

## Meijer Partners with Nation's Only Fresh Pack BAP Certified Aquaculture Farm

**Indian Brook Trout Farm utilizes a 10,000-year-old aquifer in Jackson, Mich., highlights retailer's commitment to seafood sustainability**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Meijer is taking its [seafood sustainability](#) commitment to the next level, thanks to a new partnership with Jackson, Mich.-based [Indian Brook Trout Farm](#).

The rainbow trout farm is the nation's only fresh pack Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certified aquaculture facility. That means, the farm and its new processing plant are operating in the most responsible and sustainable manner.

Beginning in April, Meijer customers across the Midwest will have the opportunity to purchase the freshest, locally-grown rainbow trout, Meijer Seafood Buyer Dave Wier said.

"At Meijer, we're focused on providing our customers with the freshest, highest quality seafood, which includes striving to offer seafood caught and farmed in the most responsible and sustainable way," Wier said. "Not only is this the right thing to do for the environment, but our customers want to know that the seafood they buy from us comes from sources that do not deplete or damage the resource. We are pleased to [partner with Indian Brook Trout Farm](#) because their entire farm is focused on doing what's right for the fish and the environment."

Global Aquaculture Alliance Executive Director Wally Stevens said he "commends" Indian Brook Trout Farm for attaining its BAP certification. The certification program is based on independent audits that evaluate compliance with BAP standards throughout the entire aquaculture supply chain.

"To be BAP certified is to prove your commitment to the environment, social integrity, and the health of the animal and public," Stevens said.

Commitment, location and access to pure water was the recipe for success, said Owen Ballow, President of Indian Brook Trout Farm. The farm utilizes artesian water from a 10,000-year-old natural aquifer 180 feet below the surface.

After retiring from the hospital industry, Ballow purchased Indian Brook Trout Farm in 2013, following an 8-year search for the perfect location to invest in his aquaculture passion. The 90-acre fish farm in western Jackson County taps into a deep, bedrock aquifer – also utilized by a national bottled water company – that pumps pure water into dozens of fish tanks and ponds that house 350,000 rainbow trout at varying stages of growth from eggs to maturity. There are no antibiotics, hormones or pesticides used at the farm, and the fish are fed an 85 percent all plant diet.

Ballow and his two sons, Chris and Andrew, along with recent Michigan State University graduates Jimmy Lee and Brad Dunlap, are committed to ensuring the farm minimally impacts the environment: All the fish waste is collected and sold to hops farmers due to its beneficial soil bacteria and neutral pH levels, and the water is returned to the natural aquifer clean.

"We are the only commercial grower in the state who does it this way," Owen Ballow said. "We want this industry to grow in Michigan. Everything we're trying to do at our farm – shape an industry, recover the wild fish populations and grow the cleanest fish around – supports local so it just made sense to partner with Meijer."

Meijer will be the exclusive supercenter carrying fish from Indian Brook Trout Farm, said Wier, noting that rainbow trout is one of the retailer's best-selling fish.

"Trout is the fish we all grew up on in Michigan. It's in our rivers, in our streams and lakes," he said. "This fish will be delivered to our stores 6 days a week, as soon as 36 hours after harvesting at the trout farm. That is incredibly fresh fish."

To view a video featuring the partnership, please visit: <https://youtu.be/KmLo6ygDb3I>.

### About Meijer:

Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 235 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include

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