

ASC Feed Standard

Version 1.0
(Launched on 15 June 2021)

Frequently Asked Questions (Feed - QAs)

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Introduction - Aquaculture & AquaFeeds

An estimated 70% of farmed aquatic species are dependent on feed; and it represents a major component of the environmental and social footprint of aquaculture. Feed is thus important for the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) to define precisely what constitutes responsible feed production. The environmental and social footprints of aquafeed are made all the more important since aquaculture is the fastest-growing animal protein production sector in the world and is forecast by the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to provide two thirds of seafood destined for human consumption by 2030.

The global ASC Feed Standard will act as a tool to help recognise and reward responsible aquaculture feed and will be applicable to all ASC farm standards. It will also provide an additional mechanism for producers and retailers eager to minimise and mitigate environmental and social impacts throughout their supply chain; and provide more traceability and transparency to their stakeholders, including on topics such as GMOs and deforestation. It is also important to remember that the sustainability-conscious trend to decrease the proportion of marine ingredients in feed results in a greater proportion of plant ingredients being used, thus 'shifting' some of the various feed production impacts onto land. These – too – need mitigating and the ASC Feed Standard proposes to address these issues.

The production of the feed's raw material – marine and terrestrial ingredients — raises issues throughout the feed supply chain. These can include habitat loss, over-harvesting, biodiversity impacts, pollution, poor labour conditions, human rights abuses and lack of community consultation, among others. These social and environmental issues will be addressed by the ASC Feed Standard, which will also include other key sustainability indicators such as greenhouse gas emissions, water and energy consumption.

The principles, criteria and indicators of the Feed Standard will be verified at the feed mill level.

What's the Feed Standard about?

Reducing the impact of feed means reducing the impact of aquaculture – on a global scale. That is why ASC has approached the topic of feed in a holistic way.

The Standard is the result of years of development by a diverse group of experts comprising feed producers, retailers, NGOs, farmers, and other stakeholders. It requires that feed mills meet strict environmental and social requirements; source ingredients from socially responsible suppliers; and use environmentally responsibly produced raw materials. In doing so, issues in both the supply chains and at raw material levels are addressed. Requirements on reporting of performance will also improve the transparency of the industry, reward efforts to improve, and assist future research into feed sustainability.

Why "Feed"?

- Impacts go beyond fish farming & much (e.g. ~70% when it comes to carbon footprint/GHGs) of the footprints come from Feed; this also includes potential Social/Human & terrestrial/deforestation impacts. That's why it is important to adopt a holistic approach.
- NB, reminder: Aquaculture Impacts are also addressed through the ASC's 11 species-specific standards (which will be aligned in the forthcoming ASC Farm Standard) and the joint ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard.

5 key Points of Differences – PODs of the ASC Feed Standard:

1. **More rigour to the Due Diligence (DD).** Other certifiers may call it a 'risk assessment' and expect mills to conduct *some form* of this. ASC has, with DD, a more standardised and stringent process.
2. **Deforestation and land Conversion (D/C) concerns are addressed** for any crop – *not just soy*.
3. **Improvement plan for marine ingredients.**
4. **Social benefits:** ASC Standard addresses comprehensively issues pertaining to Human Rights, Labour, Local Community & Indigenous People.
5. Combined holistically, the Due Diligence, Reporting, Transparency, Stringency of requirements and Rigour of auditing/certification process provide **Assurance, Credibility, Trust** and **Risk Mitigation**...

Q - What feed requirements do ASC farms need to meet *before* they are able to source ASC compliant feed produced through this new Feed Standard?

ASC farms should continue to meet the feed requirements of the species specific farm standard they are producing to, this also includes the requirements of the [ASC Interim Feed Solution](#). These requirements apply up until the end of the transition period (September 2024- See [Timelines](#)) for ASC farms to switch to sourcing ASC compliant feed produced to this new standard. ASC will release a statement confirming this.

Structure of the ASC Feed Standard

The new **ASC Feed Standard** (v1.0) is guided by 5 Principles:

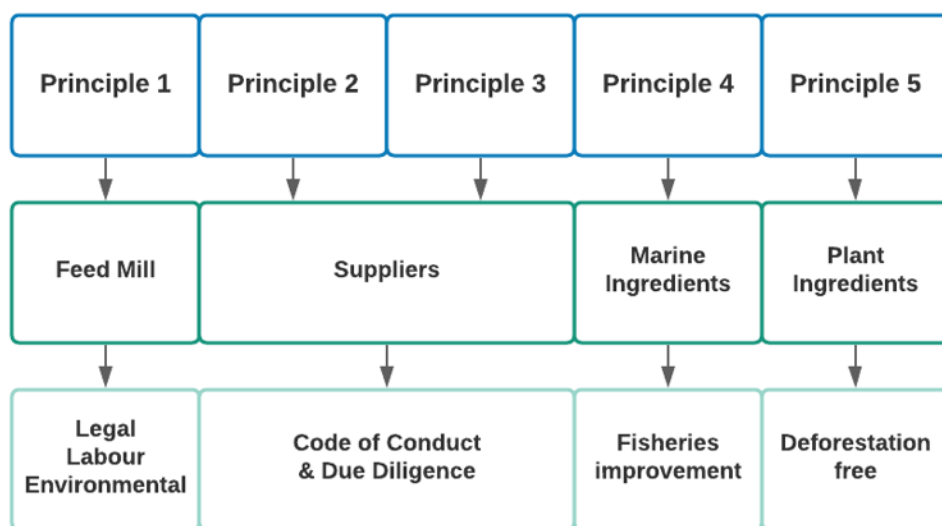
Principle 1 - The UoC has a **management system** to implement the ASC feed standard, including **operating legally**, and in a socially **and environmentally responsible** manner.

