

## Definition of Food Cultures (FC)

Food Cultures (FC) are safe<sup>1</sup> live bacteria, yeasts or moulds used in food production, and they are in themselves a characteristic food ingredient.

Food Cultures (FC) preparations are formulations, consisting of concentrates (> 10<sup>8</sup> CFU/g or ml) of one or more live and active microbial species and/or strains including unavoidable media components carried over from the fermentation and components, which are necessary for their survival, storage and to facilitate their application in the food production process, and are in some cases standardized to a low count with carriers.

FC includes, but is not limited to the terms ; starter cultures, dairy starter, yogurt starters, ripening cultures, meat cultures, sausage starter, protective cultures, wine cultures, malolactic cultures, sourdough starter, probiotics, lactic acid bacteria etc.

FC preparations are traditionally used as food ingredients at one or more stages in the food manufacturing process to develop their desired metabolic activity. They contribute to one or multiple unique properties of food stuff especially in regard to flavour, colour, texture, wholesomeness, health and nutritional benefits and food safety through protection and conservation.

### Labelling of food with FC<sup>2</sup>

Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 provides the information which shall be included in the labelling of all foodstuffs, in particular giving the exact nature and characteristics of the product which enables the consumer to choose in full knowledge of the facts.

As FCs are defined as characteristic food ingredients they should be listed on the ingredients label of the final food when they are used in the manufacture or preparation of a foodstuff unless exempted by other regulation. It means that FC must be in the list of ingredients under a generally understood category name or in certain cases the specific species and or strain name.

According to Article 19 1(d) of Regulation 1169/2011 cheese, butter, fermented milk or cream are exempted from carrying a list of ingredients if no other ingredient has been added than lactic products, enzymes and microbial cultures essential to manufacture, or the salt needed for the manufacture of cheese.

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<sup>1</sup> Bourdichon, F. et al. Bulletin of the IDF No. 455/2012 - Safety Demonstration of Microbial Food Cultures (MFC) in Fermented Food Products page 1-66

<sup>2</sup> Herody, C., Soyeux, Y., Hansen, E. B., Gillies, K. European Food and Feed Law Review, 5, 2010 - The Legal Status of Microbial Food Cultures in the European Union: An Overview page 258-269