

Cotecna Highlights Role of Quality Testing in Strengthening Rice Export Compliance

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Cotecna has underscored the importance of comprehensive quality testing and pre-shipment inspection in helping Indian rice exporters minimise cargo rejection risks and comply with international food safety requirements.

Ravi Anand Thakur, General Manager, Agriculture at Cotecna, highlighted the need for robust quality verification, given India's diverse rice production, which includes more than 360 non-basmati varieties and over 25 basmati varieties. He noted that systematic testing is essential to establish product authenticity, meet buyer specifications and ensure compliance with regulations in destination markets.

Rice quality assessment broadly covers two categories: contractual parameters, which are mutually agreed upon by buyers and sellers, and statutory parameters, which are mandated under applicable food safety regulations.

Contractual testing typically evaluates purity, broken grain percentage, moisture content, damaged grains and discolouration. These parameters determine whether consignments meet agreed quality specifications and can directly influence their commercial value.

Statutory testing, on the other hand, focuses on food safety indicators, including mycotoxins such as aflatoxins, heavy metals, pesticide residues and microbiological contaminants. Compliance with these requirements is essential for exporters, irrespective of the contractual quality specifications.

Non-compliance with destination market regulations can result in shipment rejections, financial losses, trade disputes and supply chain disruptions. Identifying contamination or regulatory violations after consignments reach importing countries can further increase costs and affect exporters' business relationships.

Cotecna highlighted that integrating laboratory testing with physical inspection can help exporters assess product quality, verify compliance with destination-specific requirements and ensure that shipments meet contractual and regulatory standards before dispatch.

As Indian rice exporters cater to markets with varying food safety regulations and quality expectations, strengthening pre-shipment testing and inspection practices can play an important role in reducing trade risks, safeguarding product integrity and supporting India's position in the global rice trade.