



Freshwater trout

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Introduction to ASC certification

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) promotes responsibly farmed seafood through its certification and labelling programme. Working together with the aquaculture industry, seafood processors, retail and foodservice companies, scientists and conservation groups, it helps to guide the industry towards an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible future.

Fish farms that meet ASC's standards gain the right to sell their products bearing the ASC logo. This gives farms a public endorsement of their responsible practices, and gives consumers the reassurance that they're making an ethical purchase.

The ASC standards

The ASC farm standards were developed by more than 2,000 stakeholders globally. The standard development process adheres to ISEAL's¹ Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

The ASC standards focus on both the environmental and social impact of farming.

- Environmentally, farms must show that they actively minimise their impact on the surrounding natural environment. This extends to careful management of the fish health and resources.
- Socially, farms must be a good and conscientious neighbour; that means operating their farm in a socially responsible manner, caring for their employees and working with the local community.

¹ ISEAL is the global membership association for sustainability standards, it defines what good practice looks like along with the core characteristics of credible standards. ISEAL members demonstrate their ability to meet ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice and accompanying requirements, as well as commit to learning and improving to deliver increased positive impacts.



The ASC Trout Standard

Nearly all trout that we eat is farmed. However, trout farming has been associated with a number of environmental impacts, such as poor water quality, threat of disease spread and the use of marine ingredients in feed. But with strict quotas on stock, careful monitoring of potential pollutants and strict feed requirements, ASC certified trout is the responsible choice:

- **Biodiversity.** ASC certified trout farms minimise impacts on the local ecosystem in a number of ways, such as the development and implementation of an impact assessment on threatened species, ensuring farms are not sited in National Protected Areas, and minimising fish escapes. In addition, the introduction of exotic trout species is not allowed, unless cultured in a closed system. Since trout farming can occur along rivers, a maximum of 50 per cent of the river water flow can be diverted through the farm. The ecological quality of the riverbed should not be impacted and needs to be monitored carefully.
- **Feed.** ASC certification requires trout farms to adhere to strict limits to minimise use of wild fish as an ingredient for feed. In addition, the standard requires farms to ensure full traceability back to a certified source, both for wild fish and soy.
- **Pollution.** ASC certified trout farms are required to measure various water parameters (phosphorus, oxygen levels, etc.) at regular intervals and remain within set limits. Responsible farming can only take place in healthy water bodies.
- **Diseases.** ASC certified trout farms must adhere to rigorous requirements to minimise disease outbreaks. A Fish Health Management Plan must be developed under supervision of a veterinarian and implemented on the farm. This plan details steps for biosecurity management. In addition, chemical antimicrobial treatments before a disease is diagnosed (prophylactic use), is prohibited.
- **Social.** ASC certification imposes strict requirements based on the core principles of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), these include prohibiting the use of child labour or any form of forced labour. All ASC certified farms are safe and equitable working environments where employees earn a decent wage and have regulated working hours. Regular consultation with surrounding communities about potential social impacts from the farm and proper processing of complaints are also required by certified farms.

Similar requirements apply for suppliers of small trouts which are supplied to the ASC certified trout farm.

Why the ASC matters

ASC's standards set performance indicators across all of the criteria. Farms must not exceed metric-based limits to ensure their output meets all the requirements for certification. During the certification process the independent certifiers' reports are published for public consultation, which informs the certification decision.

Farms that meet the ASC standards deliver real benefits: a cleaner seabed, cleaner water and healthier fish. They also help to preserve local biodiversity, and work in a way that supports their community.

Through chain of custody certification, you can be sure that ASC labelled seafood can be traced back through every step of the supply chain to a well-managed farm that meets the strict requirements of the ASC standards.