

Buyer's Six Questions

Is it really export quality? Ask these before you accept the phrase from any supplier, including us.

1. Which law and which specification are you quoting?

"Export quality" is a promise, not a standard. Ask for the destination-market rule (for example the EU contaminant limits) and the product specification (an ISO standard, an ASTA cleanliness specification, or the supplier's own numbers) that the claim rests on. If the answer is only the phrase itself, the claim is empty.

2. Which laboratory tested it, and is it accredited?

Ask for the lab's name and its accreditation, such as ISO/IEC 17025. A named, accredited lab can be checked. An unnamed one cannot.

3. Is the certificate of analysis for this batch?

A COA for a different lot, or a product-level average, proves nothing about your container. The lot number on the certificate should match the lot number on the bags.

4. Can I test a sample against it?

Ask for a pre-shipment sample drawn from the lot you are buying, and test it in your own laboratory against the same specification. The result should match the COA within normal method tolerance.

5. How is the lot traced?

Each bag should carry a lot code that leads back to a mill or farm, a processing date and a test record. Ask to see one example before you order, not after a problem.

6. What happens if the result is out of specification?

Agree the claim process in writing before shipment: who retests, at which lab, which result governs, and what remedy follows. A supplier who has defined this in advance has usually thought about the problem before.

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