

Influence of Coffee Processing, Water Activity, Temperature and pH on Mould Growth and Ochratoxin A Production in Coffee

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SUMMARY

Ochratoxin A (OTA) is the main mycotoxic contamination known in coffee. OTA occurrence in coffee beans can be due to both environmental and processing conditions. The incidence of tree post-harvest process (traditional wet processing, ecological wet processing and dry natural processing) on mould growth and OTA production by strains of *A. ochraceus* and *A. niger* was evaluated and the effects of water activity (A_w), temperature and pH and their interactions on (a) growth and ochratoxin A production on a green coffee extract medium, (b) ochratoxin A production on raw coffee by *A. ochraceus* were investigated. The method used to produce green coffee does not have any effect on *Aspergillus ochraceus* and *A. niger* growth ability and toxigenesis. However, temperature and especially A_w are very important factors that need to be controlled during drying and storage