

Shelf-Stable Seafood Sales Shine in Tough Marketplace

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August in Review

- The August 2024 Consumer Sentiment Index by the University of Michigan reflects continued concern. At 67.9 points, Americans' current day sentiment remained far below the neutral rating of 100. Consumers continue to point to impact of high prices and perceive substantial uncertainty in the trajectory of the economy, per the August findings.
- USDA's Economic Research Service released the 2023 Food Security numbers. In 2023, 13.5% of households were food insecure at least some time during the year. Per the ERS, this is a statistically significant increase from the 12.8% in 2022.
- This concern has resulted in fewer restaurant visits and a greater share of food dollars flowing into retail in recent months. When shopping for groceries, consumers also apply a wide range of money-saving measures.
- While consumers are focused on price and promotions, it is rarely the only consideration going into the purchase. There are no linear consumer purchase patterns, which makes the marketplace complex but also ripe with opportunities for growth when addressing consumers' daily puzzle between budget, time, health and more.
- Value-added and deli-prepared sales are strengthening, reflecting a continued need for convenient solutions, while younger shoppers in particular continue to drive the importance of sustainable choices. Limiting food waste has become a very popular financial measure in addition to having environmental and social implications.
- August also reflected back-to-school for states across the nation, which signals big changes for many departments around the store. Lunchbox convenience and time-saving solutions for breakfast and dinner become of greater importance.

Inflation Insights

In August 2024 (the five weeks ending 9/1/2024), the price per unit across all foods and beverages in the Circana MULO+ universe stood at \$4.23, an increase of 1.6% versus August 2023. This is higher than the 1.5% price year-over-year increase seen in July as well as the first quarter averages of +1.2%. Prices in the fresh perimeter were up 2.6% year-over-year in August versus 1.1% in the center of the store. The average price of \$4.23 is 35.1% higher than the 2019, pre-pandemic average of \$3.13.

Average price/unit vs. YA	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Q1 23	Q2 23	Q3 23	Q4 23	Q1 24	Q2 24	Aug 24
Total food & beverages	+2.0%	+5.5%	+5.6%	+12.6%	+5.9%	+11.3%	+7.0%	+3.8%	+2.2%	+1.2%	1.6%	+1.6%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+, average price per unit and % gain versus YA

Fresh seafood prices crept up a bit in August, driven by finfish. The average price per pound for shelf-stable seafood (cans and pouches) dropped below \$5 for the first time in a while. While prices are looking better for the consumer, the average price per pound of \$9.60 remained significantly higher than the average price per pound for the three biggest animal proteins of chicken (\$3.06), pork (\$3.19) and even beef (\$6.61).

	August 2024			Latest 52 weeks		
	Average price per pound	Change vs. YA	Change vs. 3YA	Average price per pound	Change vs. YA	Change vs. 3YA
Total fresh seafood	\$9.60	+0.3%	+1.5%	\$9.51	-1.8%	+5.2%
Fresh finfish	\$10.54	+0.5%	+10.3%	\$10.43	-0.6%	+16.7%
Fresh shellfish	\$8.27	-1.4%	-14.8%	\$8.30	-5.1%	-13.1%
Total frozen seafood	\$7.27	-2.0%	+2.1%	\$7.31	-5.3%	+6.7%
Shelf-stable seafood	\$4.99	-5.8%	+6.0%	\$5.18	-0.4%	+10.4%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+ (not shown: other items in the seafood department)

Four out of the top five sellers in refrigerated/fresh seafood showed deflationary conditions for the month of August. Only salmon had a small increase in the average price per pound. The same is true for the 52-week view, where tilapia was the only one with a slight increase in the price per pound.

Price per pound	August 2024			Latest 52 weeks		
	Average price per pound	Change vs. YA	Change vs. 3YA	Average price per pound	Change vs. YA	Change vs. 3YA
Fresh salmon	\$11.52	+1.6%	+10.8%	\$11.39	-0.6%	+17.9%
Fresh crab	\$8.42	-1.1%	-35.6%	\$8.66	-12.1%	-26.9%
Fresh shrimp	\$8.44	-3.0%	-0.3%	\$8.41	-6.4%	-0.1%
Fresh cod	\$9.79	-1.2%	+11.7%	\$9.68	-6.1%	+14.4%
Fresh tilapia	\$6.12	-2.7%	+13.7%	\$6.23	+1.9%	+18.6%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+ (not shown: other items in the seafood department)

In the frozen food aisle, the average price per pound for shrimp decreased by 4.1% and frozen salmon prices were down 7.5% from August 2023. The deflation in many of the large fresh and frozen commodities means having to sell more volume to drive dollar sales.

