

Definition of Microbial Food Culture (MFC)

Microbial Food Cultures (MFC) are live bacteria, yeasts or moulds used in food production.

Microbial Food Cultures (MFC) preparations are formulations, consisting of concentrates of one or more microbial species and/or strains including unavoidable media components carried over from the fermentation and components, which are necessary for their survival, storage, standardisation and to facilitate their application in the food production process.

Starter cultures¹ are MFC preparations used as food ingredients at one or more stages in the food manufacturing process, which develop the desired metabolic activity during the fermentation or ripening process. They contribute to the one or multiple unique properties of food stuff especially in regard to taste, flavour, colour, texture, safety, preservation, nutritional value, wholesomeness and/or health benefits.

Probiotic cultures are live microorganisms which, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host².

Definition of fermented foods:

The term "fermented" describes the processes of acidification, maturing, ripening, flavouring, and preserving. The metabolic activity of the microorganisms in the preparations is in any case a fermentative event."

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¹ Synonyms for the term "starter cultures" include, but are not limited to, ripening cultures, protective cultures, sourdough starter, dairy starter, sausage starter, etc.

² FAO/WHO Report on Expert Consultation on Evaluation of Health and Nutritional Properties of Probiotics in Food Including Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria. Córdoba, Argentina, October 2001.