Principle 2 - The UoC **sources ingredients responsibly**.

Principle 3 - The UoC **accounts** for eligible **ingredients input and feed output...**

Principle 4 - The UoC **sources marine ingredients** responsibly.

Principle 5 - The UoC **sources plant ingredients** responsibly.



The Social and Human Rights dimension...

The Feed Standard takes the ASC's holistic approach to responsible aquaculture and extends it to the feed mills that manufacture aquafeed, as well as the suppliers of their ingredients as labour-related issues are essentially comparable between those actors. Feed mills will be the facilities audited against the standard, but they and farms will be given time to ensure their supply chains meet ASC requirements. The Standard will also incentivise more feed mills to work towards certification to meet the growing demand from ASC farms.

As well as environmental sustainability, mills must also ensure they and their suppliers are socially responsible. For instance, independent auditors must verify that mills are not using forced or child labour, pay and treat their staff fairly, and must not discriminate on any grounds. They must also be responsible neighbours, communicating proactively with their local communities and responding on community-grievances made towards the mill. Certified feed mills are required to incentivise their supply chains to adhere to these principles as well, ensuring an impact in areas where the risk of these issues becomes more prevalent.

ASC requires that -- when it comes to community relations -- the feed mill/UoC takes the proactive step not only to have certain procedures in place, but also to ensure and 'make it known' that/how those procedures can be used/accessed (e.g. grievance procedures for employees, local communities and indigenous people).

Q - Do social aspects also apply to companies producing the primary raw materials (e.g. fisheries or soy farmers)?

- Yes, not only do the many 'Social aspects' apply to feed mill employees (Principle 1), the Standard ensures that the UoC maps its supply chain and conducts Due Diligence (DD) on ingredient manufacturers and that the latter themselves also investigate and provide relevant information on the primary raw material production (e.g. soy farming).
- Principle 2 'starts' with a requirement for the UoC to effectively implement a *Supplier Code of Conduct* which includes ("at a minimum") the Social points listed in 2.1.3 – 2.1.8.
- A series of detailed requirements (See Principles 2 & 3) ensures that the feed mill is aware of the origin and source of its various ingredients and how/by whom and where the ingredients, and their raw materials, are produced etc.
- Should the Supplier Code of Conduct not be upheld, the UoC shall discontinue purchases of ingredients from that supplier (2.1.5).
- Re. the 'soy farmer' example, indicator 2.1.7 states "Within the Supplier Code of Conduct (Indicator 2.1.1) the UoC shall require ingredient manufacturers to communicate an equivalent set of requirements (Indicator 2.1.1.) with the same intention, to their suppliers (i.e. manufacturers of purchased feed materials)."
- *Principle 2 also requires the feed mill to conduct due diligence on the ingredient manufacturer and the primary raw material for the risk factors listed in table 1, and using one of the four pathways defined in Annex 3 e.g. forced/child labour.*
- *There are many more specific requirements which can be highlighted (e.g. in DD etc.)...*

Which ‘Social Topics’ are included?

There are many issues tackled include (*but are not limited to*)

- legal compliance re. the various labour regulations and
- in line with ILO-Conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) the Feed Standard also addresses;
- forced, bonded, compulsory labour or human trafficking;
- protection of children and young workers;
- no discrimination,
- safe and healthy work environment,
- ensuring employees’ right to associate/collective bargaining,
- work contracts, wage levels,
- preventing excessive working hours;
- respecting the dignity and health of employees;
- ensuring workers, local communities and indigenous people have access to effective grievance mechanisms;
- local community engagement and respect of indigenous and tribal people’s rights, cultures and traditional territories [etc.].

Q - The Code of Conduct must include statement UoC will discontinue the business relationship if ingredient manufacturer fails to comply with the Code. (2.1.5) *How does that sit within the ASC mission, and does it improve situation for workers?*

This fits within ASC’s mission to improve social standards within the industry. By complying with the social indicators, an ingredient manufacturer is showing that it is willing and able to meet internationally accepted industry standard and best practice for labour conditions. Workers employed by those IMs should benefit accordingly.

What's New with the Feed Standard that was not already tackled by the various 11 species-specific ASC standards?

The **current ASC [farm-level] standards are *already* rather stringent**: they focus on the “environmentally efficient use of resources and responsible” aspects:

- Traceability of (marine & terrestrial; >1%) raw materials used in feed,
- Presence/evidence of a responsible sourcing policy for marine ingredients (incl. a commitment to continuous improvement of source fisheries) and for terrestrial ingredients (incl. compliance with recognised crop moratoriums & local laws).
- Re. Marine ingredients:
 - Wild fish (marine ingredients) use efficiency:
 - Fishmeal Forage Fish Dependency Ratios for fishmeal and fish oil (FFDRm & FFDRo); which also factors-in Feed Conversion Ratios (FCRs)
 - **NB:** The species-specific FFDR/FCRs levels set in the current standards will in future be defined as part of the ASC Farm Standard (Criterion 2.13) and are/will not be part of the Feed Standard.
 - No use of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) Fish and/or IUCN Red/Threatened Listed species.
- Re. Terrestrial ingredients:
 - soya or soya-derived ingredients must be 100%-certified by the Roundtable for Responsible Soy (RTRS), or equivalent.
 - Transparency: Disclosure to the buyers of/if GM/transgenic plant ingredient are being used (>1%).

The new Feed Standard encompasses this/the above in a holistic way & goes further.