Price per pound	August 2024			Latest 52 weeks		
	Average price per pound	Change vs. YA	Change vs. 3YA	Average price per pound	Change vs. YA	Change vs. 3YA
Frozen shrimp	\$7.72	-4.1%	-4.5%	\$7.81	-6.8%	-0.6%
Frozen salmon	\$8.98	-7.5%	+15.3%	\$9.22	-5.0%	+25.7%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+ (not shown: other items in the seafood department)

Seafood Across the Store

While June and July delivered sales growth in several areas, the patterns reversed in August. Fresh and frozen experienced declines in dollars and pounds. Shelf-stable seafood, however, was a notable exception. Canned seafood grew both dollars and pounds in August 2024 compared to August 2023 and volume also rose above that of two years ago.

	August 2024					Latest 52 weeks			
	Dollar size	Dollars vs. YA	Dollars vs. 2YA	Pounds vs. YA	Pounds vs. 2YA	Dollars vs. YA	Dollars vs. 2YA	Pounds vs. YA	Pounds vs. 2YA
Fresh seafood	\$807M	-2.2%	-6.1%	-2.4%	-4.9%	-4.1%	-4.9%	-2.3%	-3.2%
Frozen seafood	\$739M	-4.2%	-10.0%	-2.3%	-2.6%	-5.2%	-7.0%	+0.1%	-3.9%
Shelf-stable seafood	\$330M	+0.2%	+3.5%	+6.3%	+8.3%	+0.6%	+4.3%	+1.0%	+0.3%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+

Ambient Seafood

During the five August 2024 weeks, ambient seafood in cans and pouches reached \$330 million in sales, which reflected a dollar increase of 0.2% over August 2023. Tuna was, by far, the largest seller, and all formats grew units in August. The increase in canned sardines may be related to the strength of frozen pizza sales as well as make-your-own pizza ingredients in the past year.

Type	August 2024			Latest 52 weeks		
	\$ sales	\$ vs. YA	Units vs. YA	\$ sales	\$ vs. YA	Units vs. YA
Ambient seafood	\$330M	+0.2%	+3.6%	\$3.3B	+0.6%	+0.1%
Ambient tuna	\$244M	-0.2%	+4.2%	\$2.4B	+0.6%	-0.3%
Ambient salmon	\$28M	-4.6%	+0.1%	\$288M	-0.6%	-0.6%
Ambient sardines	\$30M	+13.0%	+3.3%	\$277M	+8.1%	+4.5%
Ambient all other	\$23M	-2.7%	+1.9%	\$285M	-3.5%	+0.7%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+

Fresh/refrigerated seafood

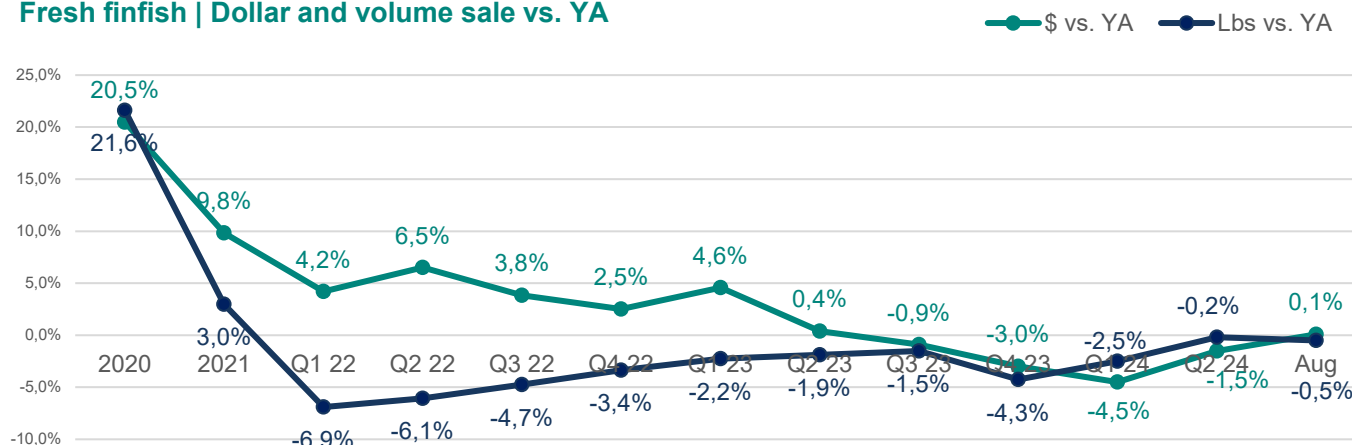
Finfish was the most stable of the various fresh/refrigerated seafood items with both dollars and pounds relatively stable in comparison to August 2023. Shellfish sales were down 7.5% in August, similar to the 8.3% decline for the total year.

