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Dairy Foods and Probiotics: A Perfect Opportunity

Fermented dairy foods containing beneficial bacteria have been around for thousands of years. Scientists are investigating whether dairy is the preferred delivery vehicle for these probiotic cultures.

“Helping one’s body help itself” is a prevailing theme amongst all types of consumer goods products. And dairy foods, for many of the reasons identified in this issue of *Tools for Innovation*, are being recognized as powerful products to assist today’s consumer in his or her pursuit of health and wellness. Cultured dairy products, in particular, are becoming increasingly popular.

Think of a breakfast yogurt loaded with good-for-you ingredients that primes the body to take on the day. What about a cultured smoothie to take you from lunch to dinner and helps support the health of your gut? And for nighttime, a fermented milk with ingredients that may relax the mind and at the same time help

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■ With yogurt being viewed as a healthful snack or even meal replacement, the opportunities for innovation are endless.



International Overview

Dairy processors outside of the United States are not shy when it comes to promoting probiotic cultures and intestinal health. Package labels often boldly state specific probiotic strains, with many touting minimum cell counts. Labels not only hype the cultures inside the package, but also what those cultures can do once they are inside the body. Almost all incorporate the word probiotic, or a form of probiotic, in the brand or product name. And finally, many of these products contain other “functional” ingredients such as fiber, which can act as a prebiotic, as well as one or more of the many recognized food ingredient antioxidants.

Indeed, international marketers are much more progressive when it comes to formulating and marketing probiotic dairy foods. U.S. marketers can learn from their peers in other markets of the world, as they embark on a journey to introduce Americans to probiotics.

Within the past year, the all-American cranberry has become much more for folks overseas thanks to U.K.-based Ocean Spray International, a company that has been able to expand beyond juice and enter the dairy market. Packages of new Ocean Spray® Plus Probiotic Yogurt Drink boldly state that the



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■ Certain strains of probiotics have been shown to treat and prevent both viral and bacterial diarrhea, a leading cause of hospitalization for young children in the United States.

recharge your insides so you can manage another day of life's stresses?

Such cultured dairy products are already available in Europe and Asia, where consumers are quite in tune with intestinal health and dietary means for enhancing well being. This trend is catching on in the United States, providing an opportunity for dairy processors to explore an

area where few in the United States, to date, have dared to go.

The power of probiotics

In the United States, yogurt has always been known as the dairy product that contains good bacteria, bacteria that have come to be known as probiotics. The term probiotics means "for life." It was defined by a group of experts convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations as "microorganisms administered in adequate amounts which confer a beneficial health effect on the host."

There is some debate about whether yogurt starter cultures—*Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*—should be considered probiotic, as these cultures are not very resistant to the bile released into the small intestine, and thus are not maintained alive in the gastrointestinal tract in very high numbers. However, these cultures have been proven to improve lactose digestion in people lacking the enzyme lactase. They have also demonstrated some immune-enhancing properties. Thus, many experts consider these yogurt starters to be probiotics. Furthermore, today, many U.S. yogurts contain *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and/or *Bifidobacterium bifidum*, both of which are lactic acid bacteria that are universally recognized as probiotics.

The link between dairy and probiotics can be traced back more than 2,000 years to a time when people consumed large amounts of lactic acid-

Communicating Probiotic Benefits to U.S. Consumers

"Every company manufacturing probiotic culture-containing dairy foods should be educating consumers about the benefits of consuming probiotics," says Mary Jo Viederman, founder of Living Out Loud Communications, Amherst, Mass., and former v.p. of communications with Stonyfield Farm, Londonderry, N.H.

Viederman, a speaker at DMI's 2004 Dairy Innovations Forum, urges marketers of probiotic-containing dairy foods to do three things. "First, create a packet of materials that describes, in consumer-friendly language, the tangible benefits identified from clinical studies," she says. "Second, engage a professional to endorse the product. Third-person testimonials go a long way. The professional can be a celebrity or sports star. Registered dietitians and pediatricians are great, too."

