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# MARY ELLEN SANDERS

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CV

PARTICIPANT AT:

## THE HUMAN MICROBIOME. PRESENT STATUS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

**July, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, Barcelona**

**Mary Ellen Sanders**, Consultant, Dairy & Food Culture Technologies and Executive Science Officer, International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics, Centennial Colorado, USA

Mary Ellen Sanders, PhD is a consultant in the area of probiotic microbiology. She works internationally with food and supplement companies to develop new probiotic products and offers perspective on paths to scientific substantiation of probiotic product label claims. Through numerous written, oral and video pieces, including a website, [www.usprobiotics.org](http://www.usprobiotics.org), she strives to provide objective, evidence-based information on probiotics for consumers and professionals. She has published on efficacy substantiation, microbiology and regulatory issues pertaining to probiotics, coordinated or collaborated on clinical studies to validate probiotic safety and efficacy, served on GRAS determination panels, participated in the working group convened by the FAO/WHO that developed guidelines for probiotics, and served on the World Gastroenterology Organisation Guidelines Committee preparing guidelines for the use of probiotics and prebiotics for gastroenterologists. Dr. Sanders serves as Executive Science Officer for the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics ([www.isapp.net](http://www.isapp.net)). She lives in Centennial Colorado USA.

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ABSTRACT

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### **Beyond strain-specificity for probiotics**

Over the past decades, a rigorous scientific approach to probiotics considered all effects to be strain-specific. However, this tenet has been questioned due to the considerable number of human studies that demonstrate that many strains have similar health effects. It was suggested recently that it is plausible for effects to be ascribed to broader taxonomic or functional units of microbes when adequate evidence for shared functionality exists. Numerous factors (both of probiotics and of the host) have been shown to impact probiotic functionality, of which strain is only one. A key question is what amount of the variance observed in functionality among different probiotics can be accounted for by strain differences, and what amount is due to other factors? This discussion has important implications for application of the systematic review and meta-analysis process to probiotics. Most such studies group many different strains of probiotics together, as one intervention. Such an approach is logical if there is an underlying commonality among different strains that leads to a scientific rationale that a class of individual strains could be expected to function similarly. This evolving framework of thinking about probiotics also has implications in evaluating strength of evidence for probiotic effects.

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