

Title PCR detection assays for the ochratoxin-producing *Aspergillus carbonarius* and *Aspergillus ochraceus* species

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Citation International Journal of Food Microbiology, Volume 104, Issue 2 , 15 October 2005, Pages 207-214

Keywords *Aspergillus carbonarius*; *Aspergillus ochraceus*; Ochratoxin A; PCR; Detection; ITS

### **Abstract**

Two PCR assays have been developed to detect *Aspergillus carbonarius* and *Aspergillus ochraceus*, considered the main sources of ochratoxin A (OTA) contaminating commodities, particularly grapes, coffee and derivatives, in warm climates. The species specific primers have been designed on the basis of ITS (internal transcribed spacers of rDNA units) sequence comparisons obtained from *Aspergillus* strains and have been tested in a number of strains from different origins and hosts. These PCR assays, based on multi-copy sequences, are highly sensitive and specific and represent a good tool for an early detection of OTA-producing *Aspergillus* species and to prevent OTA entering the food chain.