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INSIDE

DAIRY BUSINESS NEWS

Digestive health moves beyond yogurt

The idea dairy products may help consumers improve their digestive health has found some traction in the United States during the past five years due primarily to the marketing of yogurt products containing probiotics. A question remains as to whether that success will migrate from the retail yogurt case to other dairy products, and even beyond the dairy department. The application of a new type of culture

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Digestive health moves beyond yogurt

Fluid milk, cheese and cottage cheese are potential categories for growth

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to a broader line of products indicates consumers may soon look beyond yogurt when thinking about gut health.

"Probiotics are being included more as part of a general nutritional-health boost being given to dairy products," said Donald McMahon, Ph.D., director of the Western Dairy Center and Dairy Technology Innovation Laboratory at Utah State University, Logan. "An example of this from some recent activities in the Western Dairy Center pilot plant is in the frozen yogurt category. This category is being revitalized with a healthy halo as seen with TCBY's release last year of its award winning Super Fro-Yo line that combined probiotics with a number of other nutrient and health attributes."

The TCBY frozen yogurt features vitamins

A and D, probiotics, dietary fiber, protein, and calcium. The food service company positions it as a healthy alternative to treats high in saturated fat and calories. It offers seven types of probiotics, 4 grams of protein and 3 grams of fiber in a 120-calorie serving.

Another frozen dessert that presents a compelling argument for probiotics moving across product types is Yovation, from Pierre's French Ice Cream of Cleveland. Yovation is made using traditional active yogurt cultures along with an added probiotic culture, GanedenBC30 (*Bacillus coagulans* GBI-30, 6086). GanedenBC30 is formulated to withstand the industrial food manufacturing process, extreme temperatures and product shelf life. It is a key ingredient for the Pierre's yogurt product and has been used in various other in-market applications including milk, said Mike

Bush, president of Ganeden.

"The primary benefit, other than good clinical benefits on digestion and immunity, is that it is really easy to use," Mr. Bush said. "We have been able to incorporate it directly into fresh milk, in pasteurized milk, and it does not alter the flavor texture. We put it in prior to HTST and it remains dormant."

Gurnsey Farms Dairy, Northville, Mich., and Foster Farms Dairy Modesto, Calif., are using the probiotic strain in pasteurized and HTST milk as is a dairy in Lynwood, Ireland. Other customers include Red Mango frozen yogurt, Jamba Juice, and Naked Pizza, a New Orleans-based natural pizza chain that recently added a crust option called Superbiotic.

"It's really stable," Mr. Bush said. "Not having to put huge amounts of overage makes it more cost effective."

Ganeden separates spore cells from vegetal cells, and, because the spore cells have a built-in shield, losses during processing range from 14% to 20% compared to more than 95% for strains with vegetal cells, Mr. Bush said.

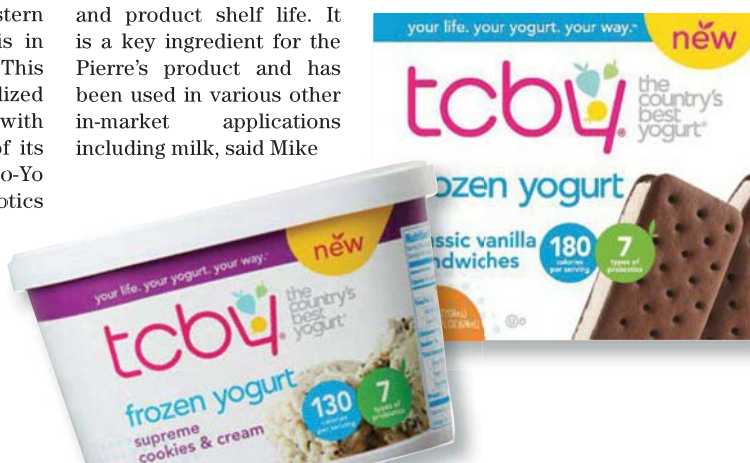
Yovation was launched in 2009 and it has become an important brand for Pierre's, now offered in seven flavors.

"We're seeing a greater diversity in people's tastes," said Matt Thornicroft, a spokesman for the company.

"Frozen yogurt lovers want fun, delicious and exciting treats," Mr. Thornicroft said.

"Yovation is all about that plus it is lower in fat than regular ice cream, which makes it an ideal better-for-you option for people who want to trim fat from their diets."

Yogurt, with naturally occurring and added cultures, enjoys a reputation as one of the most healthful products in the dairy category. Many yogurts contain an array of



New research on dairy and digestion

ROSEMONT, ILL. — Among the latest U.S. research on dairy and nutrition is a study indicating new evidence of the role dairy plays as a delivery medium for gut-healthy probiotics. A separate series of investigations showed that certain sugars isolated in milk may aid in digestive health.

The first study investigated potential synergistic interactions between dairy and probiotics to determine if dairy directly enhances the survival and activity of probiotics, said Christopher Cifelli, Ph.D., director of nutrition research for the Dairy Research Institute. The bacteria have been shown to undergo genetic changes when delivered in a milk product and those changes may help them adapt better and remain more viable once consumed.

"Dairy helps them adapt to what they will face in the gastro-intestinal tract," Dr. Cifelli said. "It's almost like priming for enhanced survival."

The study was conducted in the laboratory of Todd Klaenhammer at N.C. State University.

The study regarding dairy sugars originated at the University of California-Davis.

"Complex prebiotic sugars found in bovine milk mimic those found in human milk," Dr. Cifelli said.

"These sugars are thought to help establish a healthy flora in your gut. This could potentially lead to development of a new group of dairy ingredients that could aid digestion."

These sugars can be isolated from the permeate stream during the filtration process used to produce whey, Dr. Cifelli said, and that stream traditionally produced less nutrient-valuable components than the filtrate stream, so this may be an added opportunity for the dairy ingredient industry. ■

probiotic cultures, and kefir, which is made and marketed in the United States primarily by Lifeway Foods, Morton Grove, Ill., also includes a yeast organism, in addition to several probiotic strains.

The focus on digestive health was initially driven by The Dannon Co., White Plains, N.Y., with its marketing initiatives related to its Activia brand. The brand's success has led to several line extensions and additional category growth.

Since the success of Activia, there have been a handful of attempts at offering probiotics in dairy products other than yogurt. These have included a line of probiotic cottage cheese from Kraft Foods Inc. that was discontinued, cottage cheese from other dairy manufacturers, including Dean Foods, and a handful of block and sliced cheese offerings, including one from Kraft Foods that also was discontinued.

CheeseWell, Inc., a San Francisco-based company, continues to offer a line of Probiotic CheeseWell cheeses. The cheddar and Monterey Jack loaves and blocks are marketed as promoting digestive health and immunity health.

With the relatively recent introduction of Ganeden's BC30, more dairy products outside of the yogurt segment may soon be vying for some of the attention that Dannon's Activia has generated.

"I think Activia boosted yogurt sales and introduced many people to yogurt who had not tried it before," said David McCoy, Ph.D., vice-president of product research at the Dairy Research Institute, Rosemont,

Ill. "The significant advertising that comes with something new was also a boost for the category. Much of the success of the probiotic yogurts is built around the health halo of yogurt to begin with. If consumers



want probiotics in different types of products, then they can be made."

For more traditional yogurt applications, Chr. Hansen, Milwaukee, recently launched a series of new probiotic Nu-trish yogurt cultures. The company said the new portfolio of seven cultures includes three of them with the proprietary BB-12 probiotic strain for improved gut and immune health. Because the new cultures produce creamy textures without the need for additional texturants, they may help dairy product processors achieve a cleaner label, according to the company. ■

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