- ➔ The ‘scope’ / “Unit of Certification” (UoC) is the Feedmill (vs. the Farm). ASC thus extends its certification scrutiny and assurance programme to the feed mills that manufacture aquafeed, *as well as* the suppliers of their ingredients, as labour-related issues are essentially comparable between those actors.
 - NB: The (aligned) Farm Standard will only have the Farm-specific requirements (e.g. FFDR levels, feeding practices).
- ➔ **A comprehensive Due Diligence (DD) process and risk-mapping approach** enables to make requirements on the **sustainability status of the ingredients** being sourced.
 - NB: Deforestation and land Conversion (D/C) concerns are also specifically addressed for any crop – *not just soy*.
- ➔ **Annex 8** provides full list of reporting and transparency requirements (most of which are also unique to ASC).
- ➔ During the development process of the Standard, the Feed Standard Steering Committee (SC) has worked together with the Accountability Framework Initiative (AFI), a global consortium to address deforestation, to develop a concept to start mitigating this impact within the aquafeed industry as well.

What are some the major Feed-related novelties, compared the “old” feed requirements in the current ASC standards (spp-specific)?

- ➔ The *current* feed requirements do not focus on practices in the feed mill and the engagement of feed mills with their suppliers. The Feed Standard bridges this gap. This is of particular relevance as that relationship helps to drive-through changes in the supply chain – including down to raw material production.
- ➔ The *current* feed requirements only partly pay attention to impacts related to plant-derived ingredients – with the current emphasis only on soy. The new Feed Standard approaches these issues holistically as key agricultural impacts occur in all major agricultural commodities – not just soy.
- ➔ Enhanced Transparency / Traceability requirements, Social (including re. Communities & Indigenous People) throughout the supply chain (feed mill > Suppliers > their suppliers/raw material production), Majority Sustainability Level (MSC) & Deforestation / Conversion-free requirements.

Examples of ‘new’ requirements to ASC certification? (*non-exhaustive list, to name but a few*)

- **Anti-Corruption, bribery** etc. & E.g. “The UoC shall have a system to prevent acts of corruption, extortion, embezzlement or bribery.” (indicator 1.2.2)
- **Preventing falsification of records:** “The UoC shall have a system to ensure records are not falsified and information is not misrepresented.” (indicator 1.2.3)
- **Human rights, Hiring & Labour conditions:**
 - “The UoC shall ensure that any employment/recruitment agency(ies) used is screened and monitored...” (indicator 1.4.4)
 - The UoC, or if applicable the agency(ies) involved in recruitment, shall not test for pregnancy or virginity, nor practice or encourage forced contraception.” (indicator 1.6.2)
 - “Where the UoC, or if applicable the agency(ies) involved in recruitment, determine that medical tests are required according to their risk assessment, employees have the right to use an independent doctor, if preferred.” (indicator 1.6.5)
 - “The UoC shall allow employees the freedom to remove themselves from an unsafe situation without fear of retribution.” (indicator 1.7.8)
 - “The UoC shall provide access to free, clearly labelled, potable water for all employees.” (indicator 1.7.10)
 - “The UoC shall provide suitable areas for breast feeding women.” (indicator 1.7.13)
 - “The UoC shall ensure structural integrity of all buildings and structures within the UoC.” (indicator 1.7.15)
- **Whistle-blower protection** (indicator 1.13.8): “The UoC shall ensure a confidential process is provided for, if preferred by the employee/entity submitting a grievance, and shall only share information as necessary to investigate the grievance.”
- **Grievance mechanisms:** *Many specific indicators/requirements* have been added regarding the grievance procedures with local communities (Criterion 1.15) and Indigenous People (Criterion 1.16)
- **Environmental impacts of the feed mill facilities:**
 - “The UoC shall develop and implement an Effluent Management Plan (EMP) with the intent to reduce negative impacts on receiving waters in terms of ecosystems and human health.” (indicator 1.20.3)
 - The “Energy Efficiency Management Plan (EEMP) with the intent to improve energy efficiency and to increase the proportion of energy coming from renewable energy sources” (1.21.3)
- **Detailed and comprehensive Traceability** requirements regarding the Feed Ingredients...
- **Comprehensive Due Diligence (DD)** on ingredient manufacturers and primary raw material production & risk-mapping approach (**Annex 3**)

- A novel **Majority Sustainability Level (MSL)** approach (Annex 4)
- Etc...

Sustainability of Feed and Marine Ingredients

For plant-based ingredients, as with marine based, mills will have to record and report all ingredients that make up over 1% of a feed, and will need to take steps to ensure they have been responsibly sourced and produced. Crucially, they will have to assess the risk of a particular ingredient contributing towards deforestation and land conversion, and must commit to transitioning to a supply chain free from these key negative impacts.

What are the definitions re. “ingredients”?

The following terms and definitions are outlined (Annex 1 - Definition List) in the Feed Standard:

