfish industry in Chicot County, 2001.

Sector	Output	Employment	Value Added
Catfish farming	6.1	5.3	8.6
Catfish processing	3.7	4.0	8.1
Support businesses	4.5	9.3	3.1
Total catfish industry ^a	1.5	1.8	1.8

^a The multipliers for the total catfish industry are applied to the total economic effect for a given category. For example, the multiplier effect is 1.5 times the total economic output of \$384 million, or \$576 million.



Equipment manufacturers have added fish farming equipment to their product lines.



Growth of catfish farming creates additional spending by households for food, housing and entertainment.

Flow of Economic Benefits Generated by the Catfish Industry Through the Chicot County Economy

Sales by catfish producers and processors in Chicot County increased sales for catfish industry support businesses, increased incomes for farm proprietors and workers and increased sales for local retail and service businesses that supply goods and services to catfish farm owners and employees. The initial change brought by catfish farming and processing (the direct effect) further creates indirect and induced effects that created a

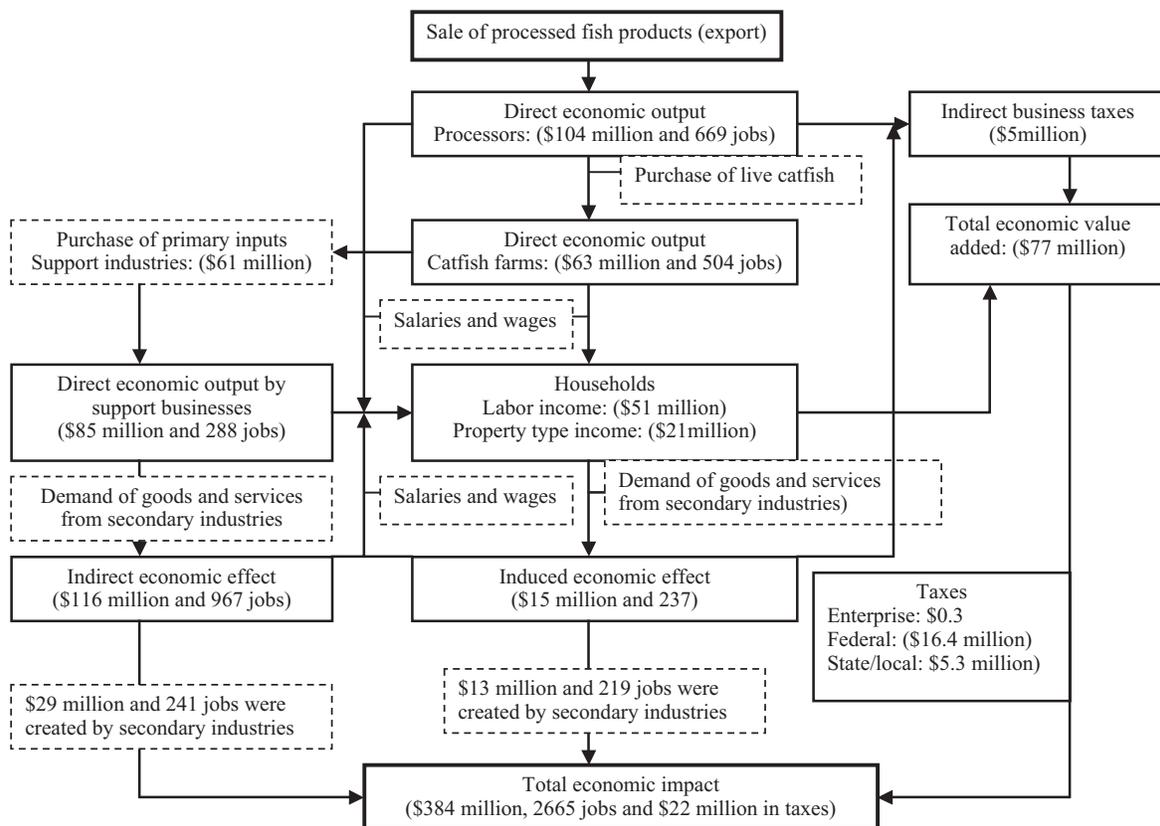
chain of demand and supply of goods and services throughout the Chicot County economy. Figure 6 is a flow chart that summarizes the economy-wide impact of the catfish industry on Chicot County through direct, indirect and induced effects. Catfish processors bring money into Chicot County through export of processed fish products. Total annual sales were \$104 million



Feed mills spend money on trucks, tanks, fuel and labor.

in 2001. Catfish processors employed 669 people and used some of the money received to pay for live catfish bought from catfish farmers in Chicot

Figure 6. Flow of Economic Benefits from the Catfish Industry Through the Economy



CHICOT COUNTY, ARKANSAS: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CATFISH INDUSTRY



Additional demand for groceries creates additional jobs at stores in the county.

County. Catfish farms received \$63 million from catfish processors by selling live catfish and employed 504 people. In addition, catfish farms purchased inputs valued at \$61 million from the industries that directly supported the production of live catfish.

The industries that directly supported catfish production employed 288 people with annual sales of \$85 million. These industries, such as equipment suppliers or feed bin manufacturers, in turn,

purchased goods and services from other industries that are not directly related to the catfish industry, such as communication or furniture industries. However, these industries also purchased goods and services from other secondary industries such as timber suppliers and producers to supply the input demanded. This demand-supply system produced 967 jobs and annual sales of \$1,116 million.

Employees of catfish farms, catfish processing plants and all

other industries that are directly or indirectly related to the catfish industry received \$51 million in salary and wages. Owners of all businesses (i.e., catfish farms, processing plants, supportive and secondary firms) received \$21 million as property income. Moreover, households of employees and business owners purchased goods and services from other industries such as food establishments valued at \$15 million, thus creating employment for 219 people. Households and business owners were able to pay \$16 million in federal taxes and \$6 million in state and local taxes. In the end, the economic impact of the catfish industry on Chicot County included \$384 million in economic output or sales, 2,665 jobs and \$22 million in tax revenue.

Encouraging the growth of backward-linked industries is one of the strategies used for rural poverty alleviation. As demonstrated in this study, the catfish industry directly and indirectly affects the production and employment of most industries in Chicot County. The industry is an important job creator in the county and thus an important source of tax revenue for local governments. Its importance to the local economy arises from the industry's demand for various support services that must be supplied locally. The existence of strong backward linkages is important in stimulating the local economy and diversification of economic activities. These characteristics are especially important when poverty alleviation is one of the development goals.



Fish farms create jobs and demand for tractors.



Fish farms generate demand for pickup trucks, netting, pumps and generators.

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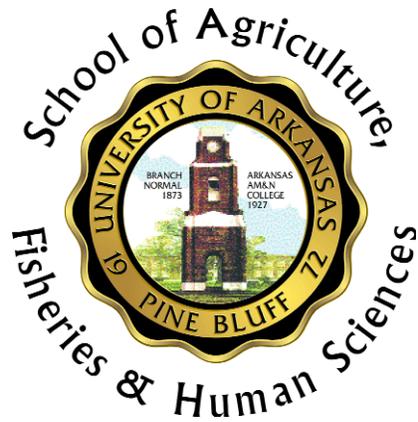
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