

Grocer favors fish-friendly farming

by Celeste LeCompte - 1.30.06

PCC Natural Markets is partnering with **Salmon-Safe** Puget Sound to encourage growers to adopt fishfriendly farming practices. The Seattle-based natural food retailer is providing information for customers about which products are Salmon-Safe certified, and is encouraging its suppliers to work with Salmon-Safe.



The Portland-based certifier expanded into the Puget Sound region during 2005 with the help of **Stewardship Partners**, and had certified 18 farms as of early January 2006.

The partnership with PCC Natural Markets has helped Stewardship Partners approach Washington growers about the Salmon-Safe certification said Larry Nusbaum, Salmon-Safe program director for Stewardship Partners.

Growers who work exclusively or primarily with PCC have been most interested in the program, said Nusbaum. During the spring, Salmon-Safe anticipates several new Washington certifications, some of which were a direct result of PCC's support for the program, according to Nusbaum.

The program has also been good for PCC's relationship with its growers, said Paul Schmidt, director of merchandising. The program provides recognition for farmers who are increasing their commitment to sustainable agriculture.

PCC Natural Markets has been experiencing rapid growth during the last few years. Schmidt said the company saw sales increase by approximately 5 percent in 2005, compared with a national average of just 1.5 percent.

"That's even with the increase in competition in organic products," he added.

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