MARKETING OF SMALL SCALE AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky State University

Richard Bryant*, Siddhartha Dasgupta

College of Agriculture, Food Science and Sustainable Systems
Cooperative Extension Program
Demographics of surveyed consumers

- Survey conducted in 2 cities of KY with a high Hispanic concentration: Lexington and Shelbyville (N= 73)
- 58% Male
- Average household size = 4
- Mexico 52%; Peru 39%
- 77% <40 years old
- 32% in “factory work” & 20% in agriculture
Fish eating habits:

- 56% cook fish at home weekly
- 71% prefer freshwater fish
- 68% like eating catfish “A Lot”
- 20% like eating catfish but not “A lot”
Catfish preference:

- Live fish preferred by 25%
- Fresh gutted fish preferred by 53%
- Fresh fillets preferred by 15%
- They do not like frozen catfish (nor frozen fillets)
- “Will you buy fresh gutted catfish?”
  - 84% YES
  - 3% NO
Distribution of willingness to pay for fresh unprocessed catfish on ice:

Willingness to pay for whole, unprocessed catfish by Hispanic consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum price ($/lb)</th>
<th>Proportion of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3.50</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6.50</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sales of unprocessed catfish on ice in Hispanic grocery stores in Lexington, Shelbyville, and Louisville, KY
Sales of unprocessed catfish on ice in Hispanic grocery stores in Lexington, Shelbyville, and Louisville, KY

- Average weekly demand per store = 30 lb.
- Store will pay $1.50-$1.70/lb for unprocessed catfish on ice.
- Preferred size = 1.5-2lb fish.
Results from survey done at several community supported agriculture (CSA) operations in KY

• N = 60

• Each CSA consumer was given 2 fresh catfish fillets, along with a simple recipe.

• The consumers were asked to eat the fish, and then answer a set of questions.

• A payment-card approach was used to determine their willingness to pay for fresh catfish fillets.
Demographics of surveyed CSA consumers:

- 97% of CSA consumers were Caucasian
- Education (proxy of income): 60% had either graduate degrees or professional degrees
- 53% of respondents were female
- 53% of respondents live in a suburban area
- 60% of respondents were 50 years old or older
- Average household size = 2.68
Preferences for fish and catfish

• 93% indicated that they like to eat freshwater fish
• 13% ate catfish once per month; 45% ate catfish a few times a year; 42% ate catfish less often than “a few times a year”
• With respect to the sample of fresh fillets they received;
  – Taste: 92% either “loved it” or “liked it”
  – Texture: 82% either “loved it” or “liked it”
  – Freshness: 97% either “loved it” or “liked it”
• 67% consider regular or year-round availability of a product is important
• 75% want their CSA to offer fresh, locally-grown catfish fillets as a future protein
Stated willingness to pay for fresh catfish fillets:

![Graph showing frequency distribution of willingness to pay for fresh catfish fillets.](image)
Stated willingness to pay for fresh catfish fillets:

• Demand for fresh catfish fillets: 72% of CSA consumers indicated that they will be willing to buy 1-10 lb of fillets per month

• 17% of respondents said that they will not buy any catfish fillets

• 3% of respondents will buy more than 10 lbs of catfish fillets per month
Conclusions

• Hispanic markets are a good avenue for selling whole fish to grocers with a “carneceria” (butcher shop).

• Suppliers could get weekly orders of 20-60 lbs/week, at a price ranging from $1.50/lb to $1.70/lb.

• Fresh catfish from Kentucky farms could be sold directly to consumers at a price of $3.00/lb or higher.

• Community Supported Agriculture projects could be a potential market for Kentucky catfish fillets.
Richard Bryant*, Siddhartha Dasgupta

Kentucky State University
Aquaculture Research Center
103 Athletic Drive
Frankfort, KY  40601

richard.bryant@kysu.edu
siddhartha.dasgupta@kysu.edu