

[The Abominable Salmon Council – Buyer Beware!](#) (20 April 2012)



Be scared, very very scared: the horror show that is the [Aquaculture Stewardship Council](#) (ASC) is gearing up to unleash ‘responsible’, ‘environmental’, ‘honest’, ‘credible’ and ‘sustainable’ farmed salmon on an unsuspecting public.

balanced credible environmental robust multi-stakeholder long-term
honest responsible transparent worldwide education open life strategic
value impactful change independent social effective open life strategic
future solutions efficient partnership sustainable

Anybody who knows anything about the salmon farming industry understands that such words do not even belong in the same sentence let alone used to certify freaky farmed salmon.



Read more details via [‘The Farmed Salmon Horror Show – Not for the Faint of Heart’](#), [‘The Horrors of Intensive Salmon Farming’](#) and [‘Fish Farmageddon: The Infectious Salmon Aquacalypse’](#)

Just last week it was [revealed](#) that over 95% of farmed salmon bought in supermarkets in Canada tested positive for a Norwegian virus. Moreover, the contamination of farmed salmon with dioxins, PCBs, DDT and other cancer-causing contaminants is [well documented](#).



The spectre of farmed fish causing sickness in humans still looms following a scientific paper in the [Journal of Alzheimer's Disease](#) linking fish farming with 'Mad Cow Disease'. Only this week (18 April), a food blog advised consumers that: "Farmed salmon are less nutritious; Farmed salmon is destroying the environment; Farmed salmon contains high levels of toxins."

Read more via ['Eat With Your Dollars: Sourcing Your Salmon'](#)

Yet the ASC clearly didn't get the memo or are too busy counting the money flooding in to countenance common sense. This week, the ASC unveiled a shiny new "[consumer label for responsibly farmed seafood](#)."

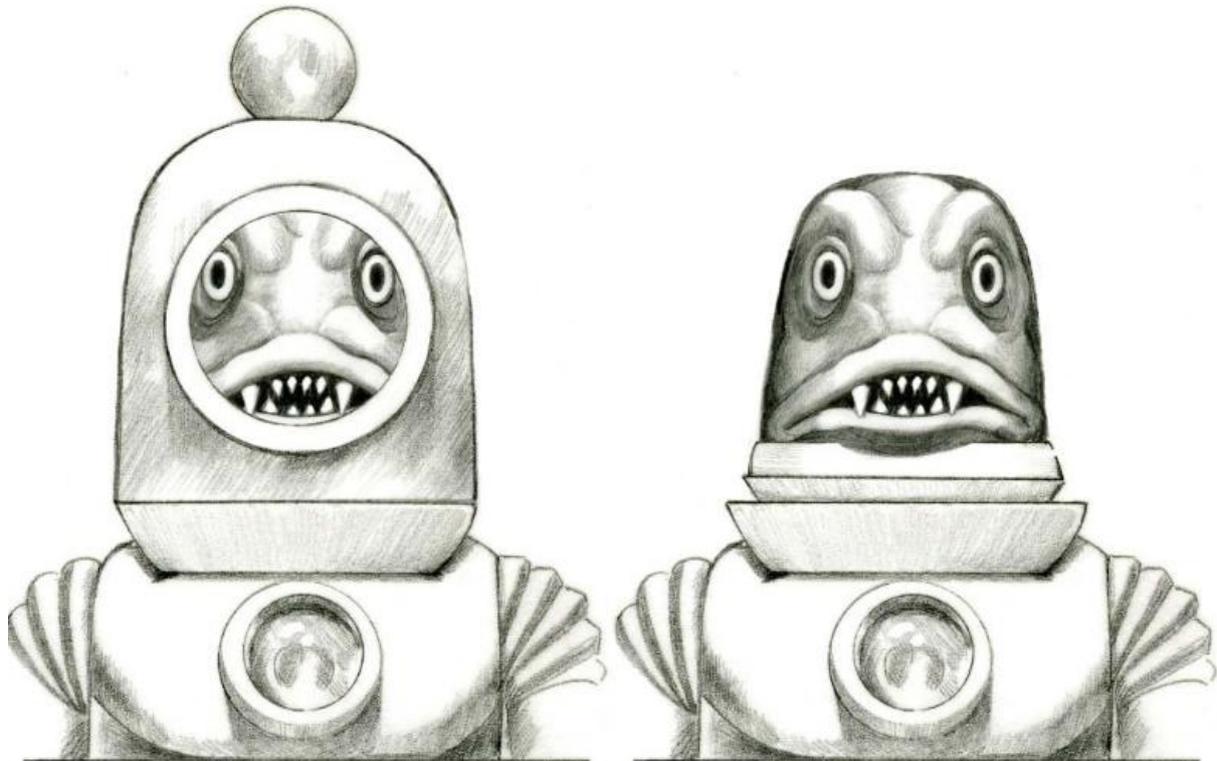


"The ASC label is complimentary to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label; which is used on certified and sustainably wild caught fish," claimed a [press release](#) issued by the ASC (17 April). "With the introduction of the ASC certification program for farmed seafood, an important step is made towards being able to credibly demonstrate to consumers that all fish sold comes from producers who have worked to limit their impact on the environment."



The ASC is the fish farming equivalent of the much maligned [Marine Stewardship Council](#) (MSC). But if you thought the MSC was the [epitome of evil](#) and a poster child of everything

that is wrong with certification, then think again. The ASC's growing pains look as if the ASC is shaping up to be the MSC's evil twin brother.



The awful truth is that the Aquaculture Stewardship Council ought to be renamed the Abominable Salmon Council.

asc Aquaculture Stewardship Council

Choose language: English

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The ASC's mission is to transform aquaculture towards environmental and social sustainability using efficient market mechanisms which create value across the chain.

Responsible aquaculture

Shock horror, it can be exclusively revealed that the 'Abominable Salmon' is so vital to the ASC's nightmare vision that farmed salmon is predicted to account for over 50% of the ASC's revenue stream.



Hank Cauley, currently serving on the [ASC Supervisory Board](#), let the disease-ridden farmed salmon slip out of the bag in 2010 when he advised [Pew Environment Group](#) (where he works as a '[Senior Officer](#)')

From: [Hank Cauley](#)
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2010 6:04 AM
To: [Don Staniford](#); *PCT-Aquaculture Group
Subject: RE: ASC "presents visual identity at Brussels Seafood Expo"

On salmon, yes, salmon and its certification under the ASC is immensely important as, ultimately, 5-7 years out, a slight majority of its label royalty stream will come from the certification of salmon. This is why getting the SAD stds in place on a timely basis is so important. Without salmon stds, the ASC won't make it unless foundations are willing to foot the bill for a long time and that increasingly looks unrealistic.

[Hank Cauley](#)

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In another email sent to the Pew Environment Group in April 2010, the ASC board member admitted that: "if you want to have a certification program for aquaculture then salmon is key." In January 2009 he further suggested that: "it's smoke and mirrors if it doesn't make sense economically."



Mr. Cauley's rabid support for the ASC landed him in hot water last year when all reference to the Pew Environment Group was [removed from the ASC web-site](#).



[Photo: [Hank Cauley](#) promoting the ASC in 2011 at the Seafood Summit in Vancouver]

Read more via '[Pew Environment Group "distancing" itself from ASC? Clarification about ASC Board membership coming](#)'

Pew Environment Group's Managing Director Joshua Reichert was forced to [state publicly](#) in February 2011 that: "The Pew Environment Group has no position regarding the ASC, either pro or con."



However, in their '[Comments on the final draft standard of the Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue](#)', Pew Environment Group made it clear that the ASC's salmon standard was not worthy of support:

“In the final analysis of whether or not Pew Environment Group (PEG) can support the Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue (SAD) standard we return to our initial question of whether the standard sufficiently drives environmental improvement. Unfortunately, the answer is no.