- **“Feed Ingredients”** = A component part or constituent of any combination or mixture making up a feed, whether or not it has a nutritional value in the animal’s diet, including feed additives. Ingredients are of plant, animal or aquatic origin, or other organic or inorganic substances.
- **“Ingredients”** = For the purpose of this standard, the term ingredient includes marine ingredients, plant ingredients, feed stuffs (e.g. land animal, algae, insects based) and feed additives (i.e. premixes, vitamins, minerals, trace elements and colourants), unless defined otherwise within the indicator. Other feed additives are excluded from this term e.g. medicines.
- **“Marine by-products”** = Unused parts (e.g. offal, frames, heads) during the processing of marine products for human consumption, for feed ingredients, food supplements (e.g. omega 3) or similar.
 - **What is an example of Marine by-products?** The marine ingredient could be derived from fisheries or aquaculture. In addition, this includes by-catch of whole fish retained under a regulatory landing obligation in the EU.
- **“Marine Ingredients”** = Ingredient derived from aquatic organisms (both marine and freshwater – capture-based and farm-based) such as fish, krill, squid and shellfish.
 - **NB: Ingredients derived from (micro)algae do not fall within this scope.**
- **“Plant Ingredients”** = Ingredient derived from agricultural products (crops).
 - **What is an example of plant ingredient?** ... ingredients derived from: soy, corn, wheat, rice, oil palm, rapeseed/canola, barley, rye, linseed, lupines, legumes, sunflower.
- **“Primary raw material”** = Products produced through agricultural or fisheries products that have not been subjected to processing. Examples of primary raw materials are: (whole) fish, krill, squid, soy, corn, wheat, rice, oil palm, rapeseed/canola, barley, rye, linseed, lupines, legumes, sunflower.
- **“Trace Elements”** = Nutrients required by animals in micro amounts.
 - **What is an example of a Trace element?** Minerals such as iron, copper, zinc, iodine, etc.
- **“Eligible ingredients”** = Eligible ingredients are those ingredients (including additives) which count towards the “mass balance eligible volume” when using the mass balance model, as well as those ingredients (including additives) included in product when using the segregation model.
 - **What is an example of a Feed Additive?** Astaxanthin, ethoxyquin (EQ)
- **“Non-eligible ingredients”** = Non-eligible ingredients can be sourced by the UoC but do not count towards the mass balance eligible volume under the mass balance model, and are not eligible for use in feed produced under the segregation model (see also definition for “eligible ingredients”).

- Non-eligible ingredients can be used in non-ASC certified feed.
- Non-eligible ingredients can be used in ASC certified feed under the mass-balance model [they do not ‘count’ but can they be ‘used’]. Whereas this (“use”) is ruled out for segregation model.
- Non-eligible ingredients differ from non-permitted ingredients, in that non-permitted ingredients cannot be sourced by the UoC.
 - **What is an example of a non-eligible ingredient?** whole fish FM without MSC or MT certification, which has passed DD.
 - **What is an example of non-permitted ingredient?** whole fish FM which has NOT passed DD.

Marine ingredients

The Feed Standard uses an ‘improvement ladder’ model for marine ingredient sourcing, which recognises the differences in sustainability between different source fisheries, and incentivises suppliers to improve their performance. Sourced marine ingredients are assigned a sustainability score, and this score must be improved upon at each certification cycle, with the ultimate goal to have the majority of marine ingredients being MSC certified or equivalent. This system means that fisheries which are not yet at this level but are working towards it are given the incentive to continue making improvements.

Q - Does the ASC Feed Standard incentivise the use of novel feed ingredients? (e.g. algae oil or other ingredients); if so, how?

Yes, these ingredients come with lesser “evidence burden” though they also need to pass DD.

Q - Is the new ASC Feed standard allowing the use of processed animal proteins (PAPs)?

Yes – but they also need to pass DD.

Q - Is the new ASC Feed standard allowing/ encouraging the use of marine by-products (e.g. trimmings or processing waste)?

Yes, following same logic as for alternative ingredients.

Terrestrial ingredients

Q - Does the new Feed standard have requirements about using GMO primary raw materials/ ingredients e.g. in soy? And ‘Why’ (using factual and scientific arguments)?

The Feed Standard does not prohibit the use of e.g. GM-soy, primarily from the point of view that ~90% of all global soy (and other crops, though in lesser percentages) are already GM-based.

- ➔ If used, the Feed mill must disclose to the buyers the use of GM ingredients. [“The UoC shall disclose the presence of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO), or ingredients produced from GMO of each product to all buyers of the product” – indicator 3.4.2]

Q - What about ‘Insect’ meal/ingredients: are they allowed/encouraged?

A definition *in the context of* “all ingredient... >1%” is provided in indicator 2.2.2 (Note 132) as: “This excludes the following feed additives per default, even if they represent >1% total annual ingredient-weight (volume) received by the UoC: premixes, vitamins, minerals, trace elements, colourants.”

- ... ‘insect’ ingredients are thus included in ingredient ‘list’ to be accounted for/traceable.
- Their use is not particularly ‘encouraged’ nor ‘discouraged’ but this may well ‘come up’ in the feed ingredient calculations to ensure ASC-compliance to ASC Farm Standard (FFDRo/FFDRm etc) & increasingly so in the future. ASC encourages all

feed mills & aquaculture producers to source feed ingredients sustainably and responsibly. These may include insects.

- Proof of compliance with e.g. insect meal is lesser/easier to achieve than with e.g. fishmeal. Hence this serves as an incentive to use insect meal. Although an alternative, these products - and their suppliers - also come with potential impacts/issues as well – hence the need for DD.

Q - Does the Majority Sustainability Levels (MSLs) scoring/improvement requirements apply to all ingredients?

➔ See Criterion 4.1 & 4.1.1:

“The UoC shall determine the volume of marine ingredients¹⁶⁰ received, for fish by-products¹⁶¹ and for whole fish, score whole fish ingredients according to categories 1-4 in Table 2, and from that calculate the UoC’s Majority Sustainability Level (MSL) (Annex 4).”

Q - Are ingredients not in scope of MSL subject to level advancement/improvements similar to MSL?

No, other ingredients don't have an improvement ladder model the same as the marine for MSL. However, for category 1) plant ingredients known to have global risks (i.e. ingredients derived from soy and palm oil), they can only be considered eligible ingredients if low risk has been demonstrated (for deforestation/conversion [D/C], etc) but the UoC can source these if an action plan is under implementation to achieve low risk. Therefore there is an improvement stepping stone here to transition from ingredients that can be sourced to ingredients that are eligible.

Which indicators relate to No Deforestation/Conversion-free [D/C]?

