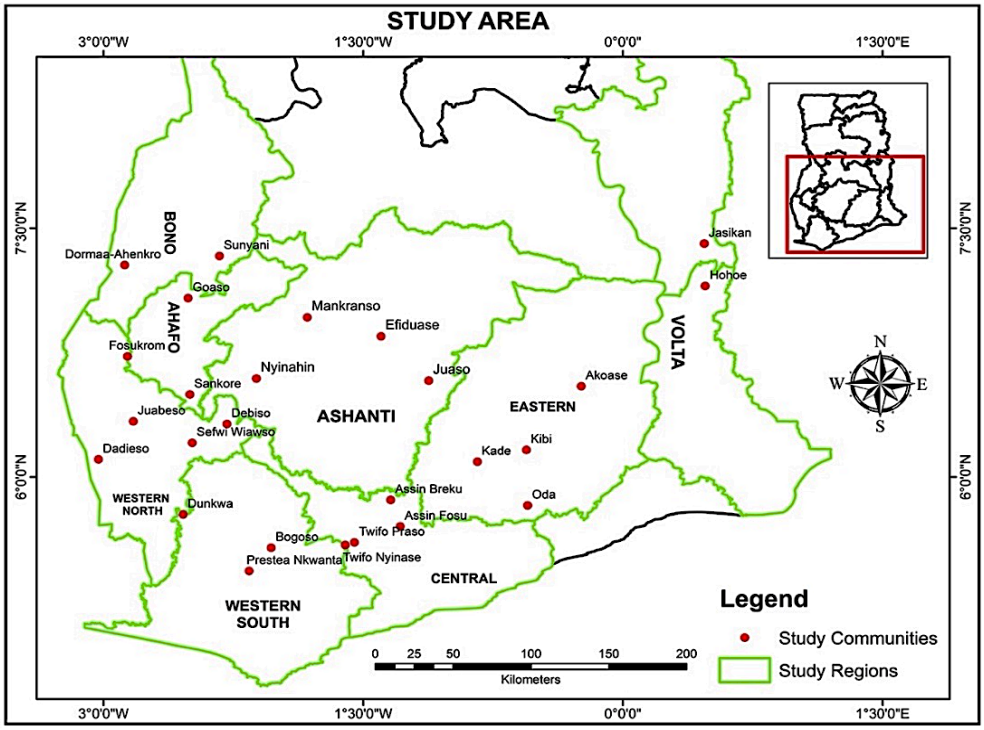

Fig. 1 Map of Ghana showing the cocoa-growing regions where the cocoa beans were sampled from