The third step is a little more challenging because it is constant work. But, according to Viederman, it pays off. (It did for Stonyfield, a company that became the third-largest U.S. yogurt manufacturer within 20 years of being founded.)

"You must implement an educational outreach program," she says. "Sampling is a very powerful program. But it's not just sampling in a store. It's at family events and neighborhood festivals. Every time there's an opportunity for face-to-face contact with potential customers, jump on it. Have reliable people working for you who can communicate why your product line offers something beyond and better than others in the marketplace." ■



■ The word “probiotics” literally means “for life,” and refers to living microorganisms that, when consumed in sufficient numbers, exert health benefits beyond basic nutrition.

fermented milk products such as kefir and yogurt. More recently, researchers correlated consumption of lactic acid bacteria-fermented dairy foods with longevity and health.

“Probiotic bacteria have a long history with dairy products,” says Mary Ellen Sanders, a consultant with Centennial, Colo.-based Dairy and Food Culture Technologies and president of the International Scientific Association of Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP), an association of academic and industrial scientists involved in research on fundamental and applied aspects of probiotics and prebiotics.

The scientists participating in ISAPP have a common interest in generating high-quality scientific information for the probiotic and prebiotic fields and providing guidance for collaborative and multidisciplinary research.

“Some of the same bacteria that are associated with fermented dairy products also make their homes in different sites on the human body,” says Sanders. “Thus, some cultures are not only able to transform milk into a diverse array of fermented dairy products, they also can provide benefits to human health.

“Today, in the United States, foods containing beneficial probiotic bacteria are almost exclusively dairy products,”

Sanders continues. “If the dairy industry wants to continue to own probiotics, investigating all angles of the long-standing relationship between dairy foods and probiotics must be conducted.”

Proving the beneficial effects

Probiotics, along with a very large and diverse range of other bacteria, colonize the human body. These bacteria play a significant role in human physiology. For example, probiotics have been shown to lower the pH of the intestinal tract so that pathogenic bacteria cannot survive. In addition, growing beneficial bacteria compete with pathogens for nutrients and space

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Perfect Timing: Dairy’s Role in Weight Management Complements Consumers’ Pursuit of Health and Wellness

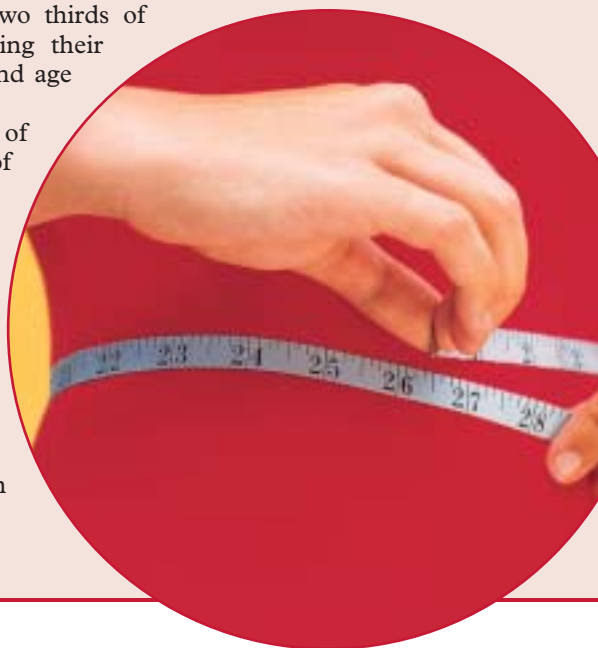
Today’s consumers demand foods and beverages that assist with improving health and well-being. In fact, the largest population group in the history of the country is in its 40s and 50s, and has no intention of growing old without a good fight. Furthermore, with two thirds of American adults overweight or obese, many consumers are changing their lifestyles to include better-for-you foods that will help keep them fit and age slowly. Dairy foods can do this, and a whole lot more.