Type	\$ sales	August 2024		Latest 52 weeks		
		\$ vs. YA	Lbs vs. YA	\$ sales	\$ vs. YA	Lbs vs. YA
Total fresh seafood	\$807M	-2.2%	-2.4%	\$8.4B	-4.1%	-2.3%
Fresh finfish	\$535M	+0.1%	-0.5%	\$5.4B	-2.1%	-1.5%
Fresh shellfish	\$239M	-7.5%	-6.2%	\$2.7B	-8.3%	-3.4%
All other seafood	\$32M	+4.1%	+0.6%	\$341M	-0.4%	-3.4%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+ (not shown: other items in the seafood department)

The new MULO+ universe shows that refrigerated/fresh finfish pounds continue to trend right around the year-ago levels.

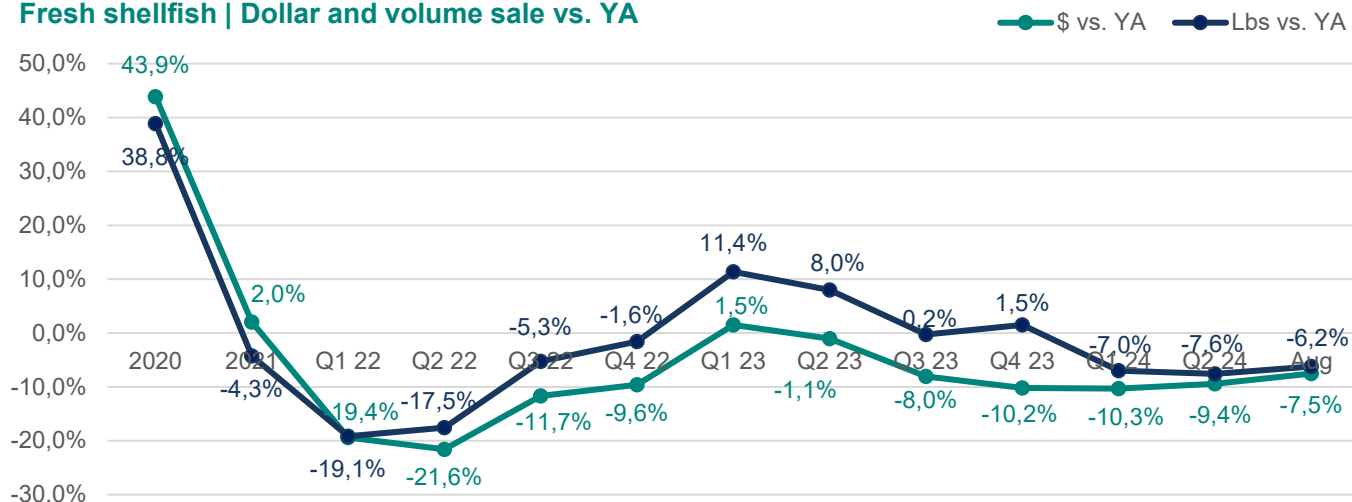
Fresh finfish | Dollar and volume sale vs. YA



Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+

Since the beginning of the year, fresh shellfish pound and dollar sales have trended in negative territory, with very similar patterns for August.

Fresh shellfish | Dollar and volume sale vs. YA



Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+

Fresh seafood	Dollar sales	Dollar vs. YA	Pounds vs. YA
August 2024	\$806.5M	-2.2%	-2.4%
W.E. 08-04-24	\$163.3M	-3.8%	-4.3%
W.E. 08-11-24	\$162.0M	-1.4%	-1.5%
W.E. 08-18-24	\$159.8M	-0.6%	-0.6%
W.E. 08-26-24	\$155.2M	-0.5%	-1.0%
W.E. 09-01-24	\$166.5M	-4.1%	-4.4%

The five August weeks were all fairly similar in size, around \$160 million in fresh/refrigerated seafood sales. The final week, leading up to Labor Day, had the highest sales at a little more than \$166 million. All weeks were down in dollars and pounds in comparison to the same weeks last year.

Top Species

Whereas July delivered pound gains for five out of the top 10 sellers, only cod and catfish sold more pounds in August 2024 compared to August 2023. In the 52-week view, more items remained in the plus, including crab and shrimp.

Type	August 2024			Latest 52 weeks		
	\$ sales	\$ vs. YA	Lbs vs. YA	\$ sales	\$ vs. YA	Lbs vs. YA
Total fresh seafood	\$806.5M	-2.2%	-2.4%	\$8.4B	-4.1%	-2.3%
Salmon	\$380.2M	-0.7%	-2.3%	\$3.9B	-1.8%	-1.2%
Crab	\$99.9M	-9.3%	-8.2%	\$1.1B	-11.5%	+0.6%
Shrimp	\$81.4M	-3.3%	-0.3%	\$876M	-5.5%	+0.9%
Lobster	\$37.0M	-9.2%	-14.8%	\$394M	-10.9%	-19.9%
Tilapia	\$24.9M	-7.7%	-5.2%	\$253M	-12.4%	-14.0%
Cod	\$22.2M	+10.0%	+11.3%	\$251M	+6.2%	+13.1%
Trout	\$21.4M	-1.0%	-1.7%	\$208M	-14.1%	-14.8%
Catfish	\$20.5M	+1.1%	+4.8%	\$213M	-1.2%	+3.4%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh Total US, MULO+

Frozen Seafood Sales

The total frozen food department generated \$8.3 billion in sales in the five August weeks. Unit sales remained ahead of August 2023, with strength for meals and processed meat/poultry but down results for seafood. In the 52-week view, frozen seafood unit sales were mostly unchanged from year-ago levels.

