Welcome Letter for “Probiotics and Antimicrobial Proteins”

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Although microbes came into existence on earth over 3 billion years ago, it was not until the late 1800s that scientists started delineating their numerous functions in disease, decomposition, oxygen production, and food spoilage. Just over 100 years later, we recognize that life as we know it would not be possible without microbes. We are beginning to appreciate the diversity and sophistication of the microbial communities harbored by us and our environments. This is truly a new age for microbial discovery.

One emerging area of microbiology focuses on the role of microbes in health and prevention and treatment of disease. “Probiotics” are live microbes which when administered in adequate amounts confer a health benefit on the host. The new journal “Probiotics and Antimicrobial Proteins” will provide an important venue for communication of original research and opinion on the fundamental nature and extent of probiotic action. Such reporting of scientific discoveries is essential to fill in the gaps in understanding the mechanisms of probiotic function, how best to recommend their use, and their potential in human and animal well-being.

Author Biography

Mary Ellen Sanders is a consultant in the area of probiotic microbiology. She received her MS and Ph.D. degrees in Food Science at North Carolina State University in Raleigh specializing in genetics of lactic acid bacteria. She currently helps food and supplement companies, as well as trade organizations and scientific societies, understand probiotic use, develop substantiation for probiotic efficacy and communicate the scientific status of probiotics. She was the founding president, and is the current executive director, of the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (www.isapp.net). Along with the California Dairy Research Foundation, she has developed a science-based information website on probiotics, www.usprobiotics.org.

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