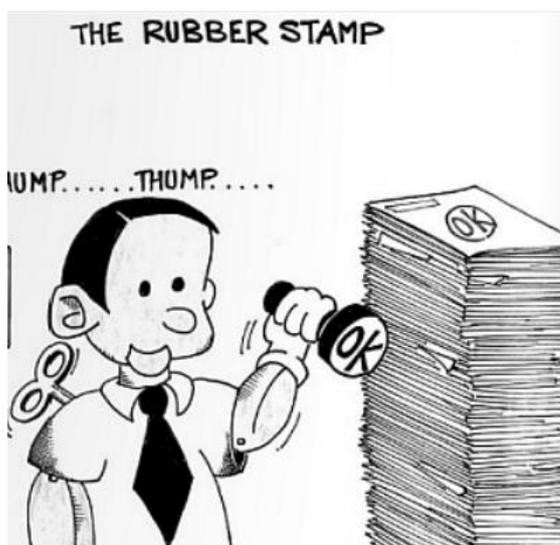
While we support several individual requirements of the standard, its deficiencies in addressing major environmental impacts and risks such as the transfer of pathogens and the discharge of harmful chemicals are too significant to overlook. The fact that some performers in the industry are able to achieve stronger performance within these categories furthers our concern that the SAD standard is placing greater emphasis on strong industry adoption rather than strong environmental performance. PEG cannot support the standard until it is revised to more adequately address the negative impacts of smolt production in freshwater lakes in Chile; the use and discharge of antibiotics considered highly important to human health; the amplification of pathogens and transfer to wild fish; and the use and discharge of toxic parasiticides.”



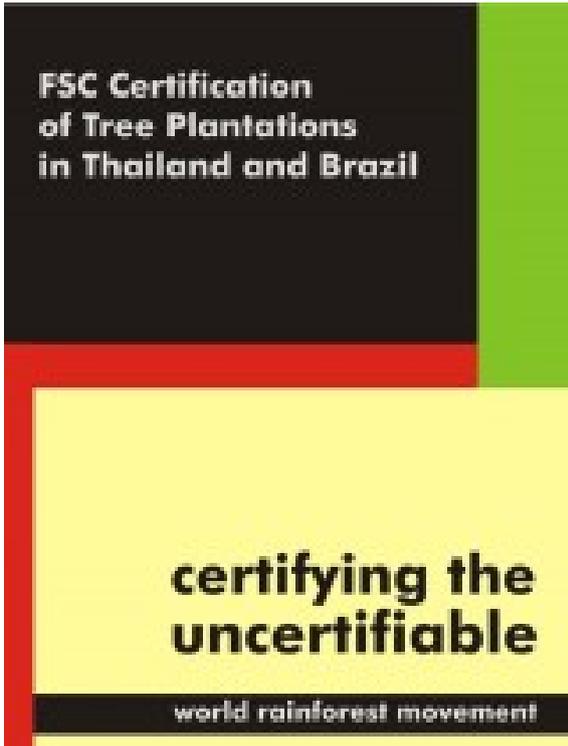
Mr. Cauley knows the certification game all too well and was the architect of another fake certification scheme – the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).



As Executive Director of the FSC from 1999 to 2002 he presided over “[incredible growth](#)” which branded 8.7 million acres of forests in the United States alone as ‘certified’.



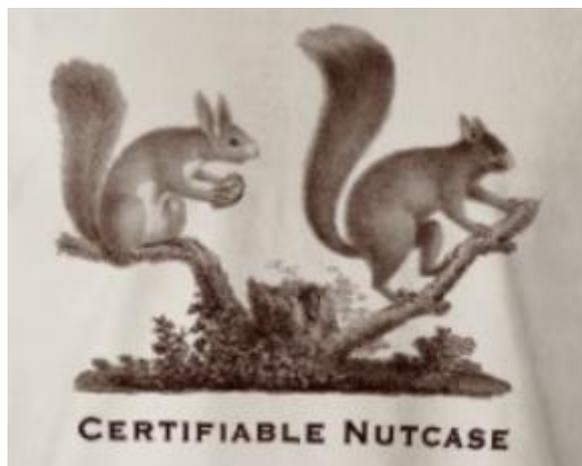
The FSC has been fiercely criticised since being set up in 1993. “From the falsification of documents, to illegal third party concessions and environmental damage in forests from Guyana to Nicaragua to Brazil, over the years FSC has been found to have certified the uncertifiable,” wrote Matilda Lee in an article – “[Can we trust the FSC?](#)” – published in The Ecologist in 2009 (for more background visit ‘[FSC-Watch](#)’).



The ASC, by certifying farmed salmon (and shrimp), is now following the same destructive path as the FSC and is certifying the uncertifiable. Indeed, anyone who seriously believes that farmed salmon can ever be sustainable, responsible and environmentally friendly must be certifiable themselves.



By leaping from the FSC to the ASC and believing that farmed salmon should be certified, Mr. Cauley is clearly a nutbar.



The credibility (and sanity) of the panda (WWF) must also be seriously called into question. Lest it be forgotten that it was WWF who jumped into bed with Unilever in [founding](#) the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in 1996. Unilever, as it happens, is the company which set up the first salmon farms in the [1960s](#) and also [founded Marine Harvest](#). In 2008, Marine Harvest also entered into a [corporate partnership](#) with WWF Norway “to strengthen the focus on sustainable fish farming with leading environmental standards” (more of that deal later!).

In 2004, WWF set up the ‘[Aquaculture Dialogues](#)’ with both Marine Harvest and Nurtreco’s subsidiary Skretting on the ‘[Steering Committee](#)’ of the ‘[Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue](#)’. The ‘Aquaculture Dialogues’, as it turned out (it was not revealed publicly until [2009](#)), acted as a Trojan Horse in the war for certification.



As WWF [explains](#): “When finalized, the standards are given to a new organization, the [Aquaculture Stewardship Council](#), that will be responsible for working with independent, third party entities to certify farms that are in compliance with the standards.”



Aquaculture Stewardship Council

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council

Our vision:
A world where aquaculture plays a major role in supplying food and social benefits for mankind without negatively impacting the environment.

Our mission:
To transform aquaculture towards environmental and social responsibility using efficient market mechanisms which create value across the chain.



The ASC: Creating change on the water.

<http://www.ascworldwide.org>

In fact, WWF [funded](#) the expenses of the ASC's first '[Development Director](#)', Dr. Philip Smith. In the incestuous world of salmon farming certification, it will come as no surprise to [discover](#) that Dr. Smith used to work for the fish feed companies [EWOS](#) (a subsidiary of [Cermaq](#)) and Nutreco as well as Marine Harvest. Dr. Smith left the ASC last year and joined another salmon farming company (the [Scottish Salmon Company](#)).

WWF's [aquaculture standards](#) are therefore the vehicle with which the ASC are railroading the certification of [farmed salmon](#) (as well as the equally destructive [farmed shrimp](#)).



