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Scientists identify lactic acid bacteria that create natural sweetness in yoghurt

The developed lactic acid bacteria create natural sweetness in the yoghurt, thus reducing the need for added sugar

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A team of scientists at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) has developed a yoghurt bacterium, which can cleave lactose in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. This makes it possible to create natural sweetness in yoghurt with less added sugar.

Yoghurt is fermented milk and milk naturally contains around 50 grams sugar (lactose) per liter. Milk sugar is characterized by its low sweetness, but by breaking down lactose with enzymes, more sweet sugars (glucose and galactose) are released. By breaking down 70% of the lactose in milk, the sweetness can be increased what corresponds to 20 grams per liter of regular sugar.

Commercially available lactase enzymes currently used for breaking down lactose in milk products, are made using microorganisms, which involves, a tedious and costly purification process. Furthermore, transportation from the manufacturer site to the dairy adds to the costs.

With the solution that the DTU researchers have developed, the lactic acid bacteria-based lactase can be grown and used directly at the dairy, and in the milk that ends up being yogurt. In this way the costs for purchasing the lactase and transportation are reduced. The solution has been tested by a large Danish dairy firm.

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