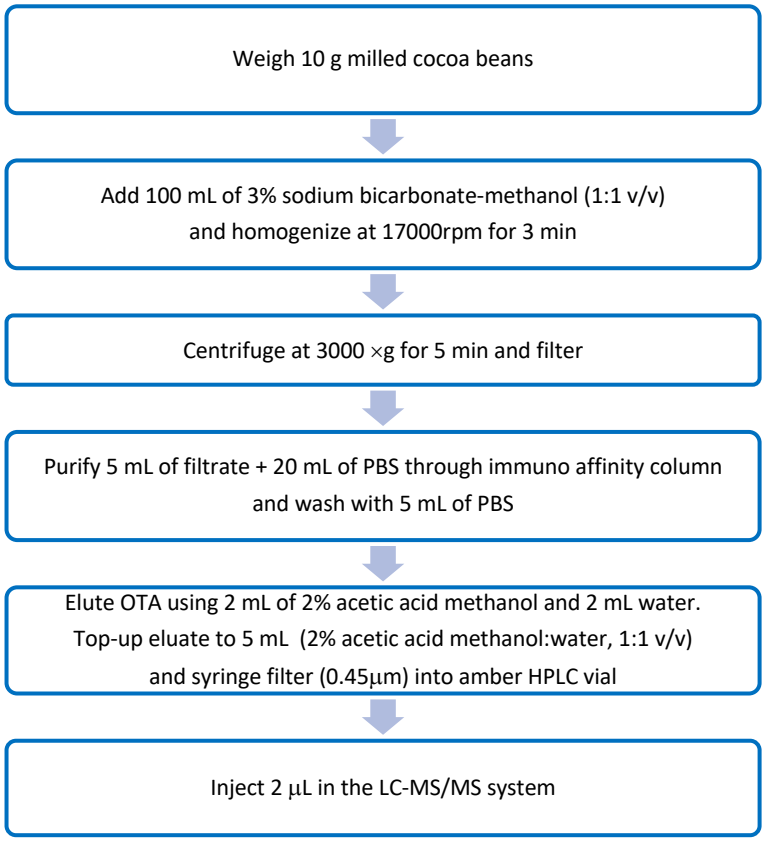

Fig 2. Sample preparation workflow for the analysis of OTA in cocoa beans

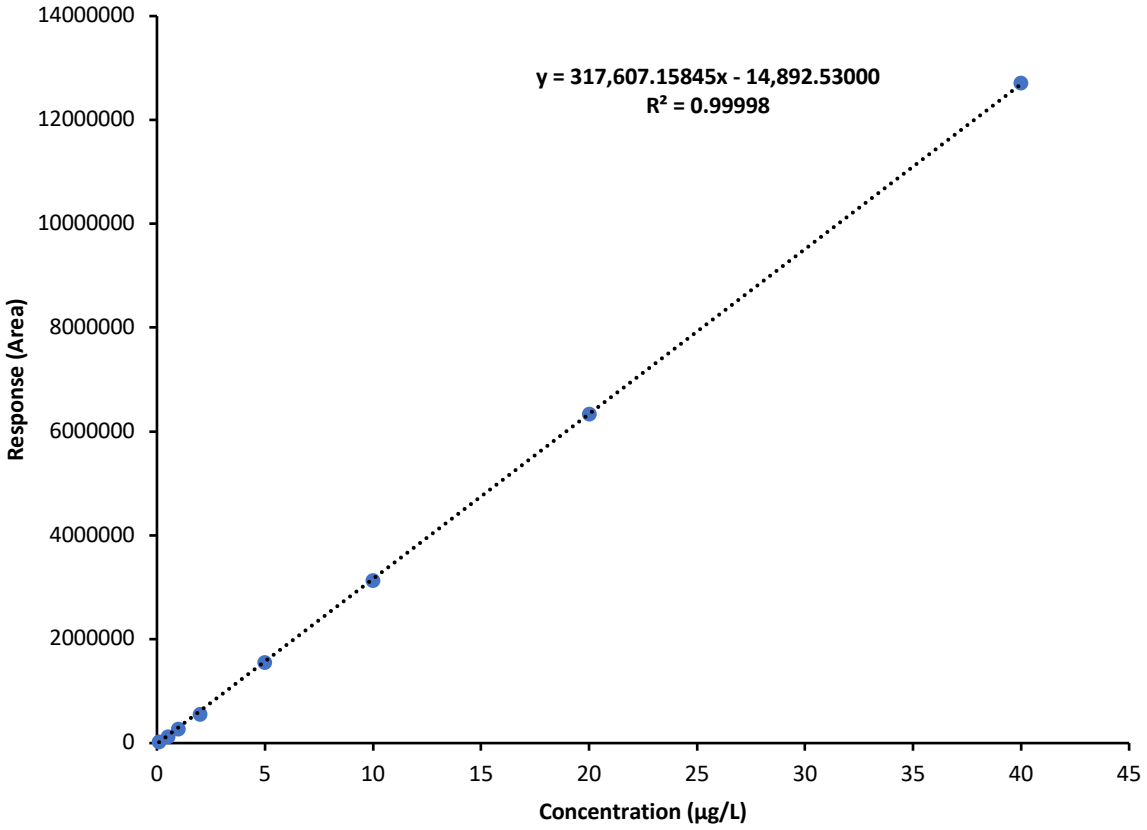

Fig 3. Calibration curve of OTA with a satisfactory correlation coefficient (R^2) over a widely tested dynamic linear range

