

# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR BASMATI RICE (July 2022)

## 1. Introduction

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

The Rice Association  
British Retail Consortium

in consultation with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Trading Standards Institute and the Association of Public Analysts (APA).

It has also been discussed 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 strive to uphold the reputation of Basmati rice as a premium rice with its own special properties, and prevent 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

**1.4** All Basmati rice imported and sold in the UK is subject to UK Regulations (see Paragraph 2.1) which reflect the horizontal rules regarding food information established by Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and Regulation 1069/2011 on the provision of food information to the consumer. These were transposed into UK legislation at the time of exit from the EU. The trade and UK food law enforcement officers will use this Code of Practice to ensure the authenticity of Basmati rice and that consumer expectations for consistent and high-quality Basmati rice are met.

**1.5** 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 General Food Law Regulations 2005, the Food Information Regulations 2014 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” was 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, on both sides of the Indian and Pakistani border.

**3.2** Table 1 lists varieties that are currently approved by the Indian and Pakistani authorities and can use the description “Basmati”, and for which the relevant reference material is available that permits DNA testing according to the methodology referred to in paragraph 5. They can all trace a lineage back to Historic Land Race varieties and *contain the appropriate genetic material relating to aroma* and grain length. 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 meet the specifications listed 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 relevant areas referred to in Paragraph 2.1.

**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%. This tolerance is in place to take account of seed impurity and other segregation issues at origin. It is not acceptable deliberately to blend non-Basmati rice in order to take advantage of the tolerance unless this is explicitly mentioned on the packaging (See clause 4.4 below).

**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 in accordance with the quantitative ingredient declaration (QUID) provisions in the Food Information Regulations 2014, (or as amended). 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 proportion 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 code of practice will be reviewed and updated from time to time and the addition of varieties considered on a regular basis by the Associations. The approved list of varieties will be modified with the agreement of the parties identified in paragraph 1.1 and provided the relevant reference material referred to in paragraph 2.2 is available.

## **6. Methodology**

6.1 The methodology for determining “Basmati” rice varieties is available on the Food Authenticity Network website ([www.foodauthenticity.uk/methods](http://www.foodauthenticity.uk/methods)). The Associations may agree to adopt alternative suitable methodologies to verify the characteristics as defined in paragraph 3.2 and Table 2. New methodologies will be included on the Rice Association website.

## **7 Transition**

7.1 This Code comes into effect immediately. Products containing varieties highlighted in yellow in Table 1 may be marketed as basmati provided they are packed and labelled before 11.59 pm on 31 December 2022. After this date products containing these highlighted varieties cannot be labelled as basmati

## **8 Review**

8.1 All parties agree to review the Code as and when required.

**Table 1. Varieties of Basmati rice that can use the description ‘Basmati’**

Varieties of Basmati rice that can use the description ‘Basmati’.

*Note: the varieties highlighted in yellow below have been removed since 2017 as they do not contain the requisite fragrance gene. Rice packed and labelled as basmati after 31.12.2022 must not use these highlighted varieties*

*Those highlighted in purple have been approved for cultivation since the 2017 revision of the UK code, and have been added because authenticated samples have been made available and the fragrance gene is present*

Basmati 198
Basmati 2000
Basmati 217
Basmati 370
Basmati 385
Basmati 386
Basmati 515
Basmati 564
<del>Chenab Basmati</del>
Haryana Basmati (HKR 228/IET 10367)
Improved Pusa Basmati 1 (Pusa 1460)
Kernel Basmati (Basmati Pakistan)
Kissan Basmati
Mahi Suganda
<del>Malviya Basmati Dhan</del>
NIAB Basmati 2016
Noor Basmati
<del>Pant Basmati 1</del>
Pant Basmati 2
Punjab Basmati
Punjab Basmati (Bauni Basmati)
Punjab Basmati 2
Punjab Basmati 3
Pusa 1121
Pusa 1509
Pusa 1609
Pusa 1637
Pusa 1728
Pusa 6 (Pusa 1401)
Pusa Basmati (IET 10364)
Pusa Basmati 1
Ranbir Basmati (IET 11348)
Shaheen basmati
Super Basmati
Super Basmati
Taraori Basmati (HBC-19, Karnal Local) Kasturi (IET 8580)
Type – 3 (Dehradun)
<del>Vallabh Basmati 21</del>
Vallabh Basmati 22

Vallabh Basmati 23
Vallabh Basmati 24
Yamini (CSR 30)
Pusa Basmati 1718
Punjab Basmati 4
Punjab Basmati 5
Haryana Basmati 2
Pusa Basmati 1692

**Table 2. Minimum characteristics for varieties of Basmati rice when milled, raw**

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