As Hank Cauley admitted in 2009:

-----Original Message-----

From: [Hank Cauley](#)

Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 1:46 PM

To: PCT-Aquaculture Group

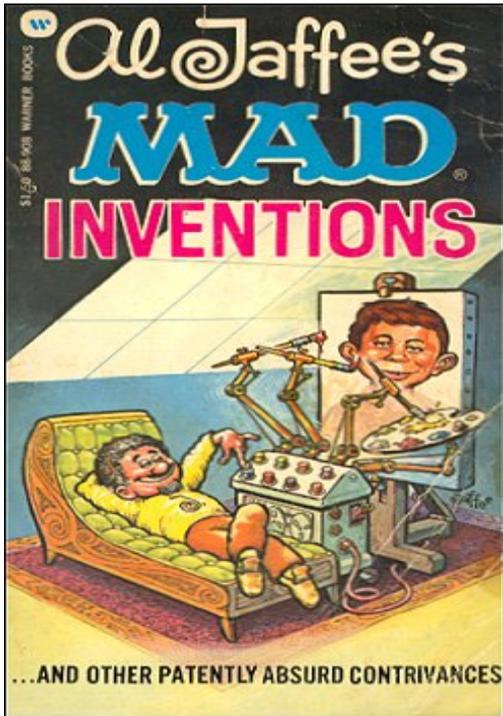
Subject: RE: WWF looks to private investors to co-fund ASC

Anyway, devils in the details and [wwf](#) is clearly frustrated that they've developed a set of [stds](#) and no one wants to use them so they have to invent the [asc](#) to take it forward.

[Hank Cauley](#)

p: 202-552-2167 | c: 202-262-4433 |

Fast-forward to 2012 and the ASC is attempting to invent the 'responsible' and 'sustainable' farmed salmon.



WWF's role in pandering to corporate interests is nothing short of prostitution – what Jeffrey St. Clair famously coined '[Panda Porn](#)'. The so-called 'panda cash machine' or '[Wicked Wildlife Fund](#)' has now become "little more than the well-paid zombies of the corporations they have gotten into bed with".



Watch a documentary exposing WWF's eco-facade – online via [‘Silence of the Pandas’](#) and read [‘Way Beyond Greenwashing’](#)



Scepticism of WWF's [farmed salmon standards](#) and the ASC's certification of farmed salmon is simmering away. A petition via the organization [‘Change’](#), signed by over 1,500 people from all over the world, includes:

“Please help stop farmed salmon being certified as ‘sustainable’, ‘environmental’ and ‘responsible’. WWF, the Aquaculture Stewardship Council and Marine Harvest (the largest salmon farming company in the world) are attempting to green-wash salmon farming via 'Standards for Responsible Aquaculture'. However these standards fail to address welfare and food safety issues and allow for the use of toxic chemicals, antibiotics, unsustainable feed, escapes, non-native species, GM feed and the killing of marine mammals.”

Sign the petition online via [‘Stop the Certification of Farmed Salmon as ‘Sustainable’ and ‘Responsible’](#)

The image is a screenshot of a petition page on the Change.org website. At the top, there is a dark teal header with the 'change.org' logo on the left, and three buttons: 'Start a Petition', 'Browse Petitions', and 'Find'. Below the header, the title of the petition is 'Stop the Certification of Farmed Salmon as "Sustainable and Responsible"'. A yellow arrow points to a grey button that says 'SIGN THIS PETITION'. To the right of the sign button is a large image of the WWF panda logo with 'WTF?' written below it. Below the sign button, there is a form with several input fields: 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email', 'Address', 'City', 'Country' (with a dropdown menu set to 'Select'), and 'Post Code'. There is also a link for 'Inside U.S.' and two buttons at the bottom right: 'About this Petition' and 'Petition L...'.

change.org	Start a Petition	Browse Petitions	Find
Stop the Certification of Farmed Salmon as "Sustainable and Responsible"			
SIGN THIS PETITION			
First Name	<input type="text"/>		
Last Name	<input type="text"/>		
Email	<input type="text"/>		
Address	<input type="text"/>		
City	<input type="text"/>		
Country	Select	Inside U.S.	
Post Code	<input type="text"/>		
		About this Petition	Petition L...

The [‘Final Draft Standards for Responsible Salmon Aquaculture’](#) was published in February this year and immediately attracted criticism – even from a member of the Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue’s [‘Steering Committee’](#) in the shape of the [Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform](#) (CAAR).

“The final draft Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue (SAD) standard is stronger than any of the other certification systems currently being touted by the industry,” said Jay Ritchlin, Director of Marine Conservation at CAAR member group the David Suzuki Foundation, and a Steering Committee member of the Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue. “Unfortunately, there are too many uncertainties to say it is strong enough to protect wild salmon or marine ecosystems and, for the CAAR groups, that is our bottom line.”

CAAR is particularly concerned that the standard falls short in a number of significant areas including elimination of disease transmission between farmed and wild fish. It does not adequately address the impacts of existing exotic species. While there are some important limits on the use and discharge of antibiotics and toxic sea lice chemicals, the standard does not eliminate them.

Nevertheless, despite such criticism: “CAAR will remain on the SAD Steering Committee to influence the standard's implementation, to follow through on what has been a strong process and to evaluate the evidence collected from farms that apply to use the standard.”

Read more via [‘Final Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue standards won't solve threat to wild salmon’](#)

GAAIA believes that any standard which supports the status quo – and consequently sanctions the use of toxic chemicals, the killing of marine mammals, escapes, waste pollution, sea lice infestation, the spread of infectious diseases and use of GM and unsustainable feed – is not worth the paper it is written on.

Judge for yourselves by reading the final draft of the salmon standards [online here!](#)

Opposition to the ASC is growing all over the globe. In 2009, a coalition of 70 NGO from around the world signed a letter expressing opposition to the ASC. “The proposed certification by WWF promises to legitimize environmentally and socially damaging forms of aquaculture in the name of cheap prawns and salmon,” Natasha Ahmad, secretary of Asia Solidarity Against Industrial Aquaculture, told [SeafoodSource](#). “It’s high time that WWF stops pandering to the interests of big business and instead begins to listen to the voices of real people that rely on the oceans and forests to survive.”

Read more via [‘NGO Oppose Aquaculture Stewardship Council’](#)

[Intrafish](#) reported in August 2010 that:

“Salmon farming opponent the Pure Salmon Campaign blasted the standard. “Any standard which merely rewards the status quo and allows open-net cages to continue to pollute our global oceans via infectious diseases, toxic chemicals, sea lice, escapees, untreated wastes and uneaten feed is not worth the green-washed paper it is written on. Marine Harvest would have us all believe that the industry has come a long way and made significant progress but the ongoing spread of ISA in Norway and increasing chemical resistance to sea lice serves only to remind us that even the trumpeted industry leader is lagging behind in the Dark Ages,” said Don Staniford, global coordinator for the Pure Salmon Campaign.

“By cravenly kowtowing to Marine Harvest --with whom WWF Norway has a financial relationship via their 'partnership for sustainable aquaculture' -- and pandering to the vested interests of retailers who are demanding 'green' farmed salmon, WWF risks losing the precious little credibility it has left,” said Staniford. “Likewise, if the Aquaculture Stewardship Council, whose current Director is a former Managing Director of Marine Harvest Europe, certifies salmon farmed in open net cages then it will be mocked as a watered down version of the much-maligned Marine Stewardship Council. For if the MSC has the gall to certify Antarctic krill and wild Fraser River sockeye salmon then you can bet your bottom dollar that the ASC is casting its beady eye towards open net cage farmed salmon and intensively farmed Mangrove-friendly shrimp.”

Read more via GAAIA’s web-page on [‘Certification’](#) and [‘Not Worth the Paper’](#)

WWF and Marine Harvest were also criticised at a meeting of the [Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue](#) in Bergen in 2009 when [Green Warriors of Norway](#) unveiled a 'Skin the Corrupt Panda' banner.



