

Mould and Ochratoxin A (OTA) Contamination in Coffee Samples from Four Districts in Uganda

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SUMMARY

Coffee samples (*C.canephora* and *C.arabica*) were collected from four coffee growing districts in Uganda. The samples were from cherries fallen on the ground under coffee trees, fresh ripe cherries from trees, green coffee beans from stores, dried coffee cherries and parchment coffee sampled from farmers drying yards. The coffee samples were dried on various surfaces to below 13% moisture content, surface disinfected by chlorine 0.4%, plated on Dichloran Rose Bengal Chloramphenicol agar at 25°C for 7 days. Samples dried on raised trays and tarpaulins were generally less infected by the predominant moulds than those dried on bare ground. Isolates of *A.ochraceus* group, *A.niger* group, *Penicillium species*, like *verrucosum*, and *A.carbonarius* which were identified were inoculated on DRBC agar and their capability to produce OTA determined by Agar plug technique. Other portions of coffee samples were analysed for OTA contamination by Vicam Ochratest method and HPLC. OTA contamination was generally higher in dry processed coffee beans dried on the ground than wet processed coffee dried on trays. OTA levels in the samples were within the range of 0-13 µg/kg.