

# The New Norm Confirms the Importance of Dairy—and Probiotics--in the Diet

[beyondairy.blogspot.com/2020/03/the-new-norm-confirms-importance-of.html](https://beyondairy.blogspot.com/2020/03/the-new-norm-confirms-importance-of.html)

Photo source: Nancy's Yogurt

First and foremost, I hope that you, your team and all of your families are staying healthy, safe and sane.

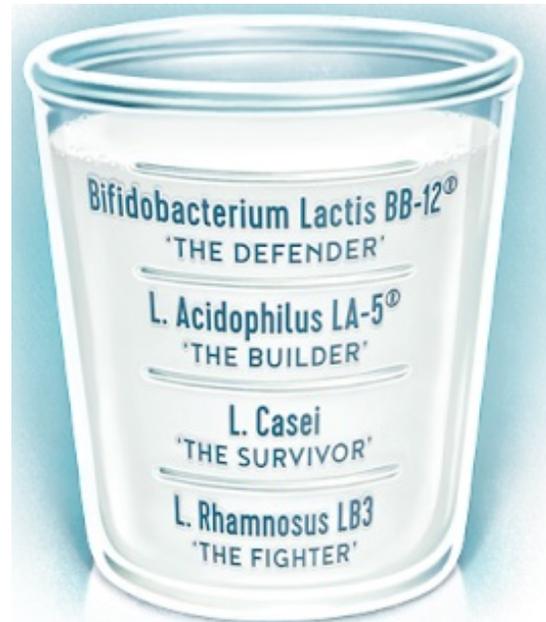
Thank you to all the dairy farmers, haulers, processors, distributors, retailers and innovators... for your time and energy to keep refrigerators—and freezers (ice cream is quite comforting)--stocked. Please be smart. Stay active. Eat healthy. Keep clean. Be kind. We can do this. Xo

Like most of you, I've spent the past week adjusting to the new norm. Part of that new norm has included more online reading, participating in more webinars and observing the changing marketplace.

My big takeaway: these uncertain, and I will say it, very “scary” times, will likely result in consumers and industry hitting their reboot buttons and prioritizing what’s important. Somehow consumers jumped from wanting clean, simple, fresh-from-the farm foods, to highly processed and fabricated foods, albeit many of them carrying an organic or natural claim, that had no resemblance to anything Mother Nature created.

Something for suppliers to the industry to remember, while many innovators are not in the lab developing new products, they are sitting at their computers and catching up on webinars they missed and reading everything they can get their hands on. Food scientists—I am one—cannot let their brains dry out. They crave information, and while they may not be hands-on mixing, blending and producing prototypes, I guarantee they are creating on paper. They are developing lists of samples to request. They are writing formulas. For the first time ever ingredient companies have a captive audience.

And, most importantly, “we are better together.”



Within less than two weeks, we've seen what matters most to shoppers. After toilet paper, hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies, the three most sold-out departments in supermarkets across the country were meat, bread and dairy. Upon close personal observation of dairy cases and from insights from others, cultured dairy, specifically products making probiotic claims, are selling out quickly. Amazon has about a month delay on shipping probiotic supplements. Many multi-vitamins and antioxidants are on backorder, too.

This shows that consumers understand the association of probiotics with gut health and building immunity. Dairy processors can provide nutrient-dense dairy foods that deliver proven probiotics to consumers. It's a very active space in dairy markets around the world.

"Functional benefits have never been so important or so dialed in to specific needs and desires," wrote The Hartman Group this week. We can expect this to intensify moving forward.

Since the beginning of the year, a number of new dairy product lines have been introduced that are made with one of the most documented probiotic strains with more than 300 published studies. It's the *Bifidobacterium lactis* BB-12 strain, which is associated with immunity and intestinal health. Chr. Hansen supplies the BB-12 strain, as well as other well-studied probiotics.

Sierra Nevada's new Probiotic Organic Yogurt Drink is made with the BB-12 strain. It also contains the lactase enzyme to ensure the product is lactose free, an attribute that appeals to consumers with—real or perceived--lactose intolerance or insensitivity. Adding lactase also breaks down milk's inherent sugar—the disaccharide lactose--into the monosaccharides glucose and galactose, which are perceived as sweeter than lactose. This makes an added sugar reduction possible.



Good Culture introduced no-added-sugar Probiotic Smoothies. Made with pasture-raised, protein-rich kefir, the USDA organic smoothies are available in three flavors: Pineapple, Vanilla and Wildberry. The drinks come in 7-ounce bottles and contain 7 grams of protein. They do not contain any added sugars. The light sweetness comes from the pasture-raised kefir, fruits and organic dates. The smoothies are powered by 35 billion CFUs and feature 12 strains of live and active cultures, including BB-12.