“There is no right way to do something wrong,” said Green Warriors' leader Kurt Oddekalv

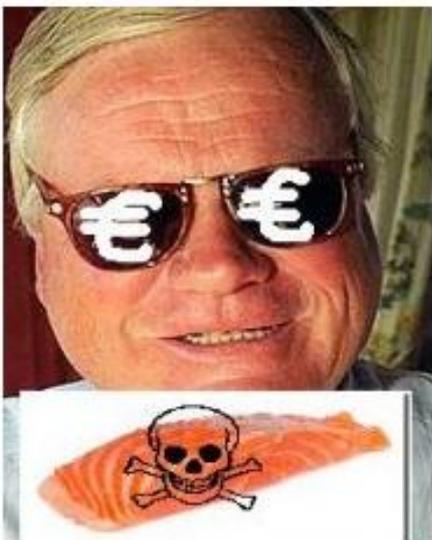


Read more via [‘Green Warriors: WWF Undermines the Environmental Movement’](#)

Greenpeace’s [‘Green Action’](#) campaign also criticised WWF and Marine Harvest for their toxic relationship in 2010.



Here's Marine Harvest's billionaire owner John Fredriksen (75th richest man in the world worth \$11.3 billion according to the Forbes '[Rich List](#)') [pictured as a money machine](#) – next to '[Branda the Panda](#)'.

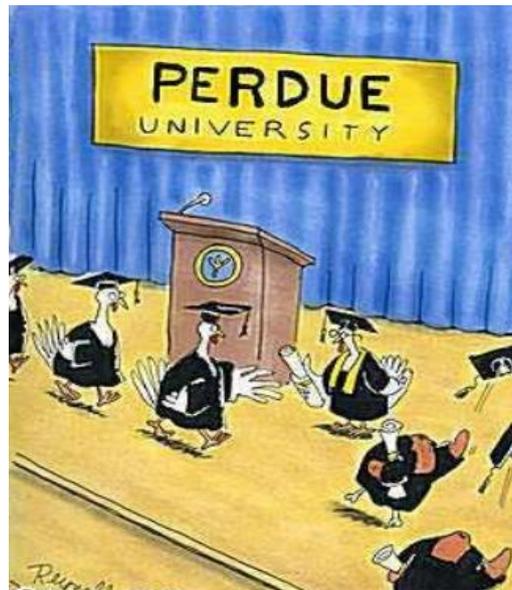


WAY BEYOND GREENWASHING



*Have Corporations Captured
"Big Conservation"?*

The ASC and WWF are carrying on regardless – very much like headless chickens sponsored by Perdue University.



WWF’s Katherine Bostick (who has overseen the ‘[Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue](#)’ process since its inception in 2004) informed participants in an email last month (29 March): “The Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue Steering Committee is currently overseeing the development of the audit manual to accompany the standards and hopes to finalize the standards and the manual soon.” She ends by encouraging people to visit the [ASC](#) at the [Seafood Exposition](#) in Brussels next week (24-26 April): “If you will be at the Seafood Exposition in Brussels in April, I encourage you to stop by the ASC booth to talk with ASC staff about the organization and the certification process.”



Aquaculture Stewardship Council

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Phone: +31 30 230 5929
[Click here to send email](#)

URL <http://www.ascworldwide.org>

Last month, the ASC's CEO Chris Ninnes was hawking the "sustainability" aspects of the ASC at a conference in the United Kingdom although the word 'sustainable' had been strangely dropped from his presentation.



The ASC: Making Sense of Sustainability through Positive Engagement

ACIG, 15 March, 2012
Chris Ninnes, CEO

A word cloud of terms associated with ASC values. The words are in various shades of blue and green. The most prominent words are 'responsible', 'independent', 'education', 'partnership', 'environmental', 'robust', 'multi-stakeholder', 'social', 'effective', 'open', 'worldwide', 'transparent', 'change', 'solutions', 'efficient', 'impactful', and 'credible'.

Now see the ASC's web-site again and notice the word 'sustainable' is mysteriously back!

A word cloud of terms associated with ASC values, similar to the one above but including the word 'sustainable'. The words are in various shades of blue and green. The most prominent words are 'responsible', 'independent', 'education', 'partnership', 'environmental', 'robust', 'multi-stakeholder', 'social', 'effective', 'open', 'worldwide', 'transparent', 'change', 'solutions', 'efficient', 'impactful', 'credible', 'balanced', 'honest', 'value', 'future', 'life', 'strategic', and 'sustainable'.

The ASC advocates a strong 'chain of custody standard'.



Chain-of-Custody Standard (Certification in partnership with MSC)

- ASC certified products traceable from farm to fork
- Existing MSC certified Chain-of-Custody clients can apply to handle ASC certified product
- Will provide for audit efficiency in supply chain
- And efficiencies in 'system' costs
 - An approach ASC will enshrine



However, the salmon farming industry by its very nature breaks the chain.



Feeding more wild fish to produce less farmed fish is the antithesis of 'sustainability'. As Dr. Daniel Pauly of the University of British Columbia [pointed out](#) in 2009:

“There is a hitch: salmon and many other farmed fish are carnivorous, and farming them involves feeding them with animal flesh, just as farming mountain lions would. In this case, the animal flesh, supplied in the form of pellets, consists of ground up sardines, anchovies, mackerels and other edible fish caught mainly - you guessed it - in developing countries. About 3-4 pounds of ground up small fishes are required to produce one pound of farmed

salmon. Thus, the more farmed fish we produce, the less fish there is. This is akin to robbing Pedro to pay Paul.”



For more background on how salmon farming is draining the world’s oceans read ‘[Raising Tigers of the Sea](#)’ and watch the film ‘[The Greed of Feed](#)’

Sadly but not surprisingly, the ASC’s supervisory board is comprised of a posse of pro-salmon farming advocates including the world’s largest fish feed company [Nutreco](#) (the [owner of Marine Harvest](#) until 2006) and WWF’s [Jose Villalon](#) who previously worked for Marine Harvest.

Governance and People

The ASC Supervisory Board

Jose Villalon (chairman)

Managing Director of WWF Aquaculture

Ted van der Put

Programme Director IDH (the Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative)

Hank Cauley

Innovative Environmental Technologies Inc

Peter Hajipieris

Chief Technical, Sustainability & External Affairs Officer, Birds Eye/Iglo

Knut Nesse

Chief Operating Officer Aquaculture, Nutreco N.V.

Marine Harvest brazenly promote their cosy relationship with WWF via their [web-site](#).

Contact Marine Harvest

marineharvest
excellence in seafood

Seafood value chain Products Seafood & health **Sustainability** About Marine Harvest Investor

Qmarine
Food safety
Salmon feed
Food quality
Fish welfare
Environmental responsibility
Social responsibility
Quality assurance
Sustainability Reports
Sustainability highlights
Working with the WWF
Sustainable Seafood
Partnership with WWF-Norway

FAQ
External links
Glossary

Sustainable Seafood

Jose Villalon, Director of WWF-US Aquaculture Program, says "Farmed fish is an excellent source of protein and, when produced well, helps protect the environment. I am totally convinced that aquaculture is the most sustainable way to feed the world."

The quote above comes from WWF's website.

In a shameless display of window-dressing, [Marine Harvest](#) wears WWF's panda logo like a green fig leaf.

Contact

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Seafood value chain Products Seafood & health **Sustainability** About Marine Harvest

Qmarine
Food safety
Salmon feed
Food quality
Fish welfare
Environmental responsibility
Social responsibility
Quality assurance
Sustainability Reports
Sustainability highlights
Working with the WWF
Sustainable Seafood
Partnership with WWF-Norway

FAQ
External links
Glossary

Partnership with WWF-Norway

On the 23rd April 2008, Marine Harvest entered into a historical partnership with WWF-Norway. Together we will work to reduce the environmental impacts and ecological footprint of aquaculture.

