



## How to estimate the quality of cashew nuts (RCN)

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### Summary

This practice describes the use of different parts of the cashew plant, and how to estimate the quality of the nuts.

### Description

#### 1. Parts of the cashew nut

##### 1.1 The kernel

The kernel is mainly consumed roasted and salted. Crushed kernels are used in the food industry (chocolate factory, pastry factory, biscuit factory). Oil obtained from kernels is used in cosmetic products or in food preparations.

##### 1.2 The balm

The balm also called Cashew Nut Shell Liquid (CNSL) has several uses in the industry. Extracted from the shell, this liquid is mostly composed of anacardic acids. It is used, after purification, in chemical products manufacturing. This liquid is dangerous, it cannot be handled with bare hands. Its handling requires the use of gloves.

##### 1.3 The apple

The apple is juicy, lightly flavoured, sour and contains vitamin C. This apple is edible. Juice can be extracted from the apple to produce alcohol, vinegar and syrup.

##### 1.4 The shell

The shell is used as a fuel to drive the nuts processing (cooking or drying).

##### 1.5 The peel

The peel is used either like the shells or as a complement livestock food, it can also be used to produce dyeing.

#### 2. Who assesses the raw cashew nuts quality?

##### 2.1 Farmers

Farmers ensure the quality of the cashew nuts they sell in order to get a good price from the buyers.

##### 2.2 Local buyers

They assess the quality of the cashew nuts they buy in order to avoid the return of bad batches from their clients (local processors, exporters).

##### 2.3 Exporters

Most of the raw cashew nuts produced in Africa are, then, exported to Asian countries (India, Vietnam). In exportation harbours the exporters always check the quality of the cashew nuts batches.

##### 2.4 Local shelling factories

Quality control is carried out when the cashew nuts arrive the selling factories. If the processing occurs after a long time, the cashew nuts quality can decrease.

That is why it is important to check the cashew nuts quality just before their processing.

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# Post-harvest and Marketing

### **3. Why is the quality control of the raw cashew nuts necessary?**

During a commercial transaction between a farmer and a trader for instance, several criteria can be used to specify the cashew nuts quality: colour, shape, brightness, exterior aspect.

But the most important is the quality of the kernel inside the shell.

### **4. Agro-ecological zones**

- Tropics, warm

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