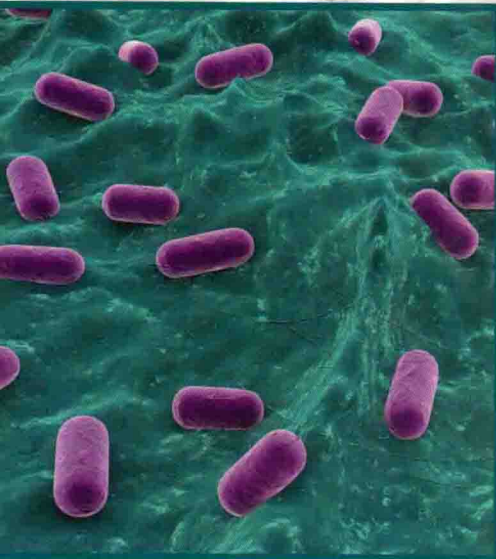


Probiotics

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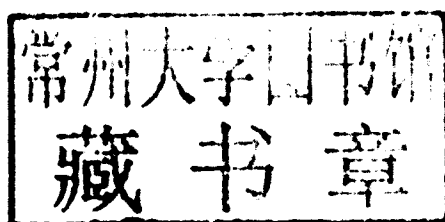
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Wolfgang Kneifel
Seppo Salminen



Probiotics and Health Claims

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Probiotics and Health Claims

Preface

Probiotics have a long history in nutrition and medicine, but their health benefits have been demonstrated only more recently, when proven standards of clinical assessment have been applied. These findings have contributed to the scientific basis for the establishment of health claims associated with some products. Concomitantly, the need for objective regulation of these claims has arisen. Today, health claim regulations are subject to intensive discussions in the public as well as by experts, and new legislative developments have been implemented in the European Union, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, China and Japan. Moreover, the Codex Alimentarius organization is still working on guidelines for global health claim definitions and assessment. Probiotic microorganisms as well as probiotic products can be regarded as the most prominent pacemakers in the area of functional foods and have always been important components providing demonstrated health benefits for various parts of the population. This development has enormously stimulated targeted research in the area of food and feed as well as in medical and pharmaceutical science.

Historical developments, from classical food fermentation to today's highly defined areas of functional foods and even clinical foods, have had a major impact on nutritional and adjuvant therapy in many gastrointestinal-associated diseases and their risk reduction. Moreover, in addition to preventive measures, new fields of probiotic applications have gradually emerged worldwide during the last few years. Thus, it is important to illuminate and to evaluate the differences in health claim requirements and assessment procedures in major global market areas by the help of experts in various but cooperating disciplines.

The information collected in this book covers different scientific areas and viewpoints and will furnish food developers and scientists involved in the work on food, health and nutrition with current multidisciplinary expertise in this field. It is also intended to be used by researchers, consulting experts and regulators who need to compare the systems and guidance used in different parts of the world. The readership may also include nutrition professionals, physicians and teachers. Additionally, the contents have been designed to be valuable not only for food science but also for students in human and animal nutrition and microbiology as well as those studying pharmaceutical sciences and drug development. The chapters are written by renowned experts and will comprise a compendium on most up-to-date developments and associated requirements as well as assessment procedures. This enables the reader to develop probiotics and new probiotic research programmes for characterizing new strains, verifying health claims and understanding the food and health relationships with specific focus on probiotics.

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