Dairy’s nutritional story goes beyond the well-known benefits of calcium, protein, potassium and other nutrients, or the advantages of consuming live and active probiotic cultures. What has recently been discovered is that dairy may aid in weight loss.

A recent study published in *Obesity Research* showed that people on a reduced-calorie diet who consumed three servings of milk, cheese or yogurt each day lost significantly more weight and more body fat than those who just cut calories while consuming little or no dairy. The mix of nutrients found in dairy foods, especially calcium, may be responsible for helping the body break down and burn fat.

In addition, emerging research suggests that higher daily intake of proteins and their components, especially the higher amounts of leucine found in dairy proteins, may help people lose fat while preserving lean muscle mass.

For more information on dairy and weight loss, visit www.healthyweightwithdairy.com. ■





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in the intestinal tract. Probiotics also are associated with preventing diarrhea, relieving constipation, building immunity, preventing skin allergy and improving women's urogenital health.

In addition to the two most common probiotics—*L. acidophilus* and *B. bifidum*—other lactic acid-producing bacteria have been clinically studied and shown to positively affect health.

"The future of probiotics holds much promise," says Sanders. "However, the data supporting their use is still emerging and has limitations. But this should not stop dairy processors from moving

forward. There are reliable probiotic suppliers in the industry.

"Ask the supplier for documented clinical research on a specific strain," says Sanders. "Ask for studies showing the strains' survival rate through a dairy product's shelflife."

Clinical trials are applicable only for the specific strain tested. Once a strain has been shown to exert beneficial effects on the human body, it must be delivered to the body at an effective dosage. The probiotics must be able to survive in the carrier food (i.e., yogurt) until the time of consumption in levels that ensure sufficient viable

organisms are transported to the site in the body where they do the most good, which, depending on the probiotic might be the mouth, stomach, intestine or vaginal tract.

Genomics are also playing a key role in probiotic research. "The genomes of five probiotic *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* strains are already sequenced, and genome sequences of 12 additional probiotic strains are on the way," says Todd Klaenhammer, director of the Southeast Dairy Foods Research Center in Raleigh, N.C. "With such extensive genomic data, we are now able to recognize genes critical for survival, colonization



Take Note

In general, U.S. cultured dairy foods marketers are not aggressive in promoting the inclusion of live and active bacteria. However, there are some players that are the exceptions.

The country's two leading kefir manufacturers—Helios Nutrition Ltd., Sauk Centre, Minn., and Lifeway Foods Inc., Morton Grove, Ill.—both use the term probiotic on package labels. On Lifeway's package, label panels list the 10 live and active kefir cultures inside every bottle. The company has also licensed the use of the dairy calcium and weight loss claim, which it flags on front panels and describes on the side.

Labels of Helios Nutrition's Organic Kefir with FOS state that the drink supports a healthy intestinal ecosystem in children and adults. The beverage also includes fructooligosaccharide (FOS), which is described as "food for your own beneficial bifidobacteria."

Stonyfield Farm, Londonderry, N.H., the country's No. 3 yogurt manufacturer, is a leader when it comes to promoting probiotics. Stonyfield's yogurts contain six live and active cultures. In addition to *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*, Stonyfield adds four probiotics. Each culture provides its own unique health benefits, and all six help to

enhance digestion as well as boost the immune system, according to the company. Stonyfield is the only U.S. yogurt to contain *Lactobacillus reuteri*, a probiotic that has been shown to inhibit the growth of harmful bacteria and to treat and prevent both viral and bacterial diarrhea.

To educate consumers about the benefits of Stonyfield's probiotics, the company provides information on its Web site, at events and, to a limited extent, on its yogurt cups. "This helps consumers begin to understand the benefits of probiotics," says Gary Hirshberg, pres. and CEO. "Often we find that a field marketing event is the best place, when we are out sampling the product, and we have the time to talk with consumers and hand out brochures. It is a complex topic, as you know, and we are limited in space on our cups, so often we talk about one benefit that will drive the consumer to our Web site to learn more.

