Contributors

Chapter 1
M. Saxelin*, R. Korpela and A. Mäyrä-Mäkinen
Valio Ltd, R&D
Meijeritie 4 A
PO Box 30
00039 Helsinki
Finland
Tel: +358 10381 3111
Fax: +358 10381 3019
Email: maija.saxelin@valio.fi

Chapter 2
C. Gill* and I. Rowland
Northern Ireland Centre for Diet and Health (NICHE)
University of Ulster
Coleraine Campus
Cromore Road
Coleraine
Co. Londonderry
BT52 1SA
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 28 7032 4675
Email: c.gill@ulst.ac.uk

Chapter 3
J. Lovegrove* and K. Jackson
School of Food Biosciences
The University of Reading
PO Box 226
Whiteknights
Reading
RG6 6AP
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 118 378 8700
Fax: +44 (0) 118 378 0080
Email: food@afnovell.reading.ac.uk

Chapter 4
R. Wood
Mineral Bioavailability Lab
USDA HNRCA at Tufts University
711 Washington St
Boston
MA 02111
USA
Email: richard.wood@tufts.edu

*Indicates main point of contact
Chapter 5
P.V. Kirjavainen
Department of Biochemistry and Food Chemistry and Functional Foods Forum
University of Turku
FIN-20014
Finland
Tel: +358 2 333 6861
Fax: +358 2 333 6860
Email: pirkka.kirjavainen@utu.fi

Chapter 6
H. Gill
Institute of Food, Nutrition and Human Health
Massey University
Palmerston North
New Zealand
Email: h.s.gill@massey.ac.nz

Chapter 7
F. Shanahan
University College Cork
Clinical Sciences Building
Cork University Hospital
Cork
Ireland
Tel: +353 21 490 1226
Fax: +353 21 434 5300
Email: f.shanahan@ucc.ie

Chapter 8
R.J. FitzGerald*
Life Sciences Department, University of Limerick
Limerick
Ireland
Tel: +358 9-456 4466
Fax: +358 9-455 2103

Chapter 9
G. Boehm* and B. Stahl
Infant Nutrition Research Numico Research Germany
Milupa GmbH & Co. KG
Bahnstrasse 14–30
61381 Friedrichsdorf
Germany
Tel: +49 6172 991320
Fax: +49 6172 991862
Email: guenther.boehm@milupa.de

Chapter 10
R. Fondén*
Arla Foods ICS
SE 10546 Stockholm
Sweden
Email: rangne.fonden@arlafoods.com
M. Saarela, J. Mättö and T. Mattila-Sandholm
VTT Biotechnology
Tietotie 2, Espoo
P.O.Box 1500
FIN-02044 VTT
Finland
Tel: +358-9-456 4466
Fax: +358-9-455 2103
Chapter 11
S. Gnädig, Y. Xue, O. Berdeaux, J.M. Chardigny and J-L. Sebedio*
Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique
Unité de Nutrition Lipidique
BP 86510 -17 rue Sully
21065 Dijon Cedex - France
Tel: +33 (0) 3 80 69 31 23
Fax: +33 (0) 3 80 69 32 23
Email: sebedio@dijon.inra.fr

Chapter 12
R. Rastall
School of Food Biosciences
The University of Reading
PO Box 226
Whiteknights
Reading
RG6 6AP
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 118 9316726
Fax: +44 (0) 118 9310080
Email: r.a.rastall@reading.ac.uk

Chapter 13
A.C. Ouwehand* and S. Salminen
University of Turku
Department of Biochemistry and Food Chemistry
FIN 20014 Turku
Finland
Tel: +358 2 333 6894
Fax: +358 2 333 6884
Email: arthur.ouwehand@utu.fi

Chapter 14
P. Marteau
European Hospital Georges Pompidou and Paris V University
20 Rue Leblanc
75908 Paris
Cedex 15
France
Email: philippe.marteau@egp.ap-hop-paris.fr

Chapter 15
L. Lähteenmäki
Sensory Quality and Food Choice
Group Manager
VTT Biotechnology
PO Box 1500
FIN 02044 VTT
Finland
Tel. +358 9 456 5965
Fax +358 9 455 2103
Email: liisa.lahteenmaki@vtt.fi

Chapter 16
T. Mattila-Sandholm,* L. Lähteenmäki and M. Saarela
VTT Biotechnology
PO Box 1500
FIN 02044 VTT
Finland
Tel: +358-50-5527243
Email: tiina.mattila-sandholm@vtt.fi

Chapter 17
L. Hoolihan
Nutrition Research Specialist
Dairy Council of California
222 Martin # 155
Irvine, CA 92612
USA
Tel: 0001 949 756 7892
Fax: 001 949 756 7896
Email: hoolihan@dairycouncilofca.org
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Dairy products are delicious, and they are healthy foods with many nutritional benefits too. However, most people only stick to a few different dairy foods. Some of the most common options include butter, cheese, cream, milk and yogurt. Most modern buttermilk products have a bacterial culture (such as Lactococcus lactis) added to them, and these are known as cultured buttermilk. However, they are often just called buttermilk. Per 100 g, buttermilk’s nutritional profile looks like this. The production of dairy products is also interested in the application of bioactive substances. We already know many such substances, since many of them naturally occur in the milk of some mammals or human milk. Others are produced by lactic acid bacteria or probiotics, and many are found in other food matrices and added to dairy products as extracts. (This article belongs to the Special Issue Functional Dairy Products).

INTRODUCTION

Milk and dairy products are the most common foods in the diet of all categories of the population. The reasons for their popularity lie in the unique properties and components of milk, as well as a possibility of producing a wide variety of foods from this material. Fermented milk products are functional foods that contain biologically active substances with health-beneficial properties. These dairy products contain many functional ingredients that decrease the absorption of cholesterol, can significantly reduce blood pressure, play role in the regulation of satiety, food intake and obesity-related metabolic disorders and may exert antimicrobial effects. This paper reviews and discusses some of the latest findings regarding the role of milk and dairy products as functional foods.