Stonyfield Organic rolled out Daily Probiotics made with BB-12. The yogurt drink comes in a 3.1-ounce easy-to-drink format and is designed to support both immune and digestive health. Available in two flavors-- Blueberry Pomegranate and Strawberry Acai--the drinks are made with real fruit and organic low-fat milk, all for only 60 calories.

All of these innovations were developed in response to increasing consumer interest in preventive daily healthcare, which will likely experience aggressive growth. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the global probiotics market was predicted to reach nearly 80 billion dollars by 2025, according to Grand View Research Inc.

My friends at Nancy's have long taken probiotics and health seriously and educate consumers that not all probiotics are created equal. This is why the formulators have selected strains that are clinically documented. They've carefully chosen a broad range of probiotic strains to help create a lineup that may help support immune and digestive health.

Probiotics make sense in ice cream and desserts, too. Earlier this year, Pro Rich Nutrition rolled out namesake high-protein frozen dessert tubes, which are loaded with protein, probiotics, prebiotics, and 26 vitamins and minerals. Sold in boxes of three tubes, the frozen dessert comes in five varieties, all of which contain cocoa protein nuggets made with whey protein concentrate and isolate. Varieties are Chocolate, Coffee Caramel (Rocket Launch), Mint, Strawberry and Vanilla (Jo Jo's Original). One tube contains 130 to 150 calories, 4 to 5 grams of fat, 10 to 11 grams of protein, 5 to 9 grams of added sugars and 3 grams of fiber. Protein content gets boosted from the cocoa nuggets and milk protein concentrate. Organic agave inulin and organic monkfruit help keep added sugars in check.

To read more about how "probiotics make dairy special," link [HERE](#).

And [HERE](#) is a must-read blog post written by Glenn Gibson, professor at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom, regarding the possible connection between gut health and COVID-19 infection. Thank you International Scientific Association of Probiotics and Prebiotics for sharing.



I want to emphasize what I wrote earlier, “we are better together.”

Going forward in this new norm, I welcome processors to share with me by [EMAIL](#) your efforts to best market dairy’s powerhouse package so that others may learn how to spread the word.

Here’s communication from my friends at Prairie Farms.

*“With all of the uncertainty in the marketplace around the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), Prairie Farms wants to reassure our customers that we will continue to provide high-quality, safe and nutritious dairy products. All of our manufacturing facilities are operating normally and will continue to deliver milk and dairy products to our retail and foodservice partners so they can keep shelves stocked with the products you love.*

*Preserving the quality and safety of milk begins on the farm and follows through to the refrigerator. All milk and dairy products must undergo multiple safety, quality and sanitation tests and procedures on our farms, in transit and at our processing plants to ensure their safety. In fact, dairy foods produced and processed in the United States are some of the most highly regulated and safest foods available to consumers. For example, the milk in your glass is tested up to 17 different times before it reaches you...We hope you will take comfort in knowing that our dairy farm families and team members stand ready to do our part to help feed America during this unprecedented crisis. We are committed to keeping you informed and will provide updates as needed.”*

Thank you, Prairie Farms!

If you need a resource to assist with your communication plan, the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) just launched its new and improved website that you can view [HERE](#). In addition to serving as a tool for advocacy, education and networking on behalf of the dairy industry, the website’s new features will play an important role in times like these —when nimble, reliable communications are more important than ever.

The IDFA also issued a new Q&A document to provide producers, processors and manufacturers of food with answers to questions about the safe production of food and the health of employees given the current environment where COVID-19 is present. The document provides recommendations on what to do if an employee tests positive for COVID-19. Download the FAQs [HERE](#).

Here's an interesting [READ](#) on the potential effects the coronavirus could have at the grocery stores, farms, food markets and economy from Jayson Lusk, distinguished professor and head of the department of agricultural economics at Purdue University.

I will close the blog with something I read on Ad Age's Wake-Up Call, where the analyst looks at the current crisis through the lens of 9/11. "The economy needs marketers and marketing."

Photo source: Topsy Scoop

That's what Melissa Tavss, owner of Topsy Scoop in New York City, is doing. I encourage readers in New York to order an ice cream cocktail to take home and enjoy. You can order online, too, so it's a "no touch" option. Check out the menu [HERE](#).

Cheers! Stay healthy, safe and sane. Best, donna

