

EFFCA position for Probiotics

Microbial Food Cultures (MFC) have a long history of use in food production, as ingredients, feed additives or food supplements. Parts of these cultures, called probiotics have demonstrated beneficial effects when ingested.

EFFCA adopts the following definition by FAO/WHO¹ saying that probiotics are “live microorganisms which when administered in adequate amounts confer to a health benefit on the host”.

In order to claim that a microbial culture confers a health benefit on the host when administered in adequate amounts, EFFCA recommends that probiotics as a minimum are described by

- (1) A proper strain identification
- (2) Safety assessment
- (3) Demonstration of beneficial effects in humans

These guidelines should be applied by the members of the Association when defining strains of microorganisms as probiotics. However EFFCA fully recognises that the perception of probiotics as a category as well as the documentation needed for benefit demonstration varies between national, regional and international authorities. Each describe specific requirements in their regulations and guidelines whereof microorganisms to be used as probiotics are evaluated and acknowledged.

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For further information, please contact

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About EFFCA

The European Food & Feed Cultures Association - EFFCA - was formed in 1992 with the objective of enhancing public knowledge of the use of microbial cultures within the food chain through accurate, fair and scientifically based information. EFFCA represents sixteen manufacturing companies accounting for more than 95% of the microbial food cultures, including probiotics, sold in Europe.

¹ FAO/WHO Report on Expert Consultation on Evaluation of Health and Nutritional Properties of Probiotics in Food Including Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria. Córdoba, Argentina, October 2001.