

Tilapia



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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 Tilapia Standard

There are a number of problems associated with badly managed tilapia farming. Tilapia is very adaptable and can cause problems if escapes are not carefully monitored and controlled. In addition, there are issues of pollution when the water quality is not well managed, which also increases the risk of disease. These issues are minimised through ASC certification:

- **Biodiversity.** ASC certified tilapia farms minimise impacts on the local ecosystem in a number of ways, such as developing and implementing an environmental impact assessment. They work towards protecting the receiving watershed from pollution, and no lethal incidents with endangered species are allowed. Fish escapes must be minimised and trapping devices are installed to recapture any fish that do escape. Farms cannot be built on sites that involved conversion of wetlands (since 1999).
- **Feed.** ASC certification requires tilapia 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 responsibly managed source, preferably certified for wild fish.
- **Pollution.** ASC certified tilapia farms are required to measure various water parameters (nitrogen, phosphorus, oxygen levels, etc.) at regular intervals and remain within set limits. The farm shouldn't impact the water quality status of the area it is operating in.
- **Diseases.** ASC certified tilapia farms must adhere to requirements to minimise disease outbreaks. A fish health management plan must be developed under supervision of a veterinarian and implemented. This plan details the steps for biosecurity management. In addition, the use of medicine before a disease is diagnosed (prophylactic use), is prohibited. A producer can only use approved medicines and all treatments must 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. The local community needs to have access to public land, freshwater and fishing grounds.

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.