© WWF®

The incestuous relationship does not stop there. The ‘[Steering Committee](#)’ of WWF’s Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue includes the Norwegian salmon farming trade association (the [Norwegian Seafood Federation](#)); the feed company [Skretting](#) (a subsidiary of [Nutreco](#)) and the [Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance](#) (whose [members](#) include the BC Salmon Farmers Association, Grieg and Mainstream) in addition to Marine Harvest.

Nutreco trumpets their role in the ASC in their ‘[Sustainability Report 2011](#)’.

Nutreco Sustainability Report 2011 [Home](#) [Contact](#) [www.nutreco.com](#) [Annual Report](#)



Overview and strategy Ingredients Operations Nutritional solutions Commitment

[Nutreco SR 2011](#) > [Ingredients](#) > [Sustainable partnerships](#) > [In practice](#)

[Ingredients](#) [Sustainable partnerships](#)

[In practice](#)

Aquaculture Stewardship Council

In June 2011 Knut Nesse, Nutreco Chief Operating Officer Aquaculture (Skretting Group), became a member of the Supervisory Board of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). The ASC is an independent not-for-profit organisation. Founded in 2009, it manages the global standards for responsible aquaculture developed by the Aquaculture Dialogues, a programme of round tables initiated and coordinated by WWF.



Knut Nesse comments: "I represent myself as a member of the Supervisory Board in ASC, and not Nutreco or Skretting Group. However, being involved in such an organisation provides insight and understanding of a variety of environmental issues relating to various aquaculture species. Now that Skretting is expanding its operations in Asia and expanding the range of species we serve, it is useful experience for me to gain insight into the sustainability issues relating to aquaculture species new for Skretting."

Seeking to increase the availability of certified sustainable seafood, the ASC is running an ambitious programme to transform the world’s seafood markets and to promote the best environmental and social aquaculture performance. "In 2011 the world’s population grew to seven billion people. With the predicted growth rate, we will reach nine billion people by 2050. A significant growth in aquaculture will be part of the solution to secure food availability for this growing population. As the number one feed supplier, Skretting will be driving the blue revolution in fish feed, developing the feed industry to enable increased production of sustainable fish feed on all continents. This huge task not only includes a significant increase in volume, but also a huge focus on research to continue developing innovative, sustainable fish feed solutions."

WWF is little more than a shameless apologist of aquaculture masquerading as an environmental group. WWF Norway, for example, accepts [blood money](#) from Marine Harvest to the tune of [800,000 NOK per year](#). Even with such blatant bribery, Marine Harvest is not 100% confident that it can meet the [low standard](#) of the ASC. Last month, Marine Harvest announced that it was conducting a trial certification.



Marine Harvest to trial run ASC certification

Marine Harvest will run an ASC salmon trial to decide if it will proceed with process.

 Joar Grindheim

Published: 07 March 2012 02:03 PM

Updated: 07 March 2012 03:21 PM

As soon as the certification manual for the Aquaculture Stewardship Council's (ASC) standard for farmed salmon is ready, Marine Harvest, the world's largest salmon farmer, will commence trial certification. The result will decide whether or not the company proceeds further.

"Once the certification manual is ready and approved, we will trial run certification at selected sites to determine the extent to which our production can be certified. The result from the trial certification will decide whether ASC is a company that Marine Harvest will proceed further with," said Marine Harvest Communications Director Jorgen Christiansen.

"The ASC has become an extremely rigid environmental standard, and I have yet to see an equally strict standard for other food products," claimed Marine Harvest's Director of Communications Jorgen Christiansen.

Read more via '[Marine Harvest to Run Trial ASC Certification](#)'

Thankfully (for Marine Harvest), the new CEO of the ASC is a former executive of the MSC (Chris Ninnis) who pledges even lower and more streamlined standards.

Associated Articles

- CEO: ASC process will be 'shorter, quicker, cheaper' than MSC
- Alaskans have done 'sustainability' a favor
- Dutch retailers to review Alaska salmon
- Marine Harvest Ireland farm under attack
- Riding farmed salmon to the top



CEO: ASC process will be 'shorter, quicker, cheaper' than MSC

The aquaculture certification group will launch within 'days,' Ninnés says.

 Avani Nadkarni

Published: 01 February 2012 01:57 PM

Associated Articles

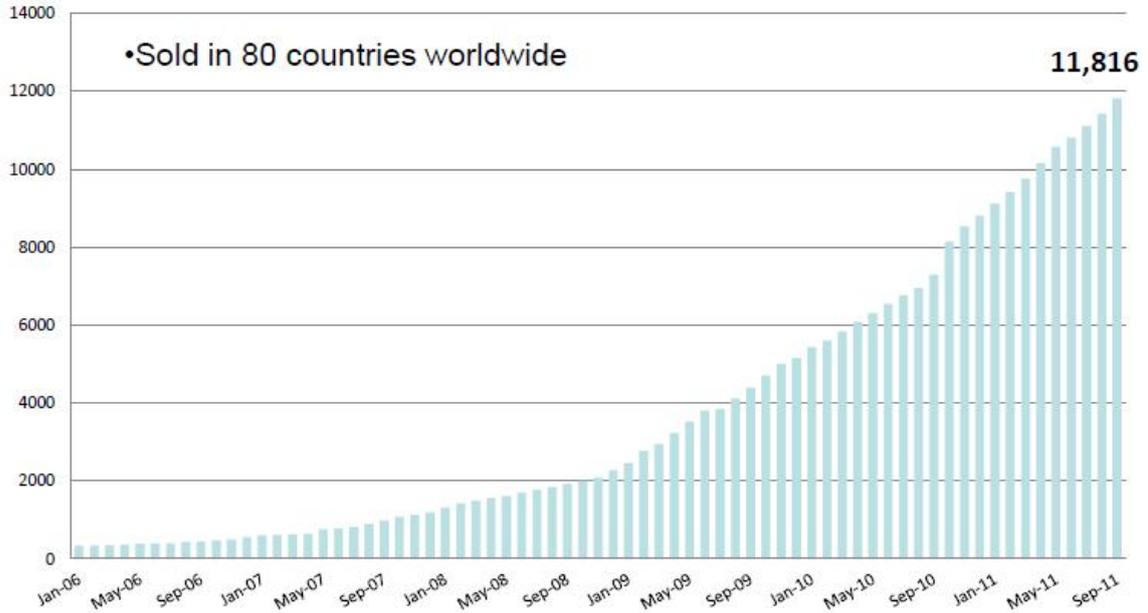
• [Former MSC exec new ASC CEO](#)

“It will be shorter, quicker, cheaper [than the MSC's process],” said the ASC’s CEO in an interview in [February](#). In view of the MSC’s appalling track record such a statement hardly inspires consumer confidence.

In a [presentation](#) last month in the United Kingdom, the ASC’s CEO gave a glimpse into the nightmare future for farmed fish certification.



Primed for rapid growth: MSC labelled products as at end 2011



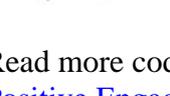
If the ASC follows the same trajectory of growth as the MSC then the marketplace will be flooded with “sustainable” farmed salmon sooner than the ‘panda cash machine’ (aka [Branda the Panda](#)) can say ‘kerching’.



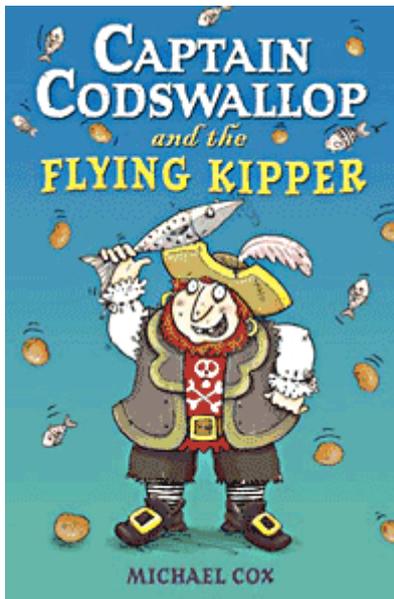
The catfish (pangasius) is out of the bag already with standards [finalized](#) along with [abalone](#), [tilapia](#) and [bivalves](#). Salmon, shrimp and trout are next on the ASC conveyor belt during Q4 2012 with only [seriola and cobia](#) delayed.



