CULTIVATING THE FUTURE

ENSURING GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY FOR EUROPE'S MICROBIAL FOOD CULTURES INDUSTRY

Food cultures are safe live bacteria, yeasts or filamentous fungi (moulds) used in food production which are in themselves a food ingredient. They contribute to one or multiple unique properties of food, particularly flavour, colour, texture, shelf-life, wholesomeness, health and nutritional benefits and food safety.

WHERE DO WE FIND FOOD CULTURES IN OUR DAILY LIVES?

	Boosting Innovation and Competitiveness	Consistent and fair market access for microbial food cultures	Recognition of the sustainability potential of microbial food cultures
WHAT IS NEEDED?			
WHY?	Nontransgenic NGT microorganisms for the deliberate release are crucial to foster innovation (i.e., preservation or enhancement of nutritional content) and maintain Europe's competitive edge in the global market	To ensure a level playing field, it is crucial to preserve the current market access structure governed by general food law.	Microbial food cultures offer significant potential to enhance sustainability within the food system by reducing food waste and improving food safety.
HOW? POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	• Develop and implement a clear regulatory framework, ensuring safety while promoting innovation. • Foster collaborative engagement between industry, academia, and policymakers to explore the potential of microbial culture applications. • Provide funding and incentives for research and development in microbial genomics to spur innovation and drive industry growth.	• Ensure consistent and fair market access for microbial food cultures focusing on innovative applications such as bioprotection across EU Member States. • Simplify the administrative processes required for bringing new microbial cultures to market, reducing time and costs for producers. • Ensure that microbial cultures with bioprotective effects are uniformly recognized as ingredients, regardless of their specific applications, in order to avoid regulatory discrepancies.	• Recognize and support the role of microbial food cultures in reducing food waste through extended shelf life and improved food safety. • Create coherent sustainability policies that align with the goals of reducing food waste and promoting sustainable food value chains. • Encourage the integration of microbial food cultures into circular economy initiatives, emphasizing their role in waste reduction and resource efficiency.

By **fostering innovation, streamlining regulatory processes, and recognizing the sustainability potential of microbial food** cultures, the 2024-2029 Commission can ensure that this vital industry continues to contribute to Europe's environmental and sustainability goals.

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#Foodcultures4future

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