5.1.1 - The UoC shall have made a public commitment to transition to deforestation-free and conversion-free supply chains for the sourcing of all of its plant ingredients (categories 1-3). The public commitment shall include:

- a cut-off date related to deforestation and conversion that is no later than the month of release of the ASC Feed Standard v1.0.

5.1.3 - The UoC shall assess the risks of legal deforestation and land conversion at the plant raw material production level for all of its plant ingredient supply chains, prioritising 1) ingredients known to have global risks (i.e. ingredients derived from soy and palm oil), and, 2) its highest-volume plant ingredients.

5.1.5 - The UoC shall use one of the four pathways 1) Country Score Card, 2) sub-national/sectoral assessment, 3) ingredient manufacturer assessment, or 4) certification (as defined in Annex 6) to determine the level of risk for legal deforestation or conversion.

5.1.8 - The UoC shall have a system to ensure it only sources plant ingredients from supply chains covered by its public commitment to transition to deforestation and conversion free supply chains (see 5.1.1).

5.1.13 - The UoC shall participate in, at least, one multi-stakeholder platform that advances the transition to conversion free supply chains

Q- Will there still be feed requirements in the ASC farm standards? If so, what sort of requirements/which?

Species-specific elements will remain in the various species-specific farm standards, like the FFDRm/o; and will be included in the (aligned) ASC Farm Standard when the latter is released. The Standard will also require that all feeds used must be ASC-certified.

Q- Will the Principles 1 & 3 of the forthcoming (aligned) ASC Farm Standard mirror the Feed Standard's Principle 1?

Yes. Since the two programmes were developed separately and followed different timelines/public consultations; there may currently be some discrepancies between the published version of the Feed Standard v1.0 and the latest P1 + P3 public consultation versions; but the intent is to align the latter.

Q - 'Where & when...' – What is the geographical scope of application of the Feed Standard?

All species ASC-certified globally will need (see [Timelines](#)) to have been produced using ASC-compliant/certified Feeds.

Q - How long does it take to certify a Feed Mill [FM]?

... About as long as the regular certification process. Progress depends on the feed mill's state of preparation and audit success.

Q - Are the ASC farms obligated to ONLY use ASC Certified Feed?

... after the transition date = yes.

... **From when onwards?** 24 months after Effective Date Feed Standard

Q - Can a FM certify only one, of many production lines with ASC?

... Several/all... can be ASC-certified.

Q - Can a feed mill produce conventional aquafeeds alongside ASC compliant feed?

Yes it can, although some of the ASC Feed Standard requirements will apply to both.

- Principle 1 (Feed Mill criteria) of the standard applies to the whole feed mill, regardless of the feed it is producing.
- Principles 2 and 3 apply to all ingredients that represent >1% of the total annual ingredient-weight (volume) received by the feed mill for use in aquafeeds. Thus the feed mill must have a supplier code of conduct in place with all its suppliers and conduct due diligence on them and its raw materials. If the ingredient manufacturer or the raw material is not passed then the ingredient cannot be sourced by the mill for use in any aquafeed.
- Principle 4 applies to marine-based ingredients used by the mill in aquafeeds – if due diligence on whole fish indicates low risk but not scoring at sustainability category 1-4 then it can be sourced by the mill but not used as part of the mass balance calculation for ASC compliant feed.
- Principle 5 applies to plant-based ingredients used by the mill in aquafeeds - the mill must only source plant ingredients from supply chains covered by its public commitment to transition to deforestation and conversion free supply chains. In addition, For category 1) ingredients known to have global risks (i.e. ingredients derived from soy and palm oil) and category 2) highest-volume plant ingredients, the mill must only source plant ingredients for which low risk of legal deforestation has been demonstrated or for which an action plan is under implementation to achieve low risk.

Q - How can a farm recognise that the feed is certified?

see previous comment.

Q - The standard is now being launched (June 15, 2021), but ‘when’ can FMs apply for certification?

See [Timelines](#).

Q - Isn't ASC increasing the audit burden and cost for feed mills by also launching a Feed standard/ certification?

No. Not addressing the issues associated with Feed pose a far bigger risk/costs element for all involved. Beyond the many advantages, the certification as per Feed Standard serves as greatly valuable risk-mitigation tools for all concerned.

Q - Why does ASC not collaborate with other certification programmes or recognise equivalency within your standard/ certification?

ASC will continue to explore this, to the degree possible.

Q - What is the difference between feed that is certified under the mass-balance model and the segregation model?

Feed certified under mass balance cannot use the ASC logo, feed certified under segregated model can.

Q - Are ASC certified farms allowed to buy both to be compliant?

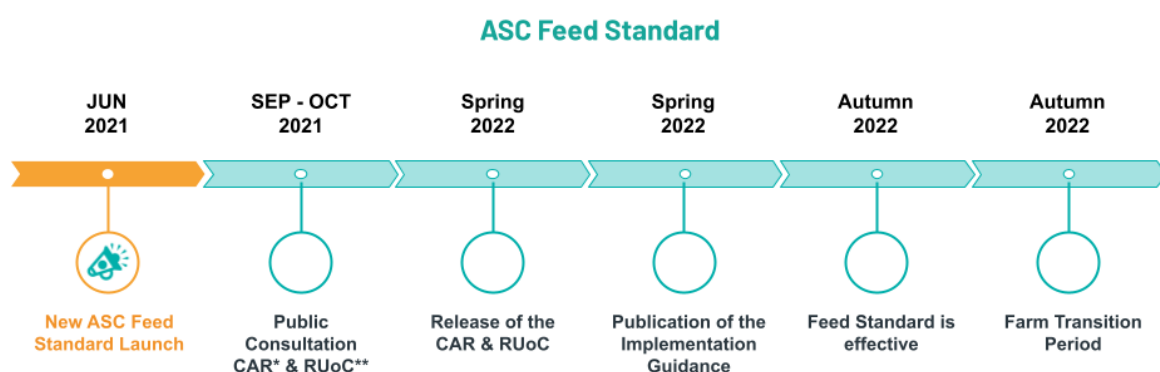
Yes

Q - How will identified social concerns that may take a long time to correct affect Farm certification, when/if feed is incorporated in the Feed Standard i.e purchase ASC certified Feed?