Planning milestones

	Species	ADs → ASC	Start audits	Volumes available in market	
	Tilapia	✓	Mar 2012	Q2 2011	
	Pangasius	✓	Apr 2012	Q2 2012	
	Bivalves (4)	✓	Q2 2012	Q3 2012	
	Abalone	✓	Q2 2012	Q3 2012	
	Salmon	AD finished	2nd half 2012	Q4 2012	
	Shrimps	AD finished	2nd half 2012	Q4 2012	
	Trout	AD finished	2nd half 2012	Q4 2012	
	Seriola & Cobia	AD paused	TBD	TBD	

Read more codswallop (i.e. bullshit) via [‘The ASC: Making Sense of Sustainability Through Positive Engagement’](#)



Don't say you haven't been warned! Just watch as the Abominable Salmon Council (aka Aquaculture Stewardship Council) attempts to greenwash salmon farming with a glossy PR makeover.



Hogwash more like it. With all the infectious disease problems in Canada, for example, this could be a case for a real consumer champion, [Advertising Standards Canada](#).



The salmon spin doctors in Scotland, Norway, Canada and Chile have all peddled farmed salmon as “sustainable”, “environmentally friendly” and even “[organic](#)” – hoodwinking a gullible public in the process.

Read more via ‘[Spinning Farmed Salmon](#)’ and ‘[Farmageddon and the Spin Doctors](#)’

The Norwegian Seafood Export Council, for example, was accused of deceptive advertising in 2010 when a complaint was filed with the Federal Trade Commission’s ‘Bureau of Consumer Protection’ (read complaint in full [online here](#)).



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Seafood News Supply & Trade

■ **Complaint: Norwegian salmon ad deceptive**



By SeafoodSource staff

15 February, 2010 – A complaint filed with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in late January alleges a Norwegian Seafood Export Council (NSEC) ad infers its salmon is wild when the fish is actually farmed.

The letter of complaint is signed by Rick Moonen, chef at RM Seafood in Las Vegas; Marianne Cufone, Food & Water Watch fish program director; George Kimbrell, staff attorney for the International Center for Technology Assessment & The Center for Food Safety; Anne Mosness of the Go Wild Campaign; Bartlett Naylor of Capital Strategies; and Don Staniford, Pure Salmon Campaign global coordinator.

The complaint claims that the ad, which appeared in the October issue of *Cooking Light*, deliberately and systematically uses misleading language such as naturally, nature, pure and simple to convey the image of wild salmon.

World Headlines

Read more via [‘Complaint: Norwegian salmon ad deceptive’](#)

Last year, in a presentation at the [Seafood Summit](#) in Vancouver, the ASC made a plea for patience. “The ASC is on a journey here – a long journey,” said Dr. Philip Smith (the then CEO of the ASC). “It’s extremely important to understand how much financial and human resources that are needed to put in in order to drive change. It does take time. Unrealistic timelines will create problems for managing expectations.”

Jose Villalon of WWF was also at pains to stress: “Sustainability is a journey and we’re all on the march together – the word ‘sustainability’ implies you’ve already reached your destination. Hence the ASC is staying away from the word sustainability and focussing on responsible. Please appreciate that the ASC is a work in progress”.

Read more via [‘ASC on a ‘mission impossible’ to brand farmed salmon as ‘responsible’](#)

Judging by the abject lack of progress since, the ASC looks nailed on to achieve the impossible – making the [‘corrupted’](#) MSC look an honourable organization! Earlier this year, the MSC suffered a body blow as Alaskan wild salmon producers [pulled out en masse](#) of the certification program.

Major Japanese retailer quits Alaska salmon

Without 'global standard,' grocery chain to source salmon elsewhere

by Sustainable Food News
February 2, 2012



Japanese retailer Aeon Topvalu Co., Ltd., said it will not sell salmon from Alaska unless it carries the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) eco-label.

Earlier this month, eight major processors of wild Alaska salmon, representing nearly three quarters of the annual harvest, will end their financial support of the MSC salmon certification program when the current certificate expires in October.

"Due to withdrawal from the MSC certification, Alaska salmon loses evidence that the salmon was caught by well-managed sustainable fisheries," said Mr. Yasuyuki Yamamoto, general manager, Topvalu merchandising division. "Aeon has promoted seafood from well-managed sustainable sources to consumers, but we will not be able to do so regarding Alaska salmon. Because we will keep our policy to promote sustainable seafood, we need to consider changing sources of salmon to the MSC certified fisheries in other countries."

Much of the wild Alaskan salmon harvested is sold in Europe. Alaska salmon was the first U.S. fishery to achieve MSC certification in 2000. MSC fishery certifications are valid for five years, subject to annual audits.

Read more via [‘Marine Stewardship Council losing ground with wild salmon fisheries’](#)

Last year, the MSC was accused of “[duping](#)” consumers by giving its ‘eco-label’ to fisheries where stocks are tumbling. Richard Page, a Greenpeace oceans campaigner, told [The Guardian](#) that decisions to certify some fisheries “seriously undermine” the MSC's credibility. “I will go as far as to say consumers are being duped,” he said. “They think they are buying fish that are sustainable and can eat them with a clean conscience.”

Read more via [‘Sustainable fish customers 'duped' by Marine Stewardship Council’](#)

“Unfortunately, perception is reality,” said Gerald Leape of the Pew Environment Group in [2010](#). “The MSC’s label falsely advertises the message that all krill are sustainably caught and that consuming krill-based omega 3 supplements or purchasing farmed salmon raised on krill meal is okay. Nothing could be further from the truth.”

The MSC is scraping the bottom of the barrel to such an extent that on World Oceans Day in July 2011 it announced a business deal with fast-food giant [McDonald’s](#) to certify as “sustainable” the catch used for each of the 100 million fish sandwiches the chain sells in Europe every year.



Marine Stewardship Council
Certified sustainable seafood

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> Partner Release: McDonald's to Bring Sustainable Fish to Millions in Europe

Partner Release: McDonald's to Bring Sustainable Fish to Millions in Europe

08 June 2011

World Oceans Day, Wednesday 8 June 2011: In a landmark move for sustainability, McDonald's has today announced that over 13 million customers every day across Europe will be able to buy Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified sustainable fish in McDonald's restaurants from October this year.



MSC labelled packaging for McDonald's filet-o-fish

According to [The New York Times](#): “For granting McDonald’s the right to its imprimatur, the nonprofit organization will receive 0.5 percent of the cost of the 100 million frozen filets it certifies.”



The writing on the wall is all too clear – McDonald’s have already teamed up with the world’s largest salmon farming producer Marine Harvest. In 2007, McDonald’s launched a ‘[Laksewrap](#)’ (salmon wrap) in Norway with the goal of expanding the product to the global market. An advertising campaign showed the farmed salmon wrap leaping out of the water with a M shape and the Marine Harvest logo underneath.

