



# BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM

## CODE OF PRACTICE

ON

## BASMATI RICE

**In Consultation with the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of  
Regulatory Services (LACORS) and the Association of  
Public Analysts (APA).**

# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR BASMATI RICE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Code has been produced and agreed by the following organisations:

The Rice Association

British Rice Millers Association

British Retail Consortium

in consultation with the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) and the Association of Public Analysts (APA), and in discussion with the Federation of European Rice Millers, the All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA) and the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP). Here in after the signatories to the Code shall be jointly referred to as 'The Associations'.

1.2 Members of the Associations are responsible for the importation, milling and packaging of the majority of Basmati rice marketed in the UK. Members of the Associations are concerned to safeguard the reputation of Basmati rice as a premium rice with its own special properties, and deplore any attempt to adulterate Basmati rice or make false claims about its geographical or botanical origin.

1.3 The scope of this Code of Practice is restricted to the labelling of Basmati rice. The Code of Practice lays down the minimum specifications for Basmati rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) sold in the UK, and applies to prepacked as well as non-prepacked rice, and where rice is used as an ingredient in another food. At such time as a consensus is reached by the producing countries on the approval and testing of new Basmati varieties, the Code may be amended accordingly.

- 1.4** Basmati rice imported and sold in the UK is subject to a number of UK Regulations (see Paragraph 2.1) which reflect the general basic principles of European Community law which requires that foods are accurately described and presented to consumers in all respects. The trade and UK food law enforcement officers will use this Code of Practice to provide greater clarity in determining the authenticity of Basmati rice. As the Code of Practice is based on generic EU legal requirements its provisions will be applied to products imported via other EU Member States. The Code is voluntary but those choosing not to follow its provisions must meet the same minimum legal requirements and must demonstrate what reasonable precautions they have taken and ensure that they have exercised all due diligence to ensure that their Basmati rice is authentic.

## **2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

- 2.1** Members of the Associations undertake to comply with the specific requirements of the Trade Description Act 1968, the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Labelling Regulations 1996, the General Food Law Regulations 2005 and any subsequent legislation concerning the labelling, description, advertising and the substance, quality and nature of rice and any other relevant legislation which would apply to Basmati rice sold in the UK.
- 2.2** The name “Basmati” is a customary name and refers to rice having special characteristics. Guidance on the use of the term “Basmati” has been published by the Food Standards Agency in February 2003, and has served as the basis for this Code.

## **3. DEFINITION OF BASMATI RICE**

- 3.1** “Basmati” is the customary name for certain varieties of rice that are grown exclusively in specific areas of the Indo Gangetic Plains, which currently includes the Punjab (on both sides of the Indian and Pakistani border), Jammu, Haryana, Uttaranchal, and Western Uttar Pradesh in India. India and Pakistan have agreed to protect the geographic indication of Basmati rice varieties covered by EC Regulation 1549/2004, as detailed in Council Decisions 2004/617/EC and 2004/618/EC.

3.2 Table 1 lists the varieties that are currently approved by the Indian and Pakistani authorities and can use the description “Basmati”. They are all, or have at least one parent, which is an Historic Land Race variety, and they have been approved on the basis of having the unique properties of Basmati rice as measured by various objective tests such as grain dimension, amylose content, cooking elongation, and aroma, and meets the specification in Table 2.

#### 4. LABELLING OF BASMATI RICE

4.1 The description ‘Basmati rice’ shall only be applied to the varieties of rice in Table 1 and grown in India or Pakistan in the areas outlined in Paragraph 3.1.

4.2 Basmati rice can only be marked with its country of origin (i.e. Product of Pakistan, Product of India), if it contains at least 97% of grains originating from the country referred to on the pack.

4.3 When the description of the product is “Basmati rice”, the non-Basmati rice content must not exceed 7%.

4.4 If the product is a named blend of two or more rice varieties (including Basmati) or types (e.g. Blend of Basmati and Thai rice), information on the nature of the mixture should be given to consumers as per the quantitative ingredient declaration (QUID) provisions in the Food Labelling Regulations 1996 (or as amended), and reflected appropriately in the name of the food, and the Basmati component must not have more than 7% non-Basmati varieties.

4.5 The specific variety name may be given as voluntary information to the consumer. In order to avoid confusion the words “**variety: X**” where X is the variety name in italics in Table 1, should be used. When Basmati rice is marked with a variety, that variety should constitute at least 97% of the Basmati rice content.

- 4.6** If the amount of broken grains exceeds 20%, the name of the food must indicate that broken grains are present (e.g. Basmati with broken grains). If the amount of broken grains is less than 20% but greater than 10%, the name “Basmati” should be qualified to indicate that it is a value or economy product. For a product to be described with the name “Basmati rice” without any qualification of the presence of broken grains, the amount of broken grains must be less than 10%. A broken grain is one where one quarter or more of the grain is missing.

## **5. MODIFICATION OF APPROVED LIST**

- 5.1** The addition or deletion of varieties for the approved list will be allowed subject to a process agreed between the Associations and the producing countries.

## **6. METHODOLOGY**

- 6.1** The methodology for determining “Basmati” rice varieties will be available on the Food Standards Agency web-site ([www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)). The Associations may decide on suitable methodology using the methods published on the Food Standards Agency web-site, or any other recognised validated method which may be more appropriate to verify the characteristics as defined in paragraph 3 and Table 2.

## **7. TRANSITION**

This Code comes into effect for products packed and labelled after 1 January 2006.

## **8. REVIEW**

- 8.1** All parties agree to review the Code, as and when required, in line with changes in the provisions of EU Regulation 1549/2004 and the Council Decisions 2004/617/EC and 2004/618/EC.

**Table 1 VARIETIES OF BASMATI RICE THAT CAN USE THE DESCRIPTION 'BASMATI'**

**Basmati rice varieties eligible for a zero import duty under Regulation (EC) 1549/2004**

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Basmati 217 (I)                       | Ranbir basmati (IET 11348) (I)             |
| Basmati 370 (I, P)                    | Super basmati (P)                          |
| Basmati 386 (I)                       | Taraori basmati (HBC-19, Karnal Local) (I) |
| Kernel basmati (Basmati Pakistan) (P) | Type – 3 (Dehradun) (I)                    |
| Pusa basmati (IET 10364) (I)          |  |

**Other Basmati rice varieties approved by India and Pakistan**

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Basmati 198 (P)                         | Kasturi (IET 8580) (I)             |
| Basmati 385 (P)                         | Mahi Suganda (I)                   |
| Haryana Basmati (HKR 228/IET 10367) (I) | Punjab Basmati (Bauni Basmati) (I) |

I - Originally approved by India

P - Originally approved by Pakistan

**Table 2 MINIMUM CHARACTERISTICS FOR VARIETIES OF BASMATI RICE**

|                                     | <b>Milled Raw</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Minimum elongation ratio on cooking | 1.7                 |
| Minimum average pre-cooked length   | 6.5 mm              |
| Amylose content                     | Intermediate 19-26% |
| Length/breadth ratio                | greater than 3.5    |
| Gel Length                          | 60-100 mm           |
| Alkali spreading value              | 4-5                 |
| Typical Basmati Aroma               | Present             |