



## Rethinking CEC: Why Cation Exchange Capacity Alone Cannot Define Mycotoxin Binder Performance

Sakshee Salvi, Rahul Mittal and Rajendra Moorthy

Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) is frequently cited when discussing clay-based mycotoxin binders. While it is a useful indicator of clay quality, it is only one of several factors that determine real-world mycotoxin binder efficacy.

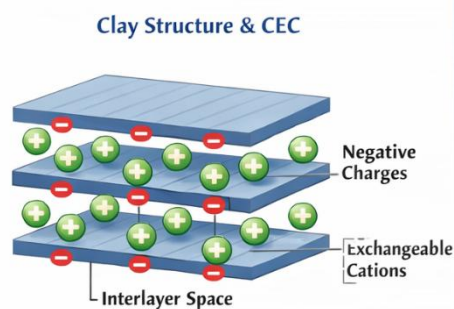
This article explains what CEC is, its significance, and why a comprehensive performance evaluation requires more than a single parameter.

### What is Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC)?

Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) refers to the number of negatively charged sites on material that can attract and exchange positively charged ions. In clay minerals such as smectites and bentonites, these negative charges arise from the layered crystal structure and contribute to the clay's ability to interact with certain classes of mycotoxins.

Higher CEC generally indicates:

- A larger number of potential binding sites
- Expanded interlayer spaces (in bentonites, both swellable and non-swelling types exist, and both can have relatively high CEC)
- Increased surface area available for interaction (smaller particles offer higher surface area)



### Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC)

- Negative Charge Sites
- Potential Binding Sites

These properties make CEC a useful indicator when assessing the potential of clays to bind polar or electrostatically interactive mycotoxins, particularly aflatoxins. Aflatoxins, being planar and partially polar molecules, interact effectively within charged interlayer spaces of smectites.

### Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) Across Common Clay Types

Clays	CEC (meq/100 g)
<i>Kaolinite</i>	5 – 15
<i>Illite</i>	10 – 40
<i>Smectites</i>	80 - 150

#### Why CEC Matters in Clays Used for Mycotoxin Binding?

Clays with higher CEC; especially high-quality smectites tend to show stronger structural characteristics that support charge-driven adsorption.

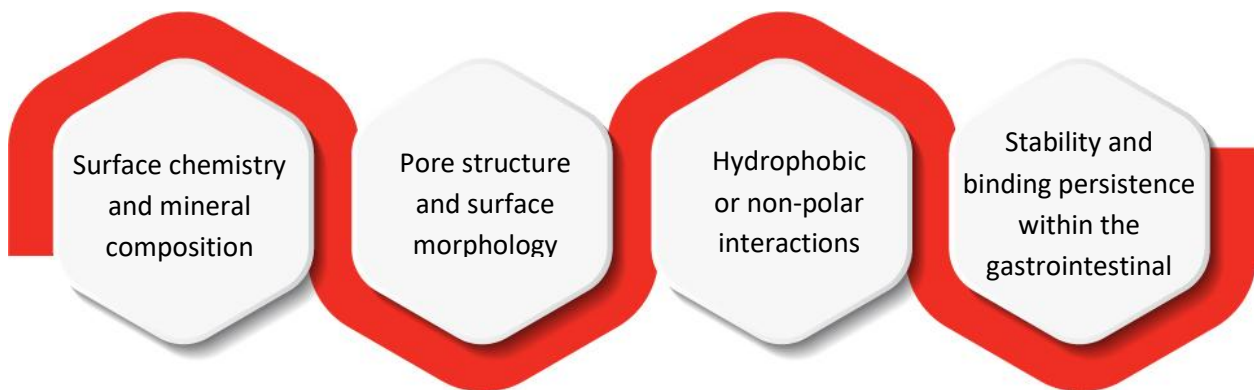
For example, different clay-based formulations may present varying CEC ranges that reflect their structural characteristics and binding potential.

**High CEC = Better electrostatic interaction (especially aflatoxins)**

While these values provide insight into the clay’s inherent capacity for electrostatic interaction, they do not directly predict its overall capability to protect animals from a broad spectrum of mycotoxins.

#### But can CEC alone determine the binding efficacy?

Although important, Cation Exchange Capacity is not a comprehensive performance indicator. Several critical factors affect binder efficacy:



Two clays with similar CEC values can behave very differently when subjected to the dynamic and variable conditions of an animal’s digestive system.

This is why relying solely on CEC can lead to incomplete or inaccurate conclusions regarding binder performance.

## Moving Beyond CEC: A Performance-Based Evaluation

The true effectiveness of a mycotoxin binder depends on its ability to capture and retain toxins throughout the digestive process.

While Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) remains an important indicator of structural clay quality, particularly for aflatoxins. Actual binder performance depends on far more than electrostatic capacity alone.

### The TOXFIN™ 360° Approach:

Across the TOXFIN portfolio, efficacy is established using both:

#### *in-vivo* excretion studies

The gold standard for evaluating binder efficacy, where increased fecal toxin excretion confirms effective gastrointestinal adsorption.

**TOXFIN™ 360° shows highest average % net binding of common mycotoxins and newly emergent mycotoxins**

#### *in-vitro* biphasic net binding studies

It is a laboratory method that closely mimics the changing pH conditions along the gastrointestinal tract of animals—typically an acidic phase (pH 3.2, gizzard) followed by a near-neutral phase (pH 6.8, intestine).

**TOXFIN™ 360° proven to excrete >99% of mycotoxins out of bird's body**

In a risk-sensitive industry like animal nutrition, evaluation criteria must go beyond single numerical indicators. A comprehensive validation strategy ensures consistent protection across varying contamination scenarios.

**CEC is a starting point; performance validation is the destination!**

References will be provided upon request.



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Kemin Industries South Asia Pvt. Ltd. #C3, 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Ambattur, Chennai • India • Tel: 04442202800 • [www.kemin.com](http://www.kemin.com)