

The Aquaculture Newsflash

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Introduction by ASC's CEO Chris Ninnes

Dear ASC Friends and Colleagues,



There are tremendously exciting times for the ASC. The work of our tireless supporters and staff over the last couple of months has paid off with some major milestones achieved. The accreditation for chain-of-custody certification opened earlier this year. The launch of ASC's first standard for Tilapia in March marked a crucial moment in the countdown to ASC's market introduction of certified responsibly farmed seafood. Most recently, accreditation for Pangasius certification was opened in April. The first farm audits (Tilapia) have taken place this month and several more are lined up in the near future. Furthermore, we have had very positive response to our recently launched ASC logo. Over 20 companies have either signed a logo licence agreements or are concluding these arrangements. Our first approved packaging displaying the ASC logo have also been approved for both Tilapia and Pangasius. I expect this growth to continue with more partners joining the program as certified supplies enter the market. Perhaps more importantly the growth in the number of companies applying for and achieving their chain of custody certification is even higher. These companies are pivotal in ensuring that certified products can flow through the supply chain so that end users can promote the endeavors of the farmers through the use of the ASC logo. I am also delighted to announce that ASC's latest supporter is the leading French seafood brand Escal. The commitment from this well-reputed brand is further proof of ASC's increasing recognition as the leading certification and labelling scheme for responsible aquaculture. Last but not least, ASC can count the recent European Seafood Exposition as its most successful to date. Footfall through the stand was high and most enquiries were directed at how businesses can become engaged in the supply of certified and logoed product into the market. I was also very pleasing to see the number of companies displaying our new ASC logo throughout the show. ASC's joint session with IDH and WWF at the show about how their programs support producers achieve ASC certification was well attended, with the audience overflowing into the hallway. We will look to host a similar meeting next year, but promise to do that in a bigger venue! This issue of the Aquaculture Newsflash delivers a range of updates on significant topics: from the latest planning to an update on the certification program and how to use the ASC logo, supervisory board decisions, and reports from ASC's visits to events around Europe. I very much hope that you will enjoy reading it!

Best regards,

Planning update

Over the last 5 months, ASC has made great progress in delivering a number of important milestones that collectively have launched the ASC into an operational phase. The opening of our Chain of Custody accreditation (in partnership with the MSC), the launch of the Tilapia and Pangasius standards and the launch of the ASC consumer logo will ensure that certified products can move through the supply chain in a controlled and accountable way. Below you can read about ASC's planning for the rest of 2012.

ASC farm certification

The accreditation of certifiers (a process to ensure they can credibly undertake farm audits) for the ASC Tilapia and Pangasius standards opened earlier this year. Certifiers need to become accredited before they are allowed to perform farm audits against the ASC Standards. With the first farm audits underway, the first certified Tilapia farm is expected to be announced shortly. Pangasius farm audits (and resulting certification) are anticipated in a few weeks later. The accreditation of certification bodies for the Abalone and Bivalves Standards follows later this Summer and certified supplies expected before the end of 2012.

ASC certified product launch

Based on feedback from companies that are interested in bringing ASC certified and logoed products to the market, the first certified Tilapia is expected in stores this summer. Certified Pangasius is anticipated for the third quarter of 2012. Products are expected to initially be available for consumers in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia and Canada. Other European, North American and Asia Pacific countries are expected to follow shortly thereafter.

Transition of the remaining Aquaculture Dialogues to ASC Standards

Four standards remain to be handed over from the Aquaculture Dialogues to ASC:

- Shrimp - final draft standard published 21 December 2011
- Salmon - final draft standard published 7 February 2012
- Trout - final standard published 19 January 2012
- Seriola/Cobia - still in progress coordinated with the Aquaculture Dialogue, draft expected before the end of 2012.

