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Bio-Functional Properties of Lactic Acid Bacteria in Functional Foods

Guest Editor:

Dr. Svetoslav Todorov

ProBacLab, Laboratório de Microbiologia de Alimentos, Departamento de Alimentos e Nutrição Experimental, Faculdade de Ciências Farmacêuticas, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo 05508-000, SP, Brazil

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Message from the Guest Editor

Lactic acid bacteria (LAB) are pivotal in the production of fermented foods, serving as functional ingredients that enhance both the quality and safety of these products. The presence of LAB in fermented foods, such as cheese, yogurt, sauerkraut, salami, olives, kimchi, etc., has been associated with improved digestibility, enhanced nutrient bioavailability, and potential therapeutic benefits. Selected LAB can play a crucial role in the cultural identity of regional cuisines, often involving native ingredients and traditional practices. The variability of artisanal production, however, poses challenges in identifying specific LAB strains, which can include species like *Lactobacillus* and *Streptococcus*, among others, and can be actively involved not only in technological but also in biopreservation and even therapeutical properties. Despite this, the health benefits conferred by these microorganisms, such as improved lactose digestion, infection prevention, and possible cancer risk reduction, underscore their significance in the food industry.



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Prof. Dr. Arun K. Bhunia

1. Department of Food Science,
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Lafayette, IN, USA

2. Department of Comparative
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University, West Lafayette, IN,
USA

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Foods Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland

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