

Impact of Quality on Yield and Pricing

Yield is an important - but less visible - factor that influences the price of fish. While yield is one of many factors influencing price, it is one of the few factors that can be controlled. Processors interviewed across New England shared that they closely track the yield they receive from fish moving through their facilities. How well they did with yield one day can impact the price the next day as they anticipate quality levels and sometimes make up for losses due to damaged fish.

Not properly chilling fish or bruising/crushing of fish can result in significantly higher costs when processors lose edible product. When this happens regularly, it is challenging for processors to justify improving prices to the boats - on the other hand, if quality and yield were consistently higher, it could justify building new, higher value market opportunities to benefit both processors and fishermen.


The examples below demonstrate the impact that lower yield can have on the cost of fish to processors and buyers.

NOTE: These examples are simplifications and are not exact representations of the costs and factors involved in the price of filleted product.


"Sometimes buyers will buy inexpensive fish and end up paying more because the yield is so bad. I'd rather pay more for dayboat fish because the quality is better and I actually end up saving money because of the better yield."

– a New England processor


Monkfish tail (market size: large)

	Landed weight	Yield	Price per lb to boat	Price fishermen receives for 200-lb lot	Price per lb of fillet (based on yield), excluding any additional costs of processing	Price processor pays for usable fillets	% increase in cost due to reduced yield
High quality	200 lbs	65%	\$2.20	\$440	$(\$2.20 / 0.65) = \$3.38/\text{lb}$	\$677	n/a
Medium quality	200 lbs	55%	\$2.00	\$400	$(\$2.00 / 0.55) = \$3.64/\text{lb}$	\$727	7% increase
Low quality	200 lbs	40%	\$1.80	\$360	$(\$1.80 / 0.40) = \$4.50/\text{lb}$	\$900	33% increase


Hake (market size: large)

	Landed weight	Yield	Price per lb to boat	Payment fishermen receives for 300-lb lot	Price per lb of fillet (based on yield), excluding any additional costs of processing	Price processor pays for usable fillets	% increase in cost due to reduced yield
High quality	300 lbs	50%	\$2.00	\$600	$(\$2.00 / 0.50) = \$4.00/\text{lb}$	\$1,200	n/a
Medium quality	300 lbs	40%	\$1.80	\$540	$(\$1.80 / 0.40) = \$4.50/\text{lb}$	\$1,350	13% increase
Low quality	300 lbs	30%	\$1.50	\$450	$(\$1.50 / 0.30) = \$5.00/\text{lb}$	\$1,500	25% increase


Skate whole (wing fishery, season 1, mults/monk/scallop permit)

	Landed weight	Yield	Price per lb to boat	Price fishermen receives for 9,080 trip	Price per lb of fillet (based on yield), excluding any additional costs of processing	Price processor pays for usable fillets	% increase in cost due to reduced yield
High quality	9080 lbs	40%	\$0.80	\$7,264	$(\$0.80 / 0.40) = \$2.00/\text{lb}$	\$18,160	n/a
Medium quality	9080 lbs	35%	\$0.75	\$6,810	$(\$0.75 / 0.35) = \$2.14/\text{lb}$	\$19,431	7% increase
Low quality	9080 lbs	25%	\$0.65	\$5,902	$(\$0.65 / 0.25) = \$2.60/\text{lb}$	\$23,608	30% increase

Plaice (market size: large)

	Landed weight	Yield	Price per lb to boat	Price fishermen receives for 300-lb lot	Price per lb of fillet (based on yield), excluding any additional costs of processing	Price processor pays for usable fillets	% increase in cost due to reduced yield
High quality	300 lbs	35%	\$2.00	\$600	$(\$2.00 / 0.35) = \$5.71/\text{lb}$	\$1,714	n/a
Medium quality	300 lbs	30%	\$1.90	\$570	$(\$1.90 / 0.30) = \$6.33/\text{lb}$	\$1,900	11% increase
Low quality	300 lbs	20%	\$1.50	\$450	$(\$1.50 / 0.20) = \$7.50/\text{lb}$	\$2,250	31% increase

Black sea bass (market size: large)

	Landed weight	Yield	Price per lb to boat	Price fishermen receives for 500-lb lot	Price per lb of fillet (based on yield), excluding any additional costs of processing	Price processor pays for usable fillets	% increase in cost due to reduced yield
High quality	500 lbs	30%	\$3.25	\$1,625	$(\$3.25 / 0.30) = \$10.83/\text{lb}$	\$5,417	n/a
Medium quality	500 lbs	25%	\$3.00	\$1,500	$(\$3.00 / 0.25) = \$12.00/\text{lb}$	\$6,000	11% increase
Low quality	500 lbs	15%	\$2.25	\$1,125	$(\$2.25 / 0.15) = \$15.00/\text{lb}$	\$7,500	38% increase



This information is based on research done by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, and processors and fishermen from across New England. To learn more about this project and find other resources on finfish quality, scan the QR code or visit gmri.org/quality.