

# Pangasius



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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's<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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 Pangasius Standard

**A number of issues have been associated with pangasius farming. In particular, concerns over pollution of the Mekong river and water quality. Other major concerns are outbreaks of diseases and the overuse of antibiotics. ASC certification demands that farms adhere to strict guidelines to ensure they produce a healthy product while minimising the negative environmental and social impacts associated with pangasius farming.**

- **Biodiversity.** ASC certified pangasius farms minimise impacts on the local ecosystem in a number of ways. They can be located only in approved areas for aquaculture and they need to prove they do not impact endangered species. Fish escapes must be minimised and trapping devices are installed to recapture any fish that do escape. Since pangasius farms often use water from surrounding sources, limits are set for how much of this water can be allocated to the farm.
- **Feed.** ASC certification requires pangasius farms to adhere to strict criteria for the use of wild fish as an ingredient for feed. Fishmeal and fish oil products sourced for feed must be ISEAL certified. In addition, the standard requires farms to ensure full traceability back to a certified source for ingredients from wild fish.
- **Pollution.** ASC certified pangasius farms are required to measure various water parameters (nitrogen, phosphorus, oxygen levels, etc.) and remain within set limits. Treatment systems for waste and sludge need to comply with strict requirements before discharging can occur.
- **Diseases.** ASC certified pangasius farms must adhere to rigorous requirements to minimise disease outbreaks. A health plan must be developed under supervision of an aquatic animal health specialist and implemented. This plan details steps for biosecurity management. In addition, the use of medicine before a disease is diagnosed (prophylactic use), and the use of medicines as growth promoter are prohibited. A producer can only use approved medicines, no antibiotics critical for human health are allowed, and all treatments (also in the hatchery) need to be disclosed. Mortalities need to be monitored carefully.
- **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. In addition, certified producers liaise directly with communities to solve conflicts and complaints and recruit workforce from the local community above migratory workers.

## 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.