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## IDF taskforce doubles microbial species on safe list

By Shane Starling, 18-Oct-2011

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**An International Dairy Federation taskforce has updated a 2002 inventory of safe microbial species including some probiotic species – from 112 to 221 – a list the group hopes will allow exemption from EU Novel Foods and US New Dietary Ingredient (NDI) regulations.**

The new list, which reflects advances in fermented food, microbial culture technology and knowledge (including probiotics), was presented at the IDF's World Dairy Summit in Parma, Italy, this week by the Technical University of Denmark's Egon Bech Hansen.

The list was also referenced at an NDI Town Hall meeting at the SupplySide West trade show in Las Vegas last week by Ioannis Misopoulos, the director general of the International Probiotics Association (IPA).

He asked the Food and Drug Administration's Dietary Supplements chief, Dan Fabricant, PhD, if such a list would exempt probiotic strains from NDI applications. Fabricant said the list could be used as evidence for exemption, on a case-by-case basis.

At the Town Hall meeting, Svend Laulund, from Danish probiotics supplier, Chr Hansen, told NutraIngredients of the importance of the updated inventory (compiled in conjunction with the European Food and Feed Cultures Association (EFFCA)) that had been submitted to a peer-review journal.

### "Convincing document"

*"An update was necessary, as the original list focused mainly on commercially available dairy cultures and omitted naturally occurring species and other varieties of fermented food products," he said.*

*"Recent advances in microbial genetics and physiology have greatly increased our understanding of their phylogeny and led to substantial taxonomic changes. These advances have facilitated establishing the history of use of microorganisms, but can from a regulatory point of view, by mistake be considered as novel."*

*"Building a regulatory framework on evolving taxonomy is quite challenging, when the definition of microbial species lacks a consensus and while new active species in fermented foods are described continuously."*

Laulund, who worked on the updated inventory with Bech Hansen and 16 others from the probiotic and scientific community, said it, *"should be a convincing document going forward"* in the dialogue with the FDA, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and other food safety authorities.

He noted the success of the original 112-species strong list from which no strain had been forced to go through the despised and long-winded EU Novel Foods process.

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