It's exciting, because it's a new topic for so many consumers." Hirshberg says the company has new probiotic dairy products in the works.

Probiotic cultures are not limited to kefir and



Stonyfield Farm
is America's only yogurt
with 6 live, active cultures
America's only yogurt with *L.*

Health Benefits of *L. reuteri*

- ✓ Aids digestion
- ✓ Better lactose tolerance
- ✓ Improves nutrient absorption
- ✓ Boosts immune system
- ✓ May inhibit carcinogens

Q&A DMI Looks to the Future of Probiotics

and activity in the human tissues. Once identified, 'chip' or microarray technology can be used to determine how delivery in milk or fermented dairy products affects expression of these desirable genes. We already know that when some probiotics are delivered in fermented (acidified) dairy products, the bacteria are preconditioned for acid tolerance and as such are more likely to survive passage through the human stomach."

"Dairy foods may well turn out to be the ideal vehicle for reintroducing probiotics to the human gastrointestinal system," he adds.

Dairy foods and probiotics: A perfect opportunity. ■

yogurt. For example, Springfield Creamery, Eugene, Ore., the very first U.S. dairy processor to use live acidophilus and bifidum cultures in yogurt more than 30 years ago, includes probiotics in its other cultured dairy products such as cottage cheese, cream cheese and sour cream. Labels boast the fact that the naturally cultured products contain live cultures such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum* and four other lactic acid bacteria.

Franklin Foods, Burlington, Vt., recently debuted Hahn's™ Yogurt & Cream Cheese Spread, which contains live and active acidophilus cultures.

Adding probiotics to dairy foods is an excellent way for processors to innovate and add value. And, at the same time, help consumers enhance their health and well being. ■



Although dairy-based products containing active cultures of beneficial bacteria—probiotics—have been around for thousands of years, American consumers haven't always embraced them. That may be about to change, says Bill Haines, v.p., product innovation, Dairy Management Inc.™ (DMI), who recently discussed probiotics and their future with *Tools for Innovation*.

Q: When do you think the mainstream public will start seeking out probiotics?

A: It could be very soon. But they may not be called "probiotics." Americans may associate live bacteria with causing illness, not helping prevent it. So there's an education process that needs to take place.

Once Americans start enjoying probiotic products though, I think this is a trend with real staying power. The research suggesting that consuming probiotic bacteria can have significant health benefits is exciting. Furthermore, in other parts of the world, people have been enjoying these types of products very enthusiastically for decades. So that's an indication of the popularity that probiotics could have in this country. I think it's a trend that's here to stay.

Q: What dairy products present the greatest opportunity for probiotics?

A: Yogurts and drinkable yogurt-type products are the easiest to formulate using probiotic bacteria. They're a natural vehicle because that type of fermented dairy product is completely compatible with probiotic cultures. Theoretically, you could incorporate probiotics into other dairy products like sour cream or cheese, but we haven't done a lot of work in that area yet.

Q: What are the special challenges of probiotics research?

A: First and foremost, I think there's a need for further clinical research to substantiate health benefits for probiotics. Then, we're investigating to see if a link exists between these cultures and dairy products, to understand if dairy is the best natural vehicle for probiotics and if it may actually help turn on probiotic activity. Some of that research is under way now.

Q: Probiotics and dairy were first linked more than two millennia ago. Do you think this natural combination will last another 2000 years?

A: Yes, I do—because dairy and probiotics just go together. I think it's one of those serendipitous discoveries of the ancients. And what will really cement the relationship is if our research clearly links dairy and probiotics as the best way to maximize any health benefits.

Q: How can dairy processors get assistance with formulating and marketing probiotic-containing dairy foods?