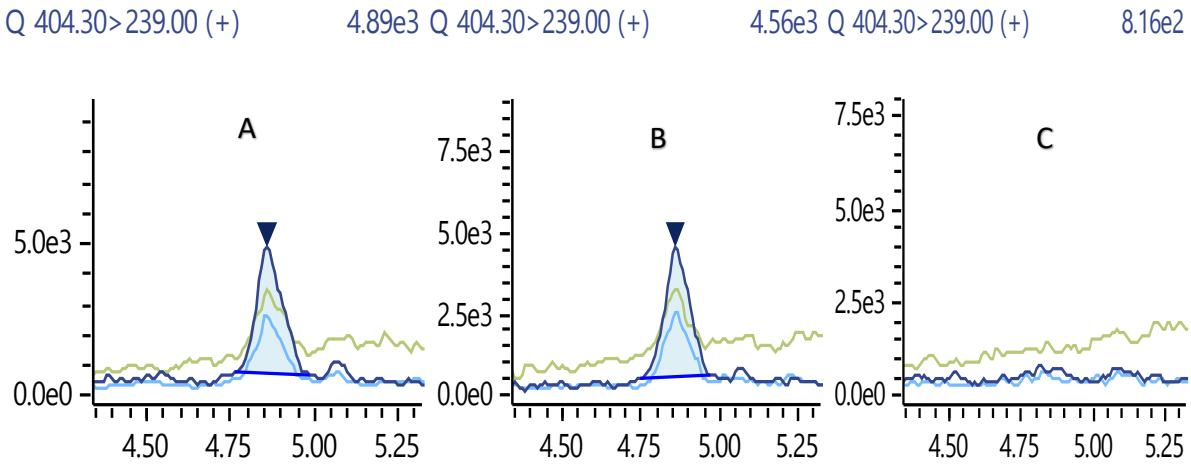

Fig 4. Representative chromatogram corresponding to LC-MS/MS analysis of OTA; (A) in standard solution at LOQ, (B) in sample spiked at 1 µg/kg, (C) in the blank sample.

