

# Exclusive: Aramark transitions to wild salmon, pollock

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United States facilities manager Aramark is sourcing more wild salmon and pollock, and is utilizing a new technology to help track its seafood purchases.

The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-based facilities manager and food supplier to more than 500 university and college campuses is transitioning all contracted salmon and shrimp products to Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch "Best Choice" and "Good Alternative" rankings, Erin Noss, director of media relations for Aramark, told SeafoodSource.

"We're featuring wild-caught salmon from state waters of Alaska by fisheries certified as sustainably managed against the MSC standard," Noss said.

New wild salmon dishes Aramark is serving on college campuses include Sumac Roasted Salmon Salad and Grilled Lemon Salmon on stir-fried snow peas, mushrooms, and peppers. Aramark is also now utilizing wild pollock in dishes such as its Spicy Fish Tacos, Baked Chili-Lime Pollock and Baked Coconut Crusted Pollock with Red Curry Sauce. Noss declined to reveal the fish that Aramark was using prior to pollock.

"We're on track to meet our 2018 seafood commitment, and continue to raise the bar by expanding our seafood contracts to ensure additional species we purchase meet Seafood Watch recommendations," Noss said.

Aramark recently began utilizing Open Fields, a FarmLogix software platform that allows the company to "easily source and report on sustainable ingredients and purchases," Noss said. Aramark is using the tool to track 85 sustainable attributes,

including Seafood Watch “Best Choice” or “Good Alternative” options, Fair Trade USATM certification, and USDA Organic qualifications.

"Open Fields increases Aramark's access to fresh, high quality, local produce and sustainably sourced products," Noss said. Utilizing the software, Aramark can also provide front-line operators with the insight to understand more about the environmental and social attributes of the ingredients they purchase.

The company said it is supporting oceans globally on two main fronts.

“Watching what comes out as well as what goes into the water,” Aramark said of its initiatives, adding that, “We work to minimize waste that may end up in our oceans by promoting recycling efforts, and by finding new ways to reduce packaging materials across operations.”

To that end, Aramark recently pledged to drastically reduce the utilization of single-use plastics across its global foodservice operations by signing up to a United Nations' environment campaign, #CleanSeas. As part of the campaign, the company aims to reduce single-use plastics by the year 2022.

In addition to increasing its sustainable seafood options, Aramark is serving more plant-based foods and meals, including raw tuna substitute Ahimi, made by Ocean Hugger Foods. Ahimi can be used in sushi, sashimi, poke, and other dishes.

“Our collaboration with Ocean Hugger Foods to introduce Ahimi into our recipes is another example of our forward-thinking approach to creating sustainable menus that not only taste great but are healthy for you,” said Annette Gray, lead chef of culinary & innovation at Aramark, in a [press release earlier this year](#).

Offering more plant-based foods is part of Aramark's commitment with the American Heart Association to help improve the health of Americans 20 percent by 2020.

“We are committed to increasing vegetables, fruits and whole grains by 20 percent on our menus, while reducing calories, saturated fat and sodium levels by 20 percent,” Aramark said in a press release.

The move will also help forward the company's goals to reduce the company's environmental impact.

“Plant-forward choices can help to reduce impact on the environment, by decreasing the amount of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, and minimizing demand for water and land resources,” the company added.

Moreover, a recent proprietary consumer survey revealed that over half of Aramark's consumers are open to excluding meat in some capacity, a few times a week. Those surveyed said that personal health is a key driver of that decision.

“As consumer demand grows for smaller portions of meat or complete plant-based proteins, we continue to provide choices to support those preferences. Today, fully one third of our menu selections for students, healthcare facilities and businesses feature vegetarian or vegan options,” Aramark said.

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