

3. Food Fish – Perch

Common Name(s):

European Perch

Species: *Perca fluviatilis*



European Perch is one of the best tasting freshwater fishes with distinctively flavoured, delicate flesh and relatively few bones. Native to the UK, they tolerate a wide range of temperatures and despite being carnivorous, can grow well on a diet supplemented with home-grown live feeds such as worms.

History: Perch farming has typically been confined to extensive pond culture in Eastern Europe and France. The fillets are a delicacy in countries such as Belgium and Switzerland retailing at double the price of trout and salmon, but the market suffers from irregular supply and an over reliance on wild capture. This has provided a niche in the market for farmers seeking to diversify from traditional cultured species where margins are tight. The European Union has therefore funded research into perch aquaculture since the 1990's, in line with policy for social and economic development, and the number of intensive recirculating perch farms has started to increase.

Physiology: Moderately deep body with rough edged scales. Short head and blunt, rounded snout. Teeth are small but numerous. Colour ranges from grey-green on the upper body to green-yellow for the abdomen with dark vertical bars across the upper sides. Pelvic, pectoral and anal fins are generally orange. It is a relatively small fish and can reach sizes of 35-50cm length and up to 5kg weight. The temperate range for Perch lies between 4-31°C with an optimum of 22°C.

Diet: Perch are carnivorous with a preference in the wild for small fish. Trout diets are recommended, however this can be heavily supplemented with live insects such as worms.

Growth Rate: Perch require around 10 months to reach a harvest size of 100g at optimum temperature. Females grow 20% faster than males and thus an all female stock will be ready to harvest after just 8 months.

European Perch: 16-24°C

D.O. mg/l	pH Units	Un-Ionised Amونيا mg/l	Nitrite mg/l	Nitrate mg/l	Hardness mg/l	Alkalinity mg/l	CO ₂ mg/l	Salinity ppt	Chloride mg/l
5-13	6-9	0-0.02	0-0.1	<50	50-350	50-250	0-20	0-1500	0-5