These standards will be operationalized once the development of guidance for certifiers, farmers and interested stakeholders has been concluded. This guidance will be incorporated into Audit Manuals for each standard. This work ensures that the standards can be interpreted consistently irrespective of who and where the audit is conducted and that farmers and stakeholders clearly understand what their obligations will be before they engage. This work is actively being developed using members from the Dialogues, technical experts and the ASC governance bodies. While the date for the handover of these outstanding standards has not been finally determined there is an ongoing commitment by all involved to deliver these in 2012. For the latest status, please check the Aquaculture Dialogues' [website](#). Once ASC has received the standards, and before accreditation will open, the ASC will deliver auditor training. All auditors must pass an exam before they can undertake farm assessments.

ASC logo update



The ASC consumer logo was officially launched last month. Leading up to the launch, the logo design went through rigorous consumer testing in Germany in

collaboration with Birdseye Iglo to gauge its commercial market impact. It was also B-2-B tested with leading European and North American seafood retailers and manufacturers. Based on the feedback from both consumers and the business the final version of the logo was developed by our dedicated London design bureau [jrk](#), the highly reputed packaging design and brand agency. Many thanks must be extended to both Birdseye Iglo and to jkr, for their commitment and support to deliver the ASC logo, all of which was contributed at no cost to the ASC.

The ASC logo demonstrates to consumers that the seafood carrying is sourced from farms operating in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. The use of the ASC logo on packaging is subject to permission. The ASC logo licence process is similar to that of the Marine Stewardship Council. An efficient transition is possible for those familiar with the MSC ecolabel process. Parties that are new to such arrangements will benefit from working with a well-tested program. The ASC Logo User Guide that outlines the correct use of the logo can be downloaded from our website under [Use the ASC logo](#).

To apply for the logo license or for media use of the ASC logo, please contact Chris Bolwig on ecolabel@msc.org

ASC's most successful European Seafood Exposition to date!

ASC's attendance at this year's European Seafood Exposition (ESE) in Brussels has been a resounding success. For the third time, ASC exhibited at the high-profile exposition to reach out to our current and future partners, informing them about the newly launched standards for Tilapia and Pangasius and ASC logo through crucial in-person meetings and with our exceptionally popular ESE information session. Our stand in hall 7 saw a steady flow of visitors representing the entire supply chain, who were eager to start their engagement with ASC and brought questions about how their businesses could join ASC's exciting certification and labelling scheme.

The high visibility of ASC's recently launched logo throughout the exposition was very encouraging; as was the positive feedback received about the logo design that we received during the show. At the time of the ESE, a considerable number of companies (20 to date) had already obtained the logo licence, or were in the process of finalising their agreements.

Another highlight during the ESE was the eagerly awaited launch of ASC's second standard for responsibly farmed Pangasius. It followed in the footsteps of the successful launch of the Tilapia standard in March this year. The exceptional growth of the Pangasius industry in the past decade has emphasised the need for a robust and credible standard for the species. The launch of ASC's Pangasius standard is a critical step towards addressing environmental and social impacts in a responsible manner.

During the ESE, ASC's latest supporter Escal was announced. *"As one of France's leading quality seafood brands, Escal's commitment to our organisation is further proof of ASC's growing impact in the market as the leading certification and labelling program for responsible aquaculture. It is a clear signal of the industry's continuous support and high confidence in ASC's mission to transform aquaculture towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility"* said ASC's CEO Chris Nannes.

ASC's joint session with our co-funders World Wide Fund (WWF) and The Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) at the ESE attracted great interests and a large audience. The session highlighted to farmers of available support programs to help them gain ASC certification and brought some pressing topics and lively discussions to the table. As a result, we intend to repeat this popular session at next year's show.

The ASC Supervisory Board also held its second in-person board meeting during the ESE. You can read more about the outcome and achievements of this meeting in the news item 'ASC Supervisory Board meets in Boston and Brussels' below.

Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to thank all our loyal partners and enthusiastic supporters for making ASC's visit to the European Seafood Exposition this year a success. It was a pleasure to meet so many of you in person. ASC hopes to continue our successful run at the ESE with yet another visit to the ESE 2013. We very much hope to see you all there next year!