A: Contact DMI by calling 800/248-8829. DMI offers a comprehensive technical support system that features the services of two dairy applications labs, six research centers and more than 100 experts in applications, technology, research, marketing and nutrition. We want to partner with companies to help them innovate.

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yogurt
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with L. reuteri.

—nutrient

www.dairy.com
800.248.8829



Efforts by U.S. Probiotic Culture Suppliers



Photo source: Chr. Hansen

An incredible opportunity exists in formulating foods and beverages, preferably dairy-based ones that contain probiotic cultures. Such products, if formulated effectively and responsibly, are a step in the right direction for improving people's health and well-being, as the benefits of probiotics range from helping treat acute intestinal infections to aiding in the digestion of lactose. And, over the longer term, probiotics can possibly reduce the risk of some disease.

What should formulators consider when choosing a probiotic?

"Microbiologists agree that it cannot be assumed that research published on one strain of a probiotic applies to another strain, even of the same species," says Mary Ellen Sanders, a consultant with Centennial, Colo.-based Dairy and Food Culture Technologies and president of the International Scientific Association of Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). "Therefore, documentation of type of bacteria (genus and species), potency (number of viable bacteria per dose), purity (presence of contaminating or ineffective bacteria) and the extent of research that has been published on health effects must be provided for any strain being used in a product. Usually the culture supplier can provide this information."

According to Sanders, there have been hundreds of papers published on the health benefits associated with probiotic cultures, which is one reason why the future is so promising for probiotic-containing dairy foods.

For the most part, anyone conducting a clinical study on probiotics in the past 10 years focused on a defined strain or a defined blend of strains. Clinical studies have focused on showing that the specific strain(s) survives in the carrier food until the time of consumption in levels that ensure sufficient viable organisms are transported to the site in the body where they do the most good. While most strains have been studied for the sole purpose of confirming that the strain possesses the general probiotic health benefit of maintaining natural balance in the gastrointestinal system, others strains have been studied for additional specific benefits.

Some companies maintain exclusive rights to specific strains, while other strains are available to food and beverage manufacturers. For example, Japan's Yakult is the only dairy product from which one can consume *Lactobacillus casei* Shirota. Nestlé S.A., Switzerland, has similar restricted use with *Lactobacillus johnsonii* La1, which is delivered to consumers via Nestlé's LC1 yogurt line.

One of the most highly researched probiotic cultures is the *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* GG (LGG) strain. Valio Ltd., Finland, owns the worldwide rights to LGG, and uses the culture in its Gefilus® line of dairy products. Other manufacturers around the world currently license the use of LGG from Valio. What makes LGG so attractive, and has set a precedent for other probiotic strains, is the large body of scientific research supporting the benefits of LGG. This strain has been shown to specifically help prevent and treat diarrhea, as well as prevent a recurring food-associated allergic condition called atopic eczema in infants. Such documentation enables companies that formulate with LGG to make health claims in their marketing materials and thereby distinguish themselves from their competitors.

Stonyfield Farm, Londonderry, N.H., licenses the use of *Lactobacillus reuteri* from BioGaia AB, Sweden. *L. reuteri* is the only *Lactobacillus* species to produce and secrete reuterin, an anti-microbial agent that prevents the growth of pathogenic microorganisms in the gastrointestinal tract while not affecting other bacteria that are normal to a healthy person. It, too, is a well documented microorganism.

Also from Sweden comes *Lactobacillus paracasei* F19. Isolated and researched by Arla Foods, F19 is used by Arla in its own dairy products, but is also available to other manufacturers through the company's Medipharm subsidiary.

Danisco A/S, Denmark, offers two ranges of branded probiotic cultures: Howaru™ and FloraFIT™. Howaru consists of two highly documented probiotics called Howaru Bifido (*Bifidobacterium lactis* DR10) and Howaru Rhamnosus (*Lactobacillus rhamnosus* DR20). Currently Danisco has exclusive Howaru marketing arrangements with dairy accounts in South Africa, Chile and Slovenia.

