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## Probiotic Food: Latest Advances and Prospects

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### **Message from the Guest Editors**

Probiotic foods are among the first functional foods developed and are currently leading products in this area. While dairy products were originally the main commercial probiotic foods, nowadays, a diversity of foodstuffs has been developed, including baked foods, juices, and fermented meats/vegetables. Typically, probiotic foods contain *Lactobacillus* and/or *Bifidobacterium* strains, but species such as *Bacillus coagulans* or *Pedococcus acilactici* are being increasingly used. Renewed interest in traditional fermented foods, including kefir and kombucha, as sources of beneficial microorganism consortiums also provides further opportunities. Moreover, their formulation poses technological challenges that have been tentatively overcome to guarantee strain viability and stability throughout production and storage. Probiotic foods were traditionally associated with digestive and immune health claims, but other health targets, including weight management, heart health, and brain-mood, are being suggested. Despite enlightening advances in research and developments, validation of the health-promoting properties of probiotic foods is still required, especially by regulators.



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# Special Issue



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