

A STUDY ON THE FISH PRICE AND CONSUMPTION OF FISH IN THE NINE CITIES OF FUJIAN PROVINCE OF CHINA IN 1997

by

QIU CHENGYU

Fisheries College, Jimei University, Xiamen ,P.R.China

Email: cyqiu@jmu.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

This paper reports changes in the price of the main fish species in nine cities of Fujian province of China in 1997. The characteristics of fish consumption in these regions have been studied. The results show that there were significant differences among the nine cities on the role of fish in household food supply. The consumption habits of the people appear to be more important than fish price. Advice and promotion of consumption will enhance the socio-economic role of fish in household food security.

Fujian province on the southeast coast of China has a mild climate, abundant rainfall, many crisscrossing rivers, 3053 km. of coastline on the mainland, 12 500 km² of fishing grounds and 0.36 million ha. of inland waters containing productive resources of aquatic animals and plants. These unique conditions are favourable for the development of Fujian fisheries. With convenient communication links, Fujian is in an excellent position to develop its international trade in aquatic products.

There are nine administrative cities in Fujian province (Fig1): Fuzhou, Xiamen, Putian, Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, Longyan, Sanming, Nanping and Ningde. Longyan, Sanming and Nanping are situated inland, the other six are in the coastal area. Xiamen is a special economic zone.

In 1997 the population of Fujian was about 32 million. The annual output of Fujian aquatic products is 4.29 million tons, about 12% of the total national production and in third place in China. The figure for per caput consumption in Fujian is 133 kg/yr, the highest in China. The value of fish production is second to that of agriculture of the province, it includes 2.0 million tons (46%) from marine fishing and 2.29 million tons (54%) from aquaculture. Mariculture output is 1.88 million tons, and the freshwater fishery produces 0.41 million tons.

In a market economy fish supply and consumption are reflected by differences in fish price. In this study, a comparison between the prices of the main fish (hairtail, silver carp and tilapia) and pork, chicken and egg in 1997 have been made. The characteristics of fish consumption in these nine cities have been studied with the hope of enhancing the socio-economic role of fish in the household food supply.

The monthly average prices in Fujian province from Jan. to Dec. 1997 of the main fish species: hairtail, silver carp and tilapia (hairtail is from marine capture and silver carp and tilapia are from aquaculture) and other competing foods are shown in Fig 2. The monthly average prices of fish from the nine cities in 1997 are almost the same, and so are those of pork, chicken and egg. The highest price is for pork, about Y19/kg, the second for hairtail and chicken, both are about, Y14/kg, and the cheapest is tilapia, silver carp and egg, all below Y10/kg. It is evident that the food supply in the province is sufficient. However, it is notable that the price of hairtail, a marine product, is higher than that of the freshwater fish and that fish is not the most important animal food in the province.

Because the annual average prices of fish from all the nine cities cannot reflect the differences and the characteristics of fish price and fish consumption between the cities, it is necessary to know the annual average price of fish in each of the nine cities. Fig 3 indicates that in the coastal cities the price of hairtail is far higher than that of freshwater fish, even higher than the price of chicken. In the inland cities, Longyan,

Sanming and Nanping, the prices of hairtail are lower than that of chicken, close to the prices of silver carp and tilapia. The differences between the prices of freshwater fish in the nine cities are small. From the annual average prices of fish in each of nine cities it shows that the people living in coastal zone prefer to eat pork and marine fish, while the people living in inland zones prefer pork and chicken. Neither marine fish nor freshwater fish rate as a preference for the people from the inland cities.

In Fuzhou, Xiamen, Sanming, and Nanping, there were some different characteristics in the monthly variation of fish price in 1997. The monthly change of the fish price in the coastal cities is larger than that in the inland cities. The prices of hairtail in Fuzhou and Xiamen are higher than that of chicken, and are close to the price of pork. It shows that hairtail and pork are equally preferred in the two cities. On the other hand, the fish prices in Sanming and Nanping, are all lower than the prices of pork and chicken, indicating that fish prices are set by consumer preference. As marine fish consumption in the coastal cities is greater than that in the inland cities fish prices in the inland cities are all lower than those in the coastal cities and change only slightly.

The conclusion is that there are obviously different habits of fish consumption which affect demand more than the fish price. To develop fisheries, we need to encourage people to consume more aquatic products, especially to enhance the socio-economic role of fish in household food. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to run campaigns to encourage people to consume more fish.

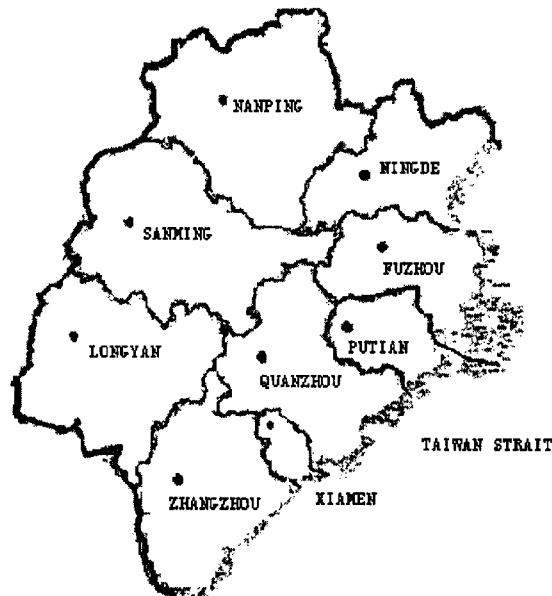


Fig. 1. Fujian administrative area.