The feed mill will lose its certified status if corrective actions are not completed (or if a critical NC is found). An ASC farm needs to purchase feed from an ASC certified mill – if the mill loses its certification the farm will have to find another supplier.

Timelines...

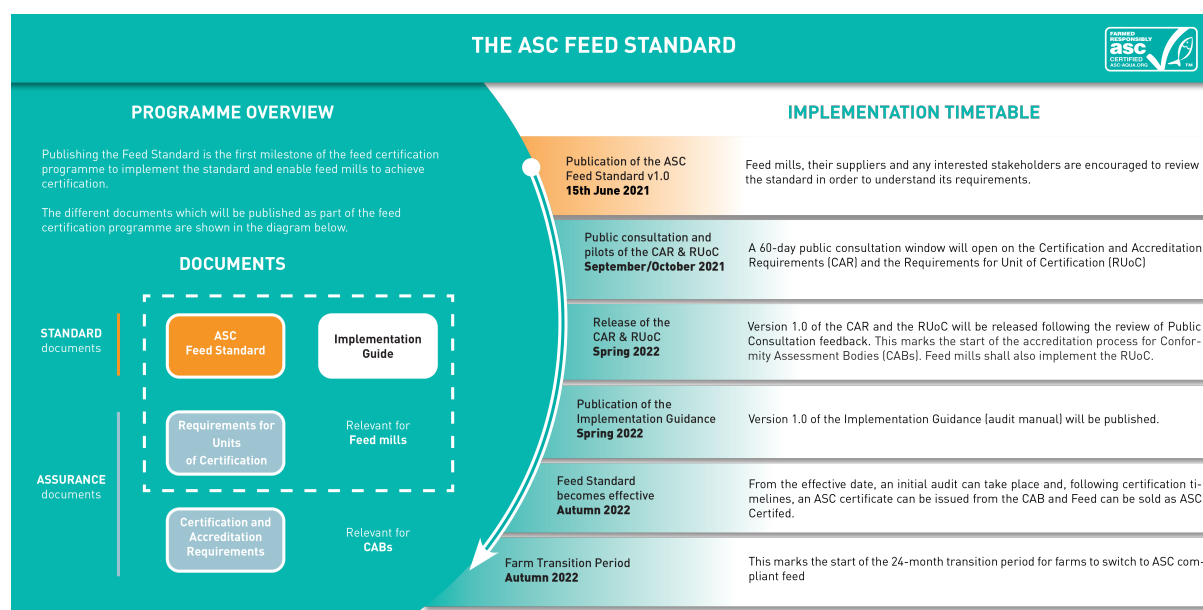
Timelines: Launch -> Implementation & Certification
Feed Standard, *per se* [Launch-Effective Date]:



*CAR = Certification and Accreditation Requirements

**RUoC = Requirements for Unit of Certification

The publishing of the Feed Standard is the first step of the feed certification program which will operationalise the standard and enable feed mills to achieve certification.



Feed Standard v1.0:

Launch June 15, 2021;

Effective Date: September 2022: 1st Feed Mill audits & certifications

From the Effective Date, a formal initial audit can take place and, following certification timelines, an accredited certificate can be issued from the CAB to the Feed Mill and Feed can then be sold as ASC compliant.

➔ **1st Sept. 2024: All (100%) ASC Fish/Farm Products will need to use ASC-compliant feeds.**

Feed Certification and Accreditation Requirements (Feed CAR): this document describes the steps a Certification Body needs to follow in order to gain applicant feed mills to audit and certify against the ASC Feed Standard from Application through to certification and all the steps in between.

Feed Requirements for Unit of Certification (RUoC)

The release of the CAR & RUoC (following public consultation) marks the start of the accreditation process for CABs (Conformity Assessment Bodies).

➔ **Feed mills shall also implement the RUoC** (RUoC. Version 1 of the Implementation Guidance will be published **Spring 2022**).

Farm Transition Period:

Q - When will ASC Farm Standard require 100% of ASC-cert. products to be ASC-compliant/certified Feeds -- at the earliest?

Autumn 2022 will mark the start of the 24-month transition period for farms to switch to ASC compliant feed. This means that from September 2024 onwards, all (100%) ASC Farms will have to ("must") use ASC compliant feed.

Web links:

- **ASC Feed Standard page:** <https://www.asc-aqua.org/what-we-do/our-standards/feed-standard/>

- Feed Steering Committee (list in Governance page): <https://www.asc-aqua.org/what-we-do/about-us/governance/>
- Press Release (15.06.2021): [ASC's New Feed Standard Will Tackle One of Biggest Threats to Aquaculture's Reputation](#)
- **Feed Standard v1.0** – actual document: https://www.asc-aqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ASC-Feed-Standard_v1.0_June-2021.pdf
 - **ASC Interim Feed Solution:** [Currently still valid]
- **Feed Standard Overview & Steps** [15.06.2021 -> Autumn 2022 1p-infographic]: <https://www.asc-aqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Feed-standard-overview-and-steps-Final-.pdf>
- **Feed Standard Programme-Timeline-Detail** (2p): https://www.asc-aqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Feed-Standard-Programme-Timeline_Detail.pdf
- [History of] **Feed Standard development:** <https://www.asc-aqua.org/programme-improvements/new-feed/> including:
 - Public Consultation II – August-October 2017 (v0.2)
 - Public Consultation I – June-September 2015 (v0.1)
 - Governance - ASC Feed ToR & White papers
 - ASC Feed Project SC meeting [1-8] minutes [Oct. 2013 – Oct. 2015]

