

2025 SEAFOOD PROGRESS PROFILE: PATTISON FOOD GROUP

Private label brands	Only Goodness, Western Family
Key documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced Labor Report 2023 • Save-On-Foods' Sustainable Seafood Policy - approximately 2016 • Supplier ESG Responsibility Standards and Procedures Document - acts as PFG's Supplier Code of Conduct, not public • No public human rights policy
Parent company	The Jim Pattison Group
NGO partner	Ocean Wise
Stores covered by seafood policy	Save-On-Foods
Stores NOT covered by seafood policy	Associated Grocers, Bulkley Valley Wholesale, Buy-Low Foods, Choices Market, Meinhardt Fine Foods, Natures Fare Markets, Nesters Market, Pricemart Foods, Pure Integrative Pharmacy, Quality Foods, Urban Fare, Van-Whole Produce



READ THE FULL REPORT

Note: This is the first time that Seafood Progress has profiled Pattison Food Group. Save-On-Foods and Buy-Low Foods were profiled separately from 2018-2023, but are now both owned by [Pattison Food Group](#).

✗ THE BAD

- Very low engagement on human rights questions.
- Lowest scoring retailer overall at 14%, and by far the lowest scoring retailer on the human rights questions at 5%.
- Sustainable Seafood Policy is very outdated and not well embedded due to overall decentralized operations.
- Sustainable Seafood Policy does not cover any shelf stable, health, beauty, pet food or garden products and appears to only apply to Save-On-Foods (one of thirteen of its store chains).
- Does not have a full chain traceability policy in place to support its Sustainable Seafood Policy, despite reporting annually to SeaChoice since 2018 that it is in the works.
- The only retailer to not have a human rights policy, and to not publish its Supplier Code of Conduct.
- Does not verify supplier compliance against its Sustainable Seafood Policy or Supplier Code of Conduct.
- No tangible plans to adopt a human rights due diligence process that incorporates worker perspectives.

✓ THE GOOD

- Overall adequate and timely engagement with SeaChoice on its Sustainable Seafood Policy.

SEAFOOD INVESTIGATIONS

Pattison Food Group (PFG) did not respond to SeaChoice's inquiry about whether the company plans to strengthen its efforts to ensure that its seafood suppliers comply with its Supplier Code of Conduct, amid growing evidence of abuse in global seafood supply chains. While none of PFG's stores were directly implicated in [the Outlaw Ocean Project's China series](#) where egregious human rights and environmental abuses were connected back to seafood products sold by North American retailers, a supplier of Save-On-Foods' private label seafood – [Premier Marine Canada](#) – was. Correspondence between Outlaw Ocean and Premier Marine can be found [here](#). Various third-party seafood brands that are commonly sold in PFG's stores were also implicated (e.g., [Aqua Star](#), [High Liner](#) and [Toppits](#)).

SCORING METHODOLOGY

For the first time, SeaChoice is scoring retailers on [indirect products](#) containing seafood—such as pet food and fish oil—and taking a deeper look at how human rights policies are being put into practice. Check out our [NEW scoring methodology!](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL

KPI 1.1
ENGAGE

Did the retailer engage with SeaChoice and respond to questions related to its sustainable seafood policy and practices?

Pattison Food Group provided adequate and timely responses to most questions related to its [Sustainable Seafood Policy](#) and practices.

SCORE
60% **D**

KPI 1.2
SCOPE

Which seafood products are covered by the retailer's sustainable seafood policy?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) received the second lowest score on this indicator at 13%. PFG informed SeaChoice that, since amalgamating Buy-Low Foods and Save-On-Foods under PFG, the retailer has deferred to [Save-On-Foods' Sustainable Seafood Policy](#) (which is very outdated with goals stated to be achieved in 2016). The Policy covers some fresh and frozen products, but does not cover any shelf stable, health, beauty, pet food or garden products. The application of the Policy depends on how integrated the store banner is under the PFG umbrella, and reporting how much of its seafood meets its Policy is challenging given the decentralized buying structures across store banners (personal communication, PFG, 16/01/2025). Finally, PFG declined to share revenue and sales data around its seafood products with SeaChoice.

OVERALL
SCORE*
23% **F**



DIRECT PRODUCTS

Third-party, private label and unbranded shelf stable, frozen and fresh seafood products.

SCORE
31% **F**



INDIRECT PRODUCTS

Third-party and private label health, beauty, pet food and garden products that contain seafood ingredients (examples [HERE](#)).

SCORE
0% **F**

SHELF
STABLE



FROZEN



FRESH



HEALTH
e.g. fish oil



BEAUTY
e.g. collagen



PET FOOD
e.g. cat food



GARDEN
e.g. fertilizer



• PRIVATE LABEL BRANDS

Products that retailers sell and own.

• THIRD-PARTY BRANDS

Products that retailers sell but do not own.

• UNBRANDED PRODUCTS

Products that retailers typically own but that do not have a brand on pack (e.g. fillets sold through deli counters).