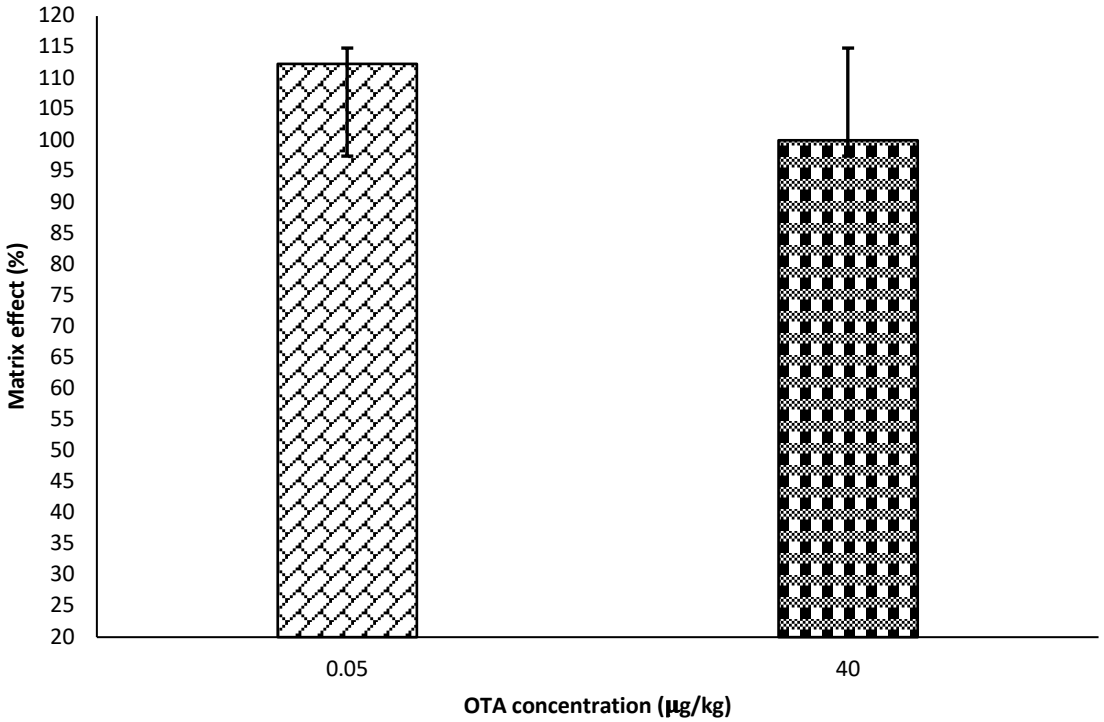

Fig 5. Assessment of matrix effect in LC-MS/MS analysis of OTA

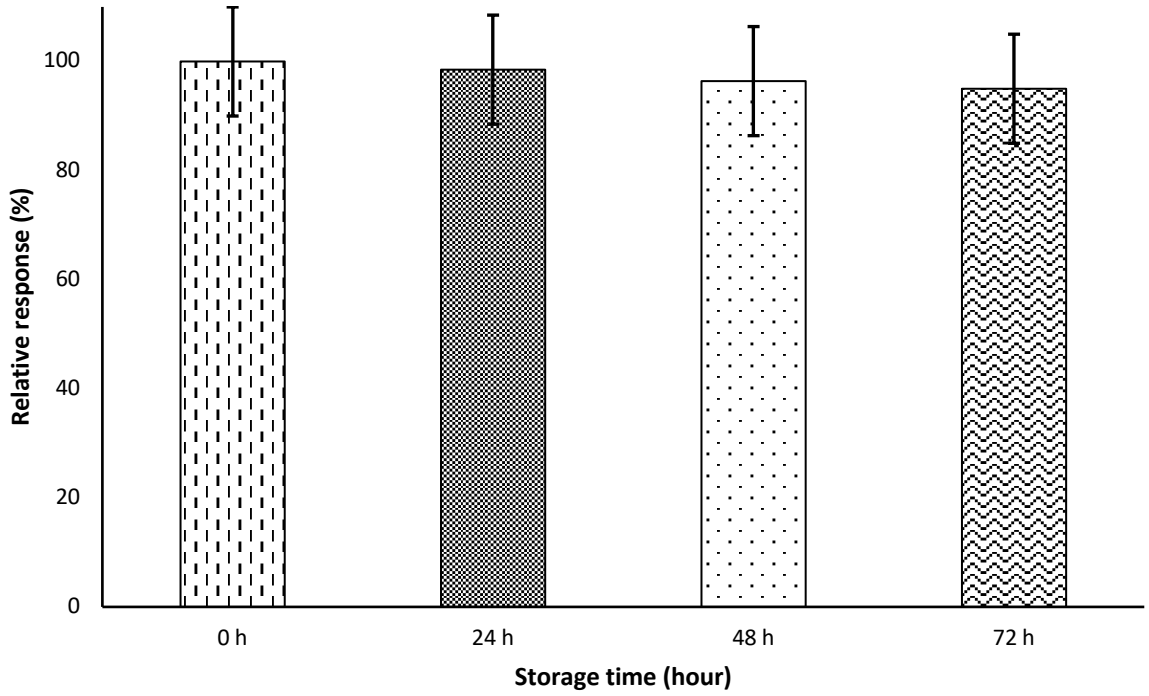

Fig 6. Assessment of stability of OTA samples after 24, 48, and 72 hours of storage in the autosampler at 10 °C

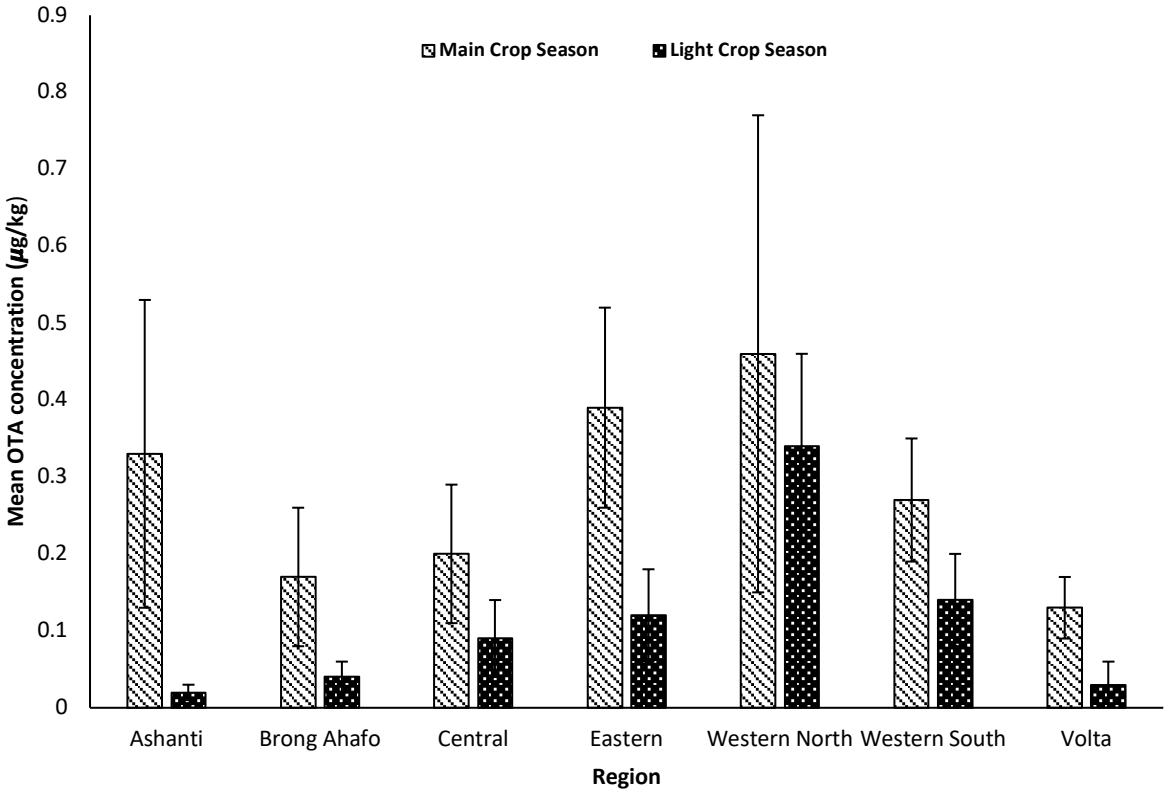

Fig 7. Distribution of mean incidence of OTA in cocoa beans across the cocoa-growing regions of Ghana during the main and light crop seasons