

Presence of Fungi in Natural Coffee and the Beverage Quality

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SUMMARY

A reduction in the quality of natural coffee for “espresso” beverage has been noticed in the last few years in Brazil. The present study was carried out with the aim of investigating every processing stage. Six farms were studied in different regions of Cerrado in Minas Gerais state, Brazil. Fungal presence was also analyzed to find out if it would interfere in the quality of the end product. The harvest was carried out by stripping when the majority of the fruit was dry on the trees. All the fruits were processed naturally (whole dried). The coffee sample, which had the best quality, was from Area 2. It presented a good aspect and was well dried, with good taste and without any fermentation problems. In the other coffee sample areas, it was observed some beans with an excessive mucilage of brown color in its ventral grooves and some of them were fermented. Some fermented immature beans were also found. The results show that the inferior quality found before the drying at the patio stage was probably because of plant stress caused by the high temperature and water deficiency from May to July. Some immature fruits and abnormal fruits with only one bean developed were found probably due to low levels of potassium application. A great percentage of fungal infection was found on ripe cherries put to dry on the patio. On the other hand, when the farmer follows all the correct processing steps with an adequate fertilization, if the fruits are harvested when the majority is at the dry stage on the trees (in the Cerrado region), then it is possible to produce good natural coffee for “espresso”.