McDonalds is launching salmon wrap with salmon from Marine Harvest

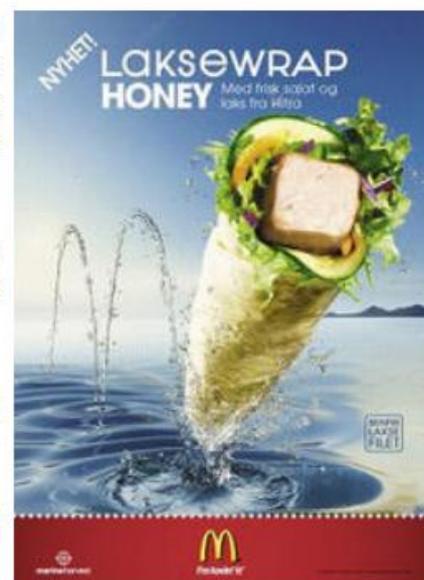
NORWAY - McDonalds has launched a new product in Norway; the Salmon wrap.

The salmon comes from the Marine Harvest plant at Hitra. "It is very exciting to cooperate with McDonalds and launch such a healthy and delicious product at the fast food chain", says Arne Hjeltnes, Communication Director in Marine Harvest.

The product is a salmon fillet from Marine Harvest Hitra, together with salat, mango and either wasabi or honey.

The recipe is made in cooperation with the Culinary institute of Norway and the VAP team in Belgium.

The salmon wrap from Hitra will be available at all McDonalds restaurants in Norway from 9 August.



Marine Harvest Canada blogged about it via ['Marine Harvest teams up with McDonalds'](#) and the Norwegian Embassy in the United States bragged:

“The aim is to go global and get the Norwegian salmon into all Mc Donald’s’ 31.000 locations around the world. If the salmon wrap sales hit the magic number of \$30 million within the first year, the wrap may be ready for launch abroad in short time.”

Read more via [‘McSalmon, Please!’](#)

“It is very exciting to cooperate with McDonalds and launch such a healthy and delicious product at the fast food chain”, said [Arne Hjeltnes, Communication Director in Marine Harvest](#).

McDonald’s and the ASC ought to know better. In [1997](#), McDonald's were sued when “four people, including two McDonald's employees, were hospitalized after eating tainted McLaks salmon burgers at a restaurant in Lorenskog, located in the outskirts of Oslo.” McDonald's Norway confirmed that the food poisoning materialized from a “corrupted” consignment of salmon fillets delivered by the Norwegian fish firm West Fish, based in Alesund. Separate legal actions against McDonald's were filed by the four people who claimed they became sick after consuming McLaks burgers. “At first the McLaks tasted very good, but after some minutes my mouth and throat became numb, and I experienced internal spasms,” said Geir Sundberg, one of the four filing suit against McDonald's.

McDonald's sued over McSalmon burger sickness

Published: July 22, 1997



OSLO -- McDonald's in Norway is facing legal action following claims that its McLaks salmon fillet burger, launched in June, caused food poisoning.

Four people, including two McDonald's employees, were hospitalized after eating tainted McLaks salmon burgers at a restaurant in Lorenskog, located in the outskirts of Oslo.

The incident forced the withdrawal of McLaks from the domestic market, and the suspension of plans to launch the product in the U.K., France and Japan.

McDonald's Norway, which operates a countrywide chain of 36 outlets, confirmed that the food poisoning materialized from a "corrupted" consignment of salmon fillets delivered by the Norwegian fish firm West Fish, based in Alesund. McDonald's Norway has declined to comment while the lawsuit is pending.

Separate legal actions against McDonald's have been filed by the four people who claim they became sick after consuming McLaks burgers. McDonald's has been producing salmon burgers in Norway since the 1970s. However, McLaks is the chain's first fish burger composed solely of salmon fillets.

"At first the McLaks tasted very good, but after some minutes my mouth and throat became numb, and I experienced internal spasms," said Geir Sundberg, one of the four filing suit against McDonald's.

For more details read [‘McDonald's sued over McSalmon burger sickness’](#)

Advertising Age reported under '[1997 Ad Follies](#)':

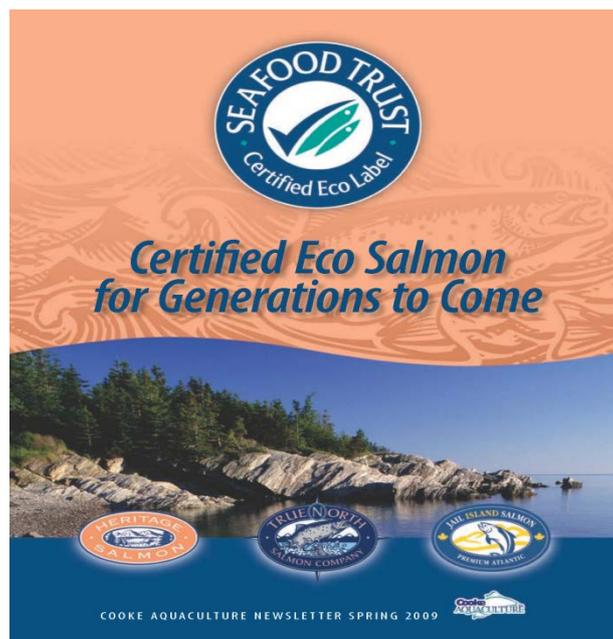
“In Norway, McDonald's pulled the McLaks salmon burger off the market after four customers were treated for food poisoning. McLaks had been a hit with health-conscious Norwegians, and McDonald's had been considering expanding the product to Sweden and Denmark”

For more background read '[Eco-Washing McFarmed Fish](#)'

Mmmm – insanitary, [filthy](#) farmed salmon with [lashings of listeria](#), sea lice, [infectious diseases](#) and tumours anyone?



As well as the ASC's 'Abominable Salmon' certification scheme there already exists a raft of other [eco-labels](#) peddling farmed salmon as 'trustworthy', 'responsible', 'organic' and 'sustainable'.



Dig more deeply, however, and behind the label there is a horror show. Cooke, the salmon farming giant lurking behind the brand names above, is currently embroiled in a disease crisis with Infectious Salmon Anaemia (ISA) [spreading in Eastern Canada](#). Cooke was also [charged by Environment Canada](#) last year in relation to the illegal use of toxic chemicals and the deaths of lobsters.

The [Global Aquaculture Alliance](#) (GAA) and [Friend of the Sea](#) are the ASC's rivals to certify farmed salmon but suffer from similar criticisms (if not more).

Read more via '[Comparison of Seafood Eco-Labels](#)' and '[Better Than the Rest?: A Resource Guide to Farmed Salmon Certifications](#)'

Earlier this month, the GAA [certified](#) a processing plant in New Brunswick, Canada, operated by Northern Harvest Sea Farms praising the company's "continued dedication to responsible aquaculture." There was no mention of the [\\$24,000 fine](#) issued by Health Canada last year following six pesticide violations. Friends of the Sea has also [certified](#) numerous salmon farming companies – including [Wester Ross Fisheries](#) who have been [accused](#) of sea lice infestation and pollution in Scotland.

Read more via '[Who's Calling Who a Convicted Criminal?](#)'

A [review of eco-labels](#) for marine aquaculture by the University of Victoria in British Columbia published in December 2011 found that many were "misleading" and "simply aren't living up to their promises" (watch a slide show [online here](#)).



"Eco-labels are abundant in the marketplace, but there's little to them but the label," Dr. John Volpe, lead author of the report, told [TakePart](#). "Many retailers don't provide any information other than the sticker, and give no indication to what they're basing their claims on. There's no meat on the bones."

FOOD

The Truth About Eco Labels for Farmed Fish

If you're spending a little extra money on farm-raised fish with a sustainability sticker, you may be getting short-changed.

