

Alternatives for communicating the health benefits of probiotics

Martin Macouzet

Institute for the development of probiotic food products, Quebec, Canada

Published online 01 October 2012
www.idpf-idap.com

Abstract

Communicating the potential health benefits of probiotic food products to consumers is essential for success in the market, regardless of brand. Little other than the expected health benefit weighs into the consumer's decision to opt for a probiotic food product rather than a less expensive traditional one. As revealed in this report, persistent ignorance and scepticism point to the need to inform consumers about the health benefits of probiotics. Up to the present, the health claim has been regarded as the principal tool for achieving this. However, strict regulatory standards make it extremely difficult and onerous to substantiate such claims in the case of probiotic food products. This situation has spawned various marketing tactics designed to by-pass health claim legislation. This work points out the pitfalls of those practices and suggests legitimate strategies for communicating health benefits in the absence of an approved health claim. Application of recognized contemporaneous and lag econometric models supports the feasibility of the proposed strategies, which can be used alone or in conjunction with to the traditional health claim approach.

Key words: probiotics, health claims, health communication, consumer awareness, endorsement seals, consumer education.

Importance of health communication

Various new categories of food products containing probiotics have made their way onto supermarket shelves in recent years.

Correspondence: Martin Macouzet,
Institute for the Development of Probiotic Food Products,
1015 Desranleau Est,
Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, J2T 4Y8
Canada
martin.macouzet@idpf-idap.com

Judging by emerging technological innovations in the area of probiotics and the expanding demand for health-food products, it is expected that an even greater variety of probiotic foods will follow in the near future. Indeed, new technologies now allow probiotics to remain viable until the "best before" date in almost any kind of food. Meanwhile, scientific research continues to shed more light on the biochemical mechanisms underlying the health benefits obtained from probiotics, which is



Get full article



Institute for the Development of Probiotic Food Products

The meeting point of science, industry and communication

www.idpf-idap.com