



## **Mission & Vision**

**Family Grown. Sustainable. Quality.**

**For 70 years Sunburst Trout Farms® has striven to produce the highest quality product while maintaining sustainability in an ever changing global market. As an artesian producer of fresh and value added trout products this third generation owned & operated farm has a continued commitment to environmental and economically sustainable aquaculture. With a strict quality control program that ensures our water source remains free of pollutants, our feed free of antibiotics, hormones and animal by-products. We make sure only the freshest, highest quality products reach our customers.**

**Sunburst Trout Farms® is a third generation family grown trout farm founded in 1948 and run by brothers, Wes and Ben Eason, and located in picturesque Haywood County, NC. Their pristine water source comes from the Shining Rock Wilderness in the Pisgah National Forest. The water is untouched before entering Lake Logan above the farm.**

## **History**

**Started in 1948 by Dick Jennings Jr in Cashiers, NC, Sunburst Trout Farms has grown to become the second largest producer of rainbow trout in North Carolina. Dick was raised in Pennsylvania, but loved his Grandfather's land in Western North Carolina, covered with forests of oak, hickory, maple, and poplar, watered with two rushing streams, and with 100 acres of reasonably flat land that could be cleared. The young veteran of WWII was compelled back to these mountains in 1948 to start the first commercial trout farm in the South.**

**This meant ignoring his deceased Father's advice, "Don't stay in these mountains, you'll starve", and it also meant dropping out of the Yale School of Engineering, where, until then, he had been an honor student. These imprudent acts were, to some extent, vindicated in the year 2001, when Dick Jennings was inducted into the Western North Carolina Agricultural Hall of Fame.**

**Early on, supplying trout to anglers and sportsmen was okay, but he noticed a trend toward trout becoming popular seafood. During the 70's and early 80's, he traveled quite a lot to learn the ins and outs and also the ups and downs, of processing and displaying trout to that new and promising market. In 1985, the Jennings Trout Farm was to become Sunburst Trout Company, LLC with the arrival of daughter, Sally, and her husband, Steve Eason.**



**They began to grow forward. That growth meant years of hard work, and many disappointments. It also meant three additional, well chosen, production sites and a large processing facility. Dick became the in house sales rep to 8 to 10 upscale supermarket chains along the East Coast and many of the local elegant restaurants, including the renowned Biltmore Estate and the famous Grove Park Inn and Spa. By the late 20th century the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina were becoming a tourist attraction of unexpected proportions with a need for new and exciting ways to present trout.**

**In 2001, Sally's and Steve's sons Wes and Ben joined the family business full time to make yet another generation of Jennings and Eason's to further push the envelope of creativity. Seeing there were still roles to be filled Ben's wife Anna joined in 2007. To continue evolving and trying to get back to our roots in February 2011 we changed our name to Sunburst Trout Farms, and began using the logo you see today.**

**By the end of 2011 we were presented with an interesting opportunity; opening a farm store in downtown Waynesville on Montgomery Street. In October 2011 Sally and Steve's daughter Katie joined the family business to run the Sunburst Market. By 2013 it was evident this space was no longer big enough for the growing demand. Katie's husband Clay became the assistant manager, and we moved to 180 N. Main Street Waynesville, where we now have over 100 sustainable and local products, as well as prepared and ready to eat foods.**

**We lost Steve in April 2014 and Pa in 2017 just after his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday, but their lasting legacy within the aquaculture industry lives on. In early 2015 Sally left to pursue other ventures, and is now CEO Emeritus.**

**Today Ben and Wes own the farm, and have become the #FamilyGrown face of Sunburst. In March 2016 we moved into a 12,000sqft building in the town of Waynesville. The fish are not city folk and will still live at our Lake Logan site. Our Waynesville processing facility has four indoor recirculating tanks that are filled up to three times a week with our fish from Canton, thus cutting our small batch production time in half to bring you the freshest product possible. With a current staff of over 25 we have grown into the second largest trout supplier in North Carolina. Our indoor recirculating tanks has also given us the opportunity to expand into agritourism for visitors and school groups. Visit us in person at our facility in Waynesville, or online at [www.sunbursttrout.com](http://www.sunbursttrout.com).**