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Functional Dairy Products, Volume 2

M. SAARELA (Ed.)

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Functional foods beneficially affect one or more target functions in the body, thereby resulting in an improved state of health and well-being and/or reduction in risk of disease. A functional food can be (i) a natural food, (ii) a food to which a component has been added, (iii) a food from which a component has been removed, (iv) a food where the nature of at least one component has been modified or (v) any combination of these possibilities. It is a well known fact that dairy products form the major part of functional foods. These include products supplemented with probiotics, prebiotics, fibres, omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, plant stanols and bioactive peptides produced by lactic acid bacteria.

The book '*Functional Dairy Products, Volume 2*' provides state-of-the-art information on the health benefits of functional dairy foods, their ingredients and key product development issues. The basic structure of this volume is identical to that of volume 1 in that it is divided in three parts bearing exactly the same respective titles as the preceding volume, which was published in 2003. Part 1 discusses current research on the health benefits of functional dairy products, with chapters on weight management, infant/child health and oral/gut health. Part 2 reviews key dairy ingredients and their functional benefits and uses, covering pro- and prebiotics, hypoallergenic hydrolysates and plant sterols and stanols. Finally, Part 3 covers product development issues such as biomarkers and experimental models to investigate health benefits, genomics of probiotic micro-organisms and functional dairy product regulation and safety. Mercifully, little space is devoted to touting commercial products available on the various world markets.

The editor, Dr. Maria Saarela of Finland, is applauded for bringing together a series of world authorities in this field. Representing 13 countries, these experts have provided an extremely timely and up-to-date collection of reviews on the current situation and future trends of functional dairy products. In conclusion, this volume, which is comprised of a total of 23 chapters, makes excellent reading for those with an interest in any aspect of functional dairy foods. It is therefore highly recommended, both as a textbook and as a source of references for further reading, to university students, professors, researchers, dairy processors and, last but not least, health-conscious consumers.

L. VARGA