

Distribution of *Aspergillus ochraceus* in Major Coffee Growing Regions of India

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SUMMARY

During 2001 and 2002 a total of 65 estates have been surveyed in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu to understand the distribution of *Aspergillus ochraceus* in coffee. The occurrence of ochre mould was observed to be more in soil followed by beans and air in arabica when compared to robusta estates. Presence of ochre mould in soil appeared to be a predisposing factor for ochre incidence in the final product. Arabica coffees were less likely to be get infected by ochre mould compared to robusta coffee. Higher incidence of ochre mould was observed in dry processed coffee compared to wet processed. In drying yards, mud surface recorded higher incidence of ochre mould. The farm practices viz., picking method; use of harvest mats, fermentation, layer thickness, stirring frequencies had no definite relationship on the presence of ochre mould in final bean. The incidence of ochre infection had positive relationship with higher altitude and high rainfall. Both in arabica and robusta higher ochre incidence were noticed in estates situated at higher elevations (900-1100 m) and high rainfall (1500-3000 mm). There appears to be a wide variation among different isolates of *Aspergillus ochraceus* in their OTA production capability.