

Global upswing for probiotic and prebiotic food and beverages

By Mike Stones, 29-Mar-2010

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World sales of probiotic and prebiotic foods and beverages climbed 12.5 per cent to reach about \$15.4bn in 2008 compared with the year before, according to research group Packaged Facts.

Dairy-based probiotic and prebiotic foods accounted for 55.5 percent of the segment's foods and beverages, revealed the group's assessment of Datamonitor's Product Launch Analytics data.

Nondairy beverages accounted for 10.7 percent, grain-based foods for 10%, and meat products for 1.4 percent.

The 2008 growth rate for probiotic and prebiotic food and beverages ranged from more than 30% to 5 percent, depending on the region and product type.

Ingredient advances

Consumers can expect a wider range of food and beverages containing both probiotics and prebiotics thanks to ingredient advances and continuing research, claimed Packaged Facts.

Enhancing probiotic stability to make it easier to add the beneficial bacteria to a wider variety of foods and beverages has been one of the main focuses of research, said the organization. Illustrating this trend it pointed to tea company Bigelow Inc's launch last autumn a line of herbal teas formulated with healthy herbs and nutrients.

The company's Lemon Ginger Herb Plus is said to support a healthy digestive system with a combination of lemon, ginger, and a patented *Bacillus coagulans* GBI-30, 6086.

Growing consumer demand for probiotics will also be underpinned by continuing research into their health benefits. The group cited research into the benefits of probiotics for intestinal health.

Healthy adults

Kalman et al. (2009) showed that GanedenBC30 reduced intestinal gas symptoms in healthy adults and improved quality of life even for those without specific gastrointestinal disorders.

The Packaged Facts report quoted the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP) as identifying the most widely accepted prebiotics as fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS), inulin (a type of FOS), and galacto-oligosaccharides.

Candidate prebiotics were listed as being: Polydextrose, soybean oligosaccharides, isomalto-oligosaccharides, gluco-oligosaccharides, xylo-oligosaccharides, palatinose, gentio-oligosaccharides, and sugar alcohols (such as lactitol, sorbitol, and maltitol).

Recent research has linked the use of prebiotics with a variety of beneficial health effects, said Packaged Facts. Those include: Colon cancer (Munjal et al. 2009), digestive health, mineral absorption, weight management and immunity.

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