FloraFIT consists of a broad range of probiotic cultures, including five *Bifidobacterium* and eight *Lactobacillus*. Most are available to manufacturers on a non-exclusive basis with the one exception being *Lactobacillus acidophilus* NCFM, the most highly documented strain of *L. acidophilus* in the world. In addition, the genome of this strain has been completely sequenced, which should enable targeted strain design for future applications. In certain markets, Danisco has extended exclusive marketing rights to this unique strain.



International Overview

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beverage contains *Lactobacillus acidophilus* La-5, *Bifidobacterium bifidum* BB12 and fruit juice. The product is described as a combination of the natural goodness of cranberries with bio cultures for a positive balance of friendly bacteria in the digestive system.



French firm Group Danone recently launched a novel probiotic dairy concept in Belgium called Zen. This fermented milk drink contains an extra boost of magnesium, which is described as assisting with muscular health.

Zen has a subtle taste and a smooth texture, and comes packaged in a unique round daily dose bottle. Unlike Danone's leading probiotic daily dose drink Actimel®, Zen is designed to be consumed at the end of the day, according to the company. In fact, the term Zen is a reference to the Japanese teaching that the only way of achieving pure enlightenment is to exclude everything else. This comes from meditation, or more simply, relaxing one's muscles before going to sleep.

Zen makes no specific health claims. Right now it is positioned to grow on the heels of the success of Actimel, which had a global sales increase of 40% in the first quarter of 2004 following new flavor introductions. Actimel flavors include original, apple, mixed fruit, orange, strawberry and vanilla. Not all flavors are available in every market.

The Japanese have truly been leaders in the whole health and wellness movement, of which probiotics are an important segment. After all, Japan was the country to give birth to the daily dose probiotic drink Yakult® some 50 years ago. (Each daily dose bottle of Yakult contains 6.5 billion active bacteria of the strain

Lactobacillus casei Shirota.) And since Yakult's introduction, the Japanese have made such products a part of their culture (excuse the pun). Both the regulated FOSHU (Foods for Specified Health Use) market and the unregulated market in Japan are growing at great speed. The unregulated market is led by functional beverages, and more specifically, by sports beverages. Yet that very first functional food category—fermented probiotic dairy drinks—has far from disappeared, with probiotics, prebiotics and fermented milks all together being the second largest unregulated category in Japan.

New entries into this category provide added value in the form of additional functional ingredients. For example, Kyodo Milk Industry Co., markets a fermented milk beverage called "Lactobacillus casei + Lactoferrin." As the name boldly states, the product contains both the probiotic *L. casei* and the bioactive milk protein lactoferrin. Lactoferrin is a natural for addition to a probiotic beverage, as the outcome of their function



in the body is similar—they both stimulate the immune system, helping protect the body against infections, according to Kyodo.

Japan's Glico Dairy Products has added value in a different way—by incorporating indulgence with health. The company's new bifidobacteria-containing yogurt includes whole blueberries, which are a source of antioxidative polyphenols, and five fruit juices (lemon, apple, raspberry, grapefruit and passionfruit). Here's the kick: It is finished off with white rum.



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Chr. Hansen A/S, Denmark, markets the nu-trish® series of probiotics, which is divided into three groups. In the Probio-Tec™ group, each product contains at least one single strain with well-documented benefits. For example, LA5 and BB-12™ are single-strain *L. acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium* strains, respectively, and are specifically identified in products such as Ocean Spray® Plus Probiotic Yogurt Drink.

The Yo-Fast® series offers probiotic culture blends with acclaimed generic health benefits. The third group consists of single-strain probiotic with generic health benefits.

From The Netherlands, DSM offers the Delvo-Pro® range, which contains exclusively selected LAFTI® strains. The company describes these cultures as second-generation probiotics, as they have been isolated and recognized for their strain-related characteristics. For example, LAFTI L10 is a proprietary strain of *L. acidophilus* and LAFTI B94 is a proprietary *Bifidobacterium lactis*.