**Note: In calculating the overall score for this indicator, the decision was made to weight direct products at 75% and indirect products at 25% following the assumption that the former amounts to significantly higher volumes of seafood than the latter.*

KPI 1.3
VERIFICATION

How does the retailer verify supplier compliance against its sustainable seafood policy?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) scored 'o' on this indicator as it does not have a full chain traceability policy in place to support its [Sustainable Seafood Policy](#). Prior to being amalgamated under PFG, Save-On-Foods (now PFG's largest store banner) has reported to SeaChoice on an annual basis from 2018-2023 that it is working on implementing a full chain traceability policy to support its Sustainable Seafood Policy. Pattison Food Group's [2023 Forced Labour Report](#) states: "In 2023, we continued the process of seeking out and evaluating options for systems and/or standardized processes that can provide visibility and traceability in our products' supply chains. Given that our companies procure but do not directly produce our goods for sale and considering the significant number of products in our stores (hundreds of thousands), this is a highly complex, challenging and thorough exercise."



KPI 1.4
STRATEGY

What is the retailer's strategy behind the scope of its sustainable seafood policy?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) score 'o' on this indicator as only its fresh and frozen seafood products are in scope across some store banners, it does not verify supplier compliance against its [Sustainable Seafood Policy](#), and there is no timebound commitment to cover the remaining products and store banners under its Policy. PFG informed SeaChoice that it has worked with its NGO partner, Ocean Wise, for several years to evaluate all of its Save-On-Foods sourcing and make changes to more sustainable options over time. PFG prioritizes based on volume and work to avoid and eliminate any species of significant concern. PFG continues to evaluate sourcing based on fishery-specific information, including species, catch methods and season (personal communication, PFG, 18/02/2025). PFG considers itself in the beginning stages of integrating procurement policies (including its Sustainable Seafood Policy) across all store banners. This is a challenging process due to variances in current buying structures across banners (personal communication, PFG, 16/01/2025).



KPI 1.5
GOVERNANCE

Who is held responsible and accountable for ensuring the retailer's sustainable seafood policy is met?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) received the lowest score across all retailers on this indicator at 33%. PFG informed SeaChoice that responsibility and accountability currently varies by banner, as some banners are fully integrated in the larger PFG supply chain, and others are not yet. In general, the responsibility to ensure policies are met rests with the procurement teams of the banner and category, and the ESG team has a role in reviewing progress against policies and any significant decisions that would impact the fulfillment of those policies. All policies have commitment from the highest levels of the organization (personal communication, PFG, 18/02/2025).



HUMAN RIGHTS

KPI 2.1
ENGAGE

Did the retailer engage with SeaChoice and respond to questions related to its human rights policy and practices?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) scored below average on this indicator as it only provided partial responses to some questions related to its human rights policy and practices.



**KPI 2.2
VERIFICATION**

How does the retailer verify supplier compliance against its human rights policy?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) scored 'o' on this indicator as it expects suppliers to abide by its Supplier ESG Responsibility Standards and Procedures Document (acts as its Supplier Code of Conduct) but does not verify compliance. PFG is the only retailer to not have a publicly available human rights policy and to not publish its Supplier Code of Conduct. PFG's [2023 Forced Labour Report](#) indicates that its Supplier Code of Conduct was very recently established in 2023. PFG informed SeaChoice that, over the past few years, it has been working to ensure suppliers sign on to policies, and understanding where they are in terms of their due diligence processes. The company does not currently audit suppliers, and does not have a timeline in mind for doing so (personal communication, PFG, 16/01/2025).



**KPI 2.3
STRATEGY**

What is the retailer's strategy behind the scope of its human rights policy?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) achieved a score of 'o' on this indicator as it does not verify supplier compliance against its Supplier ESG Responsibility Standards and Procedures Document (not public), and did not report plans to incorporate worker perspectives into its human rights due diligence process in relation to seafood. PFG's [2023 Forced Labour Report](#) states: "We are at the relative beginning of creating formalized processes and policies to address forced labour and child labour in the supply chains of the products we procure." PFG informed SeaChoice that it has been looking into how to execute and integrate supply chain mapping and risk assessment for some time. The company claims it has been able to further resource this area over the past year to make gains in its capacity. The growing awareness of human rights issues in extended supply chains further emphasizes this need. PFG is currently evaluating the most feasible and effective means to verify working conditions related to seafood (personal communication, PFG, 20/02/2025).



**KPI 2.4
GOVERNANCE**

Who is held responsible and accountable for ensuring the retailer's human rights policy is met?

Pattison Food Group (PFG) scored 'o' on this indicator as it does not verify supplier compliance and therefore is not in a position to deem anyone responsible for tracking progress against its Supplier ESG Document. Furthermore, PFG did not indicate who is held accountable for ensuring the objectives of the Document are met, or if there is a discrete budget in place for this work specific to seafood. PFG informed SeaChoice that its sourcing team is responsible to ensure its suppliers have acknowledged and accepted PFG's ESG Terms & Conditions. These were developed by the ESG and Legal team and has alignment with the highest levels of the organization (personal communication, PFG, 18/02/2025).



Please contact SeaChoice for more information at info@seachoice.org