Why Two Mushroom Ingredient Quotes Are Rarely Directly Comparable

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A buyer places three quotations side by side. Each supplier has used the same mushroom name. Each sheet contains an extract ratio, one or two assay figures, a price per kilogram, and a lead time. The comparison looks straightforward.

It usually is not.

The rows may describe different starting materials, different processing routes, different analytical definitions, and different levels of documentation. A neat spreadsheet can hide those differences rather than resolve them. Before deciding which offer is more expensive, the buyer first has to establish whether the offers describe the same kind of ingredient.

That work is not paperwork added after sourcing. It is part of sourcing.

Begin with the material, not the sales name

“Reishi extract” or “Lion’s Mane powder” is a category label, not a complete identity. At minimum, the quotation should make clear:

- the scientific name;
- the fungal material used, such as fruiting body, pure mycelium, myceliated substrate, or a stated combination;
- whether any growth medium remains in the commercial material;
- the country or sourcing route of the raw material; and
- how identity is checked.

This matters because two ingredients can share a common name while beginning with materially different inputs. Those inputs affect composition, processing behaviour, analytical results, and price.

The wording should also follow the physical reality. If a product contains myceliated grain, the quotation, specification, and certificate of analysis should not leave the buyer to infer that fact. If a blend is intentional, its components should be described as a blend rather than hidden behind a broad mushroom name.

Follow the processing route far enough to understand the product

An ingredient does not become fully defined when the word “extract” appears on the page. Buyers still need to understand what happened between raw material intake and finished powder.

Useful points to clarify include:

- milling only versus a defined extraction step;
- water, ethanol and water, or another permitted extraction system;
- a single extraction stage versus more than one stage;
- the concentration and drying route;
- any carrier, processing aid, or added mushroom powder in the finished material; and
- the basis of the stated extract ratio.

An extract ratio can help describe a process, but it cannot replace the process description. The same stated ratio can sit on products with different starting material quality, extraction yields, carrier levels, moisture bases, and chemical profiles. A ratio is one piece of the record, not a universal measure of strength.

This is also where manufacturing control becomes commercially relevant. A buyer is not only purchasing the material that passed through the process once. The buyer is relying on the supplier to repeat the process, manage changes, and explain deviations across future batches.

Do not separate an analytical number from its method

Specifications often become misleading at the point where they appear most precise. A percentage with two decimal places can look definitive while leaving the analytical question unanswered.

For every result that influences acceptance or price, ask four things:

1. the analyte or attribute being measured;
2. the method used;
3. the calibration or reference basis; and
4. the reporting convention, including units and dry-weight basis where relevant.

Beta-glucan is a familiar example. A buyer comparing two beta-glucan values should know whether the laboratories used the same method, sample preparation, calculation basis, and reporting convention.

Reishi triterpenoids show the problem even more clearly. A UV-visible colorimetric method may express a broad response as “total triterpenoids” against an ursolic-acid or oleanolic-acid

calibration. A chromatographic method may instead determine a specified group of individual ganoderic and ganoderenic acids, using named reference standards or a validated multi-component approach. Both results may be useful within their own method. They are not automatically the same analytical object, and the percentages should not be compared without reading the method behind them.

The practical rule is simple: if the method changes, the meaning of the number may change with it.

Include the finished application in the comparison

An ingredient can satisfy its compositional limits and still fail in the customer's product. A quotation becomes more useful when the supplier knows the intended dosage form and the performance that matters.

For drink powders and liquid applications, the discussion may need to cover dispersibility, clarity, sediment, flavour, colour, pH, heat exposure, mixing conditions, and storage. "Water-soluble" is not specific enough if the buyer actually needs a clear solution or a stable suspension.

For capsules and tablets, different questions move to the front: bulk and tapped density, flow, particle size, compressibility, fill weight, and interaction with other ingredients. A low-density powder may create a practical capsule problem even when its assay result is acceptable.

Application information also helps suppliers identify trade-offs before the sample stage. Adding fruiting-body powder to an extract, for example, may change cost and compositional results, but it may also reduce solubility and increase sediment. That can be reasonable for one product and unacceptable for another. The quotation should make the trade-off visible.

Define the market before defining the document package

The required evidence depends on where the finished product will be sold and how it will be classified. A request for a U.S. dietary supplement, an EU food product, and a beverage sold in another market should not automatically produce the same testing and documentation list.

Under the U.S. dietary supplement CGMP framework, manufacturers establish component specifications and carry responsibility for verification and supplier qualification. FDA guidance also makes clear that method, limits, and actual results matter when a certificate of analysis is used in the relevant supplier-qualification context.

In the European Union, contaminant limits are connected to the food and category covered by the legislation. "EU compliant" is therefore not a substitute for identifying the actual product category, applicable limits, and the buyer's regulatory assessment.

The supplier can support that assessment. It cannot make the customer's finished-product decision without knowing the market and use.

Compare the evidence behind each offer

Price comparison should begin only after the buyer has checked what evidence accompanies the product description. The following questions expose many hidden differences:

Question behind the quotation	Why it changes the comparison	Evidence to request
Material entering production	Species, fungal material, substrate status, and origin affect identity and composition	Product description, specification, identity information, traceability summary
Processing route	Powder, extract, dual extract, drying route, and carrier use create different products	Manufacturing flow summary, composition statement, carrier disclosure
Meaning of each assay value	Method, calibration, and reporting basis can change the interpretation	Specification with methods, representative COA, method reference
Performance in the finished product	Solubility, sediment, density, taste, and process tolerance affect application fit	Sample, application data where available, agreed evaluation criteria
Suitability for the target market	Markets and product categories require different documents and limits	Relevant declarations, certificates, contaminant plan, regulatory information
Repeatability of the supply basis	Batch control, change management, packaging, volume, and lead time affect continuity	Commercial terms, packaging details, change-notification expectations

A certificate is useful evidence, but it should not be read in isolation. The product specification defines the agreed limits; the COA reports a batch against those limits; the method explains how the result was obtained; and the supplier-qualification process decides whether the evidence is sufficient for the buyer's use.

Send an inquiry that allows a disciplined response

A workable inquiry does not need to be long. It does need to remove the ambiguities that would change the material or the price. Biosan recommends that serious enquiries include five groups of information:

1. **Material identity:** mushroom species and the required fungal material.
2. **Format and application:** powder or extract, intended dosage form, and essential performance needs.

3. **Critical specifications:** acceptance limits together with methods and reporting basis.
4. **Market and documents:** destination, product category, and the documents needed for evaluation.
5. **Commercial basis:** sample quantity, expected order size, packaging, delivery location, and timing.

This gives the manufacturer enough context to identify an available format, explain a limitation, or propose a technically honest alternative. A responsible response may contain questions or qualifications. That is more useful than a quick “complies” attached to a product that was not properly defined.

What a better quotation should achieve

The purpose of a quotation is not merely to produce a number for the purchasing sheet. It should connect a defined material to a controlled production route, an interpretable specification, an appropriate document package, and a clear commercial basis.

When those elements are aligned, price becomes meaningful. When they are not, the apparent saving may simply be the cost of buying something different.

If you are comparing mushroom powders, extracts, or dual-extract formats, send Biosan the intended application, destination market, critical specification targets, required methods, and document needs. The Biosan team can then review the available formats, provide relevant specifications and supporting documents, and clarify where the inquiry still needs a decision before a useful quotation can be prepared.

Sources

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