In the United States, it is necessary to have such scientific substantiation if a structure/function claim regarding the effect of probiotics on the normal functioning of the human body is going to be made on a food or beverage. This documentation is also recommended for claims or suggestions made on supporting marketing materials. The responsibility for accuracy lies with the food or beverage manufacturer, which is why it is so important to work closely with the culture supplier. ■

For More Information

Dairy Management Inc.™ (DMI) helps stimulate innovation and encourages companies to create new products, processes and packaging. This supplement, a joint product of DMI and Dairy Foods, is designed to encourage fresh thinking about dairy foods. For help in bringing your ideas to fruition, or for contact information on suppliers listed in this supplement, call the DMI Technical Support Hotline at 800/248-8829. Or visit www.extraordinarydairy.com. For more general information on probiotics, visit: www.isapp.net or www.usprobiotics.org.



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Back in Europe, Mona GmbH, Austria, markets the Well & Active drink line, which is fermented milk and fruit juice (apple, mango and tropical light). Through the brand name and label declaration of “probiotic milk,” consumers are aware that this beverage is

associated with wellness.

Germany’s Plus Vertriebs recently added ProBiotischer Drink to its Almsana yogurt brand. Plus Vertriebs is a probiotic-containing fermented milk that contains oligofructose, a fiber ingredient that acts synergistically with the probiotics, increasing their activity and efficacy.

In the Czech Republic, Valasske Mezirici dairy has rolled out a range of probiotic yogurt drinks targeted to different age groups. For young children, the yogurt drink is enriched with vitamins A, C and E. Cartons are adorned with the popular Czech cartoon character Pohadka. For on-the-go, young active adults who demand more out of their beverages, the Zdrave Osvezeni line has added fiber.

From Wales in the United Kingdom, Rachel’s Organic Dairy Ltd., recently grew its product line with a fat-free probiotic yogurt range. The yogurts contain *L. acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium lactis*.

Rachel’s, along with many other Western European dairies, uses the term “bio” to convey the inclusion of live and active cultures to consumers. This is a term that could catch on in the United States, as it is a subtle way of communicating the addition of beneficial bacteria, without actually calling them out.

The subtleties used by Rachel’s, which was owned by Horizon Organic when Horizon was purchased by Dean Foods Co., Dallas, earlier this year, may be just what the U.S. probiotic-containing dairy foods industry needs to get the category going.



Probiotics are already making their way into non-dairy foods in Europe. For example, in March, Arla Foods, Sweden, grew its Cultura® brand with a range of fermented products containing the active lactic acid culture, *L. paracasei* F19. Fortunately, some of the beverages are based on a blend of yogurt and juice; however, there is a non-dairy probiotic juice line. The probiotic strain F19 was developed and patented by Arla Foods. It is said to actively help maintain a healthy stomach.



The Cultura line directly competes with the ProViva® line from Skane Dairy, also of Sweden. The original ProViva fruit drink comes in a 1-liter carton that contains multiple servings. The new ProViva Shot! comes in 80ml daily dose “pots,” as they are described in Sweden. The fruit-flavored shots use ground oatmeal as the base. The Shot is a concentrated form of ProViva

and contains five times as many bacteria as the equivalent quantity of ProViva fruit drink, which means around 250 million beneficial bacteria per milliliter.

All of the offerings in the ProViva line use *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v, which the company says is a strain that has been scientifically tested on humans and shown to be safe and effective. According to the company, consuming ProViva on a regular basis helps maintain a healthy digestive system and keeps harmful bacteria at bay, thereby helping the immune system.

As you can see, probiotic-containing dairy foods are alive and thriving in other parts of the world. U.S. consumers deserve these health and wellness products, too. It is up to the U.S. dairy industry to deliver them. Now is the time to seize the opportunity and innovate. ■