Annex 1 - Contents & Topics - ASC Feed Standard v1.0 in a nutshell

Version control / Available language(s) / Copyright notice

About the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)

ASC Vision / ASC Mission / ASC Theory of Change

The ASC Document and Certification System

Scheme Owner / Accreditation Body / Conformity Assessment Body / ASC Audit and Certification Process / ASC Logo Use

Structure of ASC Standards

Language use, acronyms and definitions

Scope and Unit of Certification (UoC)

Unit of Certification / Scope of standard

Principle 1 - The UoC has a management system to implement the ASC feed standard, including operating legally, and in a socially and environmentally responsible manner

Criterion 1.1 - The UoC is in possession of all necessary **legal** licenses and permits

Criterion 1.2 - The UoC implements an **effective management system** to maintain compliance with the ASC requirements

Criterion 1.3 - The UoC complies with applicable **labour laws** and regulations.

Criterion 1.4 - The UoC does not engage in – nor support – **forced, bonded, compulsory labour or human trafficking**

Criterion 1.5 - The UoC protects **children and young workers**

Criterion 1.6 - The UoC **does not discriminate** against its employees

Criterion 1.7 - The UoC provides a **safe and healthy** work environment

Criterion 1.8 - The UoC respects the **right to associate** and the right for **collective bargaining**

Criterion 1.9 - The UoC **contracts** employees in a transparent manner

Criterion 1.10 - The UoC **pays** employees at or above the legal minimum wage

Criterion 1.11 - The UoC **prevents excessive working hours**.

Criterion 1.12 - The UoC has disciplinary practices that **respect the dignity and health** of the employee

Criterion 1.13 - The UoC provides effective worker **grievance mechanisms**.

Criterion 1.14 - The UoC provides **safe, decent and hygienic worker accommodation**

Criterion 1.15 - The UoC contributes to maintaining or enhancing the social and economic **well-being of local communities**

Criterion 1.16 - The UoC respects **indigenous and tribal people's rights**, cultures and traditional territories.

Criterion 1.17 - The UoC is in compliance with applicable **environmental laws** and regulations.

Criterion 1.18 - The UoC uses **water** responsibly

Criterion 1.19 - The UoC handles **waste** responsibly

Criterion 1.20 - The UoC handles **effluent** responsibly

Criterion 1.21 - The UoC uses **energy** responsibly and monitors **greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions**.

Principle 2 - The UoC sources ingredients responsibly.

Criterion 2.1 - The UoC implements a **Supplier Code of Conduct**.

Criterion 2.2 - The UoC conducts **Due Diligence on ingredient** manufacturers and primary raw material production.

Principle 3 - The UoC accounts for eligible ingredients input and feed output...

Criterion 3.1 - The UoC implements an **ingredient** in-coming and out-going **accounting** system.

Criterion 3.2 - The UoC determines **eligible ingredients** and calculates its **mass-balance** eligible volume.

Criterion 3.3 - The UoC **labels** products correctly.

Criterion 3.4 - The UoC is **transparent** on product characteristics.

Principle 4 - The UoC sources marine ingredients responsibly.

Criterion 4.1 - The UoC increases the **majority sustainability level** of its (whole-fish) marine ingredients.

Principle 5 - The UoC sources plant ingredients responsibly.

Criterion 5.1 - The UoC works **towards a deforestation/conversion-free supply chain**.

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Annex 1: List of Acronyms, Definitions and Verbal Forms used: Acronym List / Definition List

Annex 2: Environmental Impacts by the Feed Manufacturer

Section A1 Water consumption calculation

Section A2 Effluent discharge calculation

Section A3 Energy consumption calculation

Section A4 Waste consumption calculation

Section B GHG Emission calculation – indicator 1.21.4

Annex 3: Due Diligence (DD)

DD Assessments and where they need to occur/ DD Process / DD Risk Factors / DD Pathways to Determine Low risk

Annex 4: Calculation of the Majority Sustainability Level (MSL)

Annex 5: Calculation of Mass Balance Eligible Volume

Annex 6: Assurance Procedure for Deforestation / Conversion free Supply Chains

Annex 7: Flowcharts illustrating requirements for DD, D/C-free risk assessment and summary tables of permitted work types

Annex 8: UoC requirements on publishing information and reporting to ASC

Embargoed: 00:01 BST Tuesday 15 June 2021

ASC's new Feed Standard will tackle one of biggest threats to aquaculture's reputation

Tuesday 15 June 2021

Unsustainable and irresponsible practices across the aquaculture feed supply chain risk undoing the positive impact of the farming industry according to the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) which is today launching a Feed Standard to tackle this issue.

The Standard is the result of years of development by a diverse group of experts comprising feed producers, retailers, NGOs, farmers, and other stakeholders. It requires that feed mills meet strict environmental and social requirements; source ingredients from socially responsible suppliers; and use environmentally responsible raw materials. In doing so, issues in both the supply chain and at raw material level are addressed. Requirements on reporting of performance will also improve the transparency of the industry, reward environmental sustainability, and assist future research into responsible feed.

The Standard will now enter a 14-month 'effective period', allowing auditors, feed manufacturers and their suppliers to familiarise themselves with the Standard and prepare for certification. Following that period, the Standard will become effective in Autumn 2022, when feed mills become eligible for certification. Farms will then have 24 months to switch to ASC compliant feed in order to continue meeting the ASC Farm Standards.