By [Clare Leschin-Hoar](#) December 9, 2011 1 comment



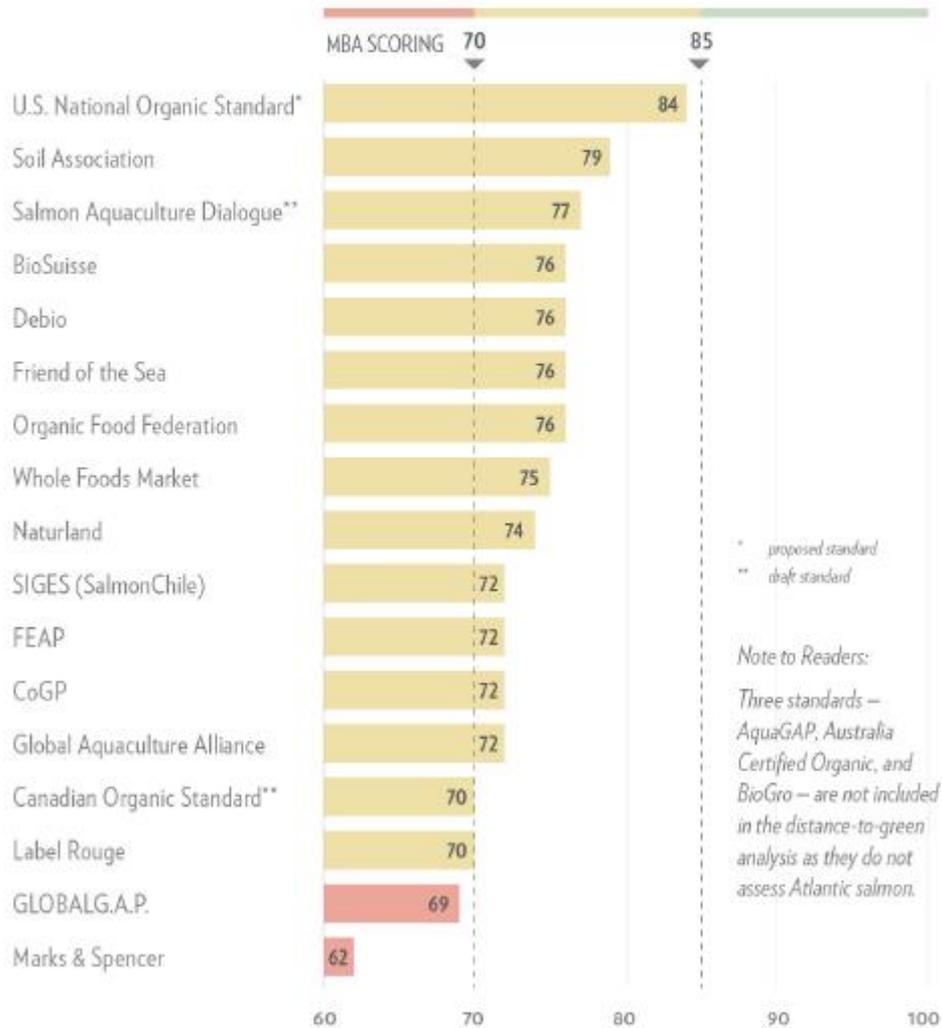
NPR reported (8 December) via that: “The majority of labels scored less than 10 percent higher than their conventional counterparts. Four scored exactly the same as the conventional average, and two labels, Global G.A.P and Marks & Spencer, got negative scores. This means their sustainability standards set the bar so low that companies doing more than the average amount of environmental damage could still obtain an eco-friendly label.”

Read more via [‘Environmental Claims for Farmed Fish Don’t Hold Up To Scrutiny’](#)

In fact, not a single standard (including the WWF’s ‘Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue’ and by extension the ASC’s salmon certification scheme) achieved a ‘green’ rating.

Figure IV: Distance to Green: MBA rating results (Absolute Performance Scores for Atlantic salmon)

No standard achieves a green rating. Only one standard – the proposed U.S. National Organic Standard – comes close to a green ranking. Most standards fall in the yellow category and two in the red category.



Read the report in full via [‘How Green is Your Eco-Label? A Comparison of the Environmental Benefits of Marine Aquaculture Standards’](#)

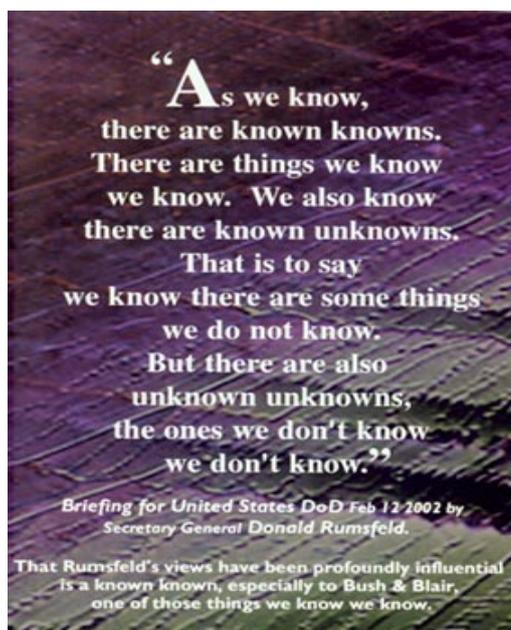
Perversely, desperate retailers and supermarket chains are [lined up like lemmings](#) rushing headlong to promote farmed salmon as “sustainable” and “responsible”.



ASC Supporters



For example, Canadian retailer [Loblaw](#) pledged last year to sell only “sustainable seafood” by the end of 2013. In promoting Cooke’s farmed salmon, Paul Uys, vice-president of sustainable seafood at Loblaw, blathered like Donald Rumsfeld to [The Globe & Mail](#): “We’re not saying this is the most sustainable; we’re saying this is the most sustainable seafood that we can currently sell.”



Read more via [‘Environmentalists Skeptical of Loblaw’s Boost for Salmon Farming’](#)

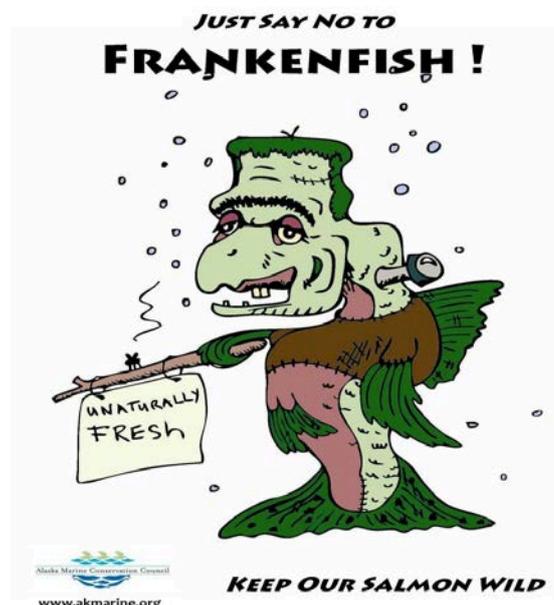
Loblaw, as well as other retailers, surely have an impossible job ahead convincing consumers that farmed salmon is sustainable let alone safe and healthy. Just this week [The Globe & Mail](#) revealed that farmed salmon bought in supermarkets owned by Loblaw in Vancouver tested positive for a Norwegian disease (Heart & Skeletal Muscle Inflammation).

Loblaw's spokesman Craig Ware spluttered: "As relates to this virus, this is definitely the first time we've heard about it in relation to any of the fish that have been sold in our stores. Obviously, we take any of these kind of concerns seriously. And so we are looking into it with our suppliers."



Read more via [‘Supermarket Salmon Test Positive for Virus Found in Europe’](#)

Hell knows what other skeletons, viruses and toxic timebombs are lurking in the salmon farming industry's closet.



When it comes to 'Abominable Salmon' it's clearly a case of caveat emptor (buyer beware)!



Online via [“The Abominable Salmon Council - Buyer Beware!”](#)