	August 2024			Latest 52 weeks		
	Dollar sales	Dollars vs. YA	Units vs. YA	Dollar sales	Dollars vs. YA	Units vs. YA
Frozen food department	\$8.3B	+0.5%	+0.6%	\$84.9B	+0.1%	-0.1%
Meals	\$2.7B	-1.5%	+0.1%	\$28.4B	-1.6%	-1.6%
Seafood	\$739M	-4.2%	-1.0%	\$8.1B	-5.2%	-0.3%
Processed meat/poultry	\$734M	+13.4%	+11.6%	\$7.2B	+5.3%	+8.5%
Meat/poultry	\$649M	+2.7%	+0.7%	\$6.5B	-1.4%	-1.9%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+

By type, frozen shellfish (predominantly raw and cooked shrimp) was the largest seller in August 2024, at \$403 million. Seafood alternatives, a small seller of less than \$1 million in August sales, had dollar and pound declines.

Dollar sales	2020	2021	2022	2023	Q2 23	Q3 23	Q4 23	Q1 24	Q2 24	Aug 24	\$ vs YA	Pounds vs YA
Frozen seafood	+38%	+2%	-1%	-4%	-2.7%	-6.5%	-10.7%	-4.6%	-5.2%	\$739M	-4.2%	-2.3%
Shellfish	+42%	+4%	-5%	-6%	-4.3%	-7.1%	-10.8%	-5.8%	-7.1%	\$403M	-5.7%	-1.6%
Finfish	+32%	-1%	+7%	-2%	-0.7%	-2.3%	-4.7%	-2.6%	-2.8%	\$300M	+0.3%	+0.7%
All other frozen seafood	+36%	+6%	-4%	+3%	+3.2%	+6.1%	-3.9%	-7.2%	-1.7%	\$36M	-19.8%	-25.4%
Seafood alternatives	+22%	+19%	+16%	-15%	-16%	-17.6%	-12.7%	-9.0%	-3.4%	\$842K	-5.6%	-8.8%

Source: Circana, Integrated Fresh, Total US, MULO+

Top 5 Frozen Species

Shrimp are the frozen seafood powerhouse, with sales of \$3.9 billion in the latest 52 weeks. July was an exception to an otherwise strong year for frozen salmon. While down in dollars in July, the 52-week view registers both dollar and pound growth.

Top 5 frozen species		August 2024		Latest 52 weeks		
Type	\$ sales	\$ vs. YA	Lbs vs. YA	\$ sales	\$ vs. YA	Lbs vs. YA
Frozen shrimp	\$346M	-6.2%	-2.2%	\$3.9B	-8.0%	-1.3%
Frozen salmon	\$100M	+3.2%	+11.6%	\$1.0B	+0.7%	+6.1%
Frozen pollock	\$55M	+5.7%	+4.7%	\$615M	+4.0%	+9.2%
Frozen tilapia	\$52M	-3.9%	-10.4%	\$539M	-6.8%	-3.8%
Frozen cod	\$29M	-0.9%	-2.2%	\$302M	-10.5%	-9.7%

What's Next?

- Out with back-to-school, in with pumpkin season. The Halloween and fall sets are in-store and with the change in weather and daily routines often comes a change in consumption patterns as well.
- Consumers continue to make more trips to the grocery store than they have in years. The key to sales success is capitalizing on these additional visits by optimizing trips to the aisle and the number of items bought each trip.
- While the decline in the number of items per trip has had a profound impact on grocery sales for the past two years, holidays remain an important reason to include more premium items and treats — underscoring the importance of suggestive selling in-store, online and utilizing social media.
- All consumer confidence, restaurant and grocery indicators point to a more home-centric environment for the time being, compounded by ongoing higher restaurant inflation and a cooling job market.

The next performance report in the [Circana](#), 210 Analytics and MSD Animal Health series will be released mid-October to cover the September sales trends.

Date ranges:

2023: 52 weeks ending 12/31/2023

Q1 2024: 13 weeks ending 3/31/2024

Q2 2024: 13 weeks ending 6/30/2024

August 2024: 5 weeks ending 9/1/2024