Producer costs in Japan

The producer cost information is given in the MAFF Fisheries Management Survey, published March 29, 2024, which reports data from the fiscal year 2022, ending March 29, 2023. (Japanese fiscal years are named for the starting year, while in most other countries they are named for the ending year.)

I attach an edited Excel file giving aquaculture data. I added English and highlighted in yellow the parts relating to "yellowtail family." Other parts are for sea bream, scallops, oysters, and seaweed, so I did not translate those. (Link to original Excel download)

Note that "yellowtail family" includes the three *Seriola* species of buri, kampachi, and hiramasa, so the resulting prices would be skewed a bit higher than for only buri. The actual buri prices would be lower and the kampachi prices would be higher. The volume of hiramasa is probably too low to move the figure much, but its price would be higher still than kampachi. Also, note that these are producer prices to the fish farmers rather than wholesale prices.

The survey only covers Kyushu and Shikoku islands, though there is also production on Honshu Island. However, those two islands are the leading producers.

The "Aquaculture production income" averaged between Kyushu and Shikoku was JPY 134,923,000, while the averaged "Total fish cultivation expenses" were JPY 133,745,000, giving an averaged profit of JPY 1,178,000. When this profit is divided by the averaged production of 119,768 kg, we get an averaged profit of just JPY 9.8 per kg.

At such low prices, one might wonder why they would even bother to farm. For family-run operations, the labor cost represents wages paid to the family, so they earn in that way. For larger integrated operations, upstream (feed mill) and downstream (processing/marketing) activities may earn more.

By dividing the averaged "Total fish cultivation expenses" by the averaged production volume we can find a producer break-even price of JPY 1,116. Using the average yen-dollar and yen-euro exchange rates for the calendar year of 2022 of 131.50 and 138.04, respectively, this would have been USD 8.48 or EUR 8.08. (Average exchange rates are usually given for calendar years rather than fiscal years, so it is not an exact overlap of the time period.)

Typically, family-owned operations have lower labor costs, but higher feed and credit costs compared with corporate owners. The number of operators has been declining over time with consolidation.

区分 - Classification	単位 - Unit	ぶり類養殖業 - Yellowtail farming		
		平均 - Average	四国 - Shikoku	九州 - Kyushu
		(1)	(2)	(3)
集計経営体数 - Number of management entities	経営体	15	7	8
養殖施設面積 - Aquaculture facility area				
ぶり類養殖 - Yellowtail farming	㎡	1,433	1,770	1,137
まだい養殖	〃	-	-	-
ほたてがい養殖	〃	-	-	-
かき類養殖	〃	-	-	-
のり類養殖	〃	-	-	-
操業状況 - Status of operations				
出漁日数 - Number of days spent on the water	日 - Days	292	290	295
延べ労働時間 - Total working hours	時間 - Hours	4,406	5,599	3,365
海上労働 - Work at sea	〃	3,971	5,039	3,038
家族 - Family	〃	2,590	2,744	2,456
雇用者 - Employee	〃	1,381	2,295	582
陸上労働 - Work on land	〃	435	560	327
家族 - Family	〃	313	434	208
雇用者 - Employee	〃	122	126	119
収獲量 - Production				
ぶり類 - Yellowtail family (includes buri, kampachi, hiramasa)	kg	119,768	182,888	64,537
まだい	〃	-	-	-
ほたてがい（殻付き）	〃	-	-	-
かき類（むき身）	〃	-	-	-
板のり	枚	-	-	-
その他ののり	kg	-	-	-
養殖業生産物収入 - Aquaculture production income	千円 - ¥1,000	134,923	199,518	78,402
漁労支出合計 - Total fish cultivation expenditures	〃	133,745	198,541	77,048
期首期末棚卸増減 - Inventory changes from beginning to end of period	〃	10,107	14,273	6,462
雇用労賃 - Labor costs	〃	4,389	8,225	1,032
漁船・漁具費 - Fishing vessel and fishing gear costs	〃	1,128	1,942	416
油費 - Fuel costs	〃	1,778	2,475	1,168
えさ代 - Feed costs	〃	83,604	124,641	47,696
種苗代 - Mojako (fingerling) cost	〃	9,988	11,224	8,906
修繕費 - Repair costs	〃	1,985	3,057	1,047
販売手数料 - Sales commission	〃	2,234	3,275	1,323
負債利子 - Interest on loans	〃	929	410	1,384
租税公課諸負担 - Taxes and public charges	〃	623	718	540
その他の漁労支出 - Other fishing expenditures	〃	11,634	19,652	4,618
減価償却費 - Depreciation expenses	〃	5,346	8,649	2,456

漁業投下固定資本 - Fixed capital invested in aquaculture	〃	13,403	20,557	7,144