Following the Netflix film *Seaspiracy*, there has been much debate about the impact of the marine ingredients used by fish farms. ASC's Feed Standard makes clear that while certified mills must source increasing levels of environmentally sustainable ingredients, marine ingredients in fact make up a minority of feed ingredients, with around 75% of global aquafeed ingredients derived from agriculture - crops like soy, wheat and rice. These have their own impacts, notably deforestation and land conversion, which are often overlooked in debates about the industry.

Chris Ninnes, ASC CEO, said: "Aquaculture is already providing over half of the seafood consumed around the world, livelihoods to millions of people, and without it we will not be able to achieve food security for a growing global population with a low carbon footprint. But this positive impact will be undone unless the feed used by the industry is sourced responsibly. ASC has spent the last decade incentivising producers to reduce the impacts of their farms, and now we're spreading this approach to the wider supply chain.

"Marine ingredients play an important role providing vital nutrients to farmed fish, but like everything they must be used and sourced responsibly. Rather than driving substitution of one type of ingredient with another, the ASC Feed Standard recognises that all ingredients - marine and agricultural - can have benefits as well as impacts, and must be addressed holistically.

"We know many producers and feed manufacturers are already taking this issue seriously, and we want to reward them and incentivise others to follow suit to tackle what could be the biggest threat to the industry's reputation. This standard could not have been produced without the work and expertise of our multi-stakeholder Steering Committee and I'd like to thank them for their contribution to this important milestone for the wider industry."

Extending ASC's approach to responsible aquaculture

The Feed Standard takes the ASC's approach to responsible aquaculture and extends it to the feed mills that manufacture aquafeed, as well as the suppliers of their ingredients. These mills will be the facilities audited against the standard, but they and farms will be given time to ensure their supply chains meet ASC requirements. The Standard will also incentivise more feed mills to work towards certification to meet growing demand from ASC farms.

As well as environmental sustainability, mills must also ensure they and their suppliers are socially responsible. For instance, independent auditors must verify that mills are not using forced or child labour, pay and treat their staff fairly, and must not discriminate on any grounds. They must also be responsible neighbours, communicating proactively with their local communities. Certified feed mills are required to conduct Due Diligence on their supply chains to adhere to these principles as well, ensuring an impact in areas where the risk of these issues are more prevalent.

As a source of protein, aquaculture has one of the lowest carbon footprints, but it is important that the industry monitors and works to reduce its footprint along the entire supply chain. ASC certified feed mills will have to record and report their energy use and greenhouse gas emissions; and work to improve energy efficiency, use of renewables, and water usage.

The Feed Standard uses an improvement model for marine ingredients which requires feed mills to source from more sustainable fisheries overtime. MSC and MarinTrust, both full ISEAL-members, play a crucial role in this mechanism. Intermediate steps are recognized Fishery Improvement Projects leading-up to each scheme. Ultimately, the major volume of marine ingredients needs to be derived from MSC fisheries.

The model offers a unique opportunity for feed mills to work together with their fish meal and fish oil suppliers to meet the increasing requirements over time.

For plant-based ingredients, as with marine based, mills will have to record and report all ingredients that make up over 1% of a feed, and will need to take steps to ensure they have been sourced from supply chains with low-risk for illegal deforestation. Additionally, they will have to assess the risk of high-risk and high-volume ingredients contributing towards deforestation or land conversion, and must commit and report publicly to transitioning to a supply chain free from these key negative impacts. This mechanism is based on internationally recognized steps by the Accountability Framework initiative [\[1\]](#)(AFi) to work towards ethical supply chains.

Next steps

ASC will be providing additional documents for auditors and feed mills to provide clear guidance on how the standard should be implemented, just as the Certification Accreditation Requirements (CAR) does for the ASC farm standards. ASC is also working with mills to ensure these documents are appropriate in a practical setting, and looking at ways to make the audit process as efficient as possible.

During the current period, alongside this guidance workshops will be held for stakeholders to learn more and ask questions. ASC staff across the world will be reaching out to their stakeholders in various sectors to explain the benefits and requirements of the new standard, and how they could be impacted.

[1] <https://accountability-framework.org>

ENDS

Notes to editors

Steering Committee Members

- Andrew Jackson, IFFO/MarinTrust
- Eduardo Goycoolea, Blumar Seafoods/GSI
- Tor Eirik Homme, Griegs Seafood/GSI
- Ally Dingwall, Sainsbury's
- Trygve Berg Lea, Skretting
- Dave Robb, Cargill
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- Yaowaluk, CP Thailand
- GC Latha, CP India
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Annex 3 - Acronym List (NB: Part of Annex 1, in Feed Standard)

AB	Accreditation Body
Afi	Accountability Framework initiative
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
ASI	Assurance Services International
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CAR	Certification and Accreditation Requirements
CASS	Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CoC	Chain of Custody
CC	Code of Conduct
D/C	Deforestation and Conversion
DD	Due Diligence
EL	Entry Level
EEMP	Energy Efficiency Management Plan
EMP	Effluent Management Plan
EU	European Union
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FIP	Fishery Improvement Project
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GM / GMO	Genetically Modified / Genetically Modified Organism
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISEAL	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (Alliance)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LLA	Logo Licence Agreement
IM	Ingredient Manufacturer
MJ	megajoules
ML	megalitres
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSL	Majority Sustainability Level
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RUoC	Requirements for the Unit of Certification
SDG	UN Sustainable Development Goal
t	Tonne (1,000 kg)
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UoC	Unit of Certification
WCEP	Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan
WMP	Waste Management Plan

[END]