Call for pilot partners Abalone, Bivalves, Shrimp, Salmon and Trout

ASC is inviting farms and certification bodies to take part in the field testing of the Audit Manuals currently being developed. The Audit Manuals provide explicit guidance for farmer, certifiers and stakeholders about how the standards should be interpreted. Preparation is underway to pilot the Audit Manuals (AM) for abalone, bivalves, shrimp, salmon and trout. As an ASC pilot partner you will help shape the future of responsible farming and they are important to ensure that the standards can be interpreted consistently. By undertaking rigorous testing of the guidance material prior to launching our standards, ASC can best ensure robust audits and clear certification decisions.

We invite both farms and certifiers to apply. When becoming part of the pilot team, you will join a group of likeminded, early-adopters committed to transforming the aquaculture seafood market towards sustainability. Pilots will be held all over the world depending on the location of the farms that take part. At least one or two pilot partners and a related certifier per species will be needed.

If you are interested in becoming an ASC pilot partner please contact ASC Standards Director Bas Geerts on bas.geerts@asc-aqua.org by the end of May.

First ASC farm audits this month

We are delighted to announce that the first ASC farm audits have taken place this month (May 2012) at two aquaculture operations in Indonesia. Audits of Tilapia farms in Ecuador and Malaysia are expected to follow shortly. The ASC certification process includes an extensive stakeholder feedback component. All audits need to be announced on the ASC website at least 30 days before the audit. In addition, all audit results need to be available, in draft, on the ASC website for a 10 day (minimum) public consultation as soon as they are available. If the audit process goes as planned the first farms will be certified shortly. Certified and logoed products will follow after.

Certifiers will be available for farm audits as soon as they have successfully been reviewed by Accreditation Services International (ASI), the independent accreditation partner for ASC, as well as for others sustainability schemes (MSC, FSC and RSPO). At this moment auditing capacity is available for Tilapia. First auditors for Pangasius will be available shortly. If your farm or company is interested to become ASC farm- or Chain of Custody certified, we advise you to contact an accredited certifier. An overview of ASC accredited certifiers can be found at: <http://www.accreditation-services.com/archives/standards/asc>

Certifiers that are interested in becoming accredited can find, more information about the accreditation process on the dedicated ASC page at the ASI website <http://www.accreditation-services.com/programs/asc>. Or they can contact ASI directly on info@accreditation-services.com

Call for members Technical Working Group for Group Certification

An important project coordinated by ASC, the development of a group certification model, has made promising progress recently.

The first draft of ASC's group certification requirements is available for review by a technical working group of experts, with experience with group certification and/or smallholder farming (preferably in aquaculture, but experience in other commodities would also be helpful). Group certification will play

an important role in ASC's certification programme. It will allow a number of small-scale farmers (such as family-owned farms) to collectively participate in the certification program and to seek ASC certification. The intent is to lower the costs of engaging with the ASC program to individual small-scale participants. Following initial review a dedicated technical working group composed of TAG representatives and external experts will consider comments received and further develop requirements.

The ASC is currently looking for additional experts with relevant experience to join this working group. As a group member you will have the opportunity to contribute to a crucial component of our programme that works towards ensuring environmental sustainability and social responsibility for all farmers, including smaller farms.

If you are interested to become a member of the **group certification technical working group**, please contact ASC Standards Director Bas Geerts on bas.geerts@asc-aqua.org by June 18.

ASC Supervisory Board meets in Boston and Brussels

The ASC Supervisory Board has met in person twice this year and participated in a number of topic-specific telephone conferences. On March 13, the Supervisory Board meeting took place in Boston. Highlights included discussions around its fundraising strategy, ASC's business model and the development of new standards. During the meeting, the SB was advised about the nominations for the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) representatives to the SB. The ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements document was unanimously adopted by the board.

On April 25, the Supervisory Board met in Brussels during the European Seafood Exposition. Items on the agenda included an update on the progress related to the market launch of the standards and a report on the work of the Technical Advisory Group. Furthermore, fundraising and communication strategies were revisited and the ASC logo was evaluated. The meeting minutes will be available on the ASC website shortly.
