



PROEUHEALTH

Newsletter No.2

March 2002

Food, GI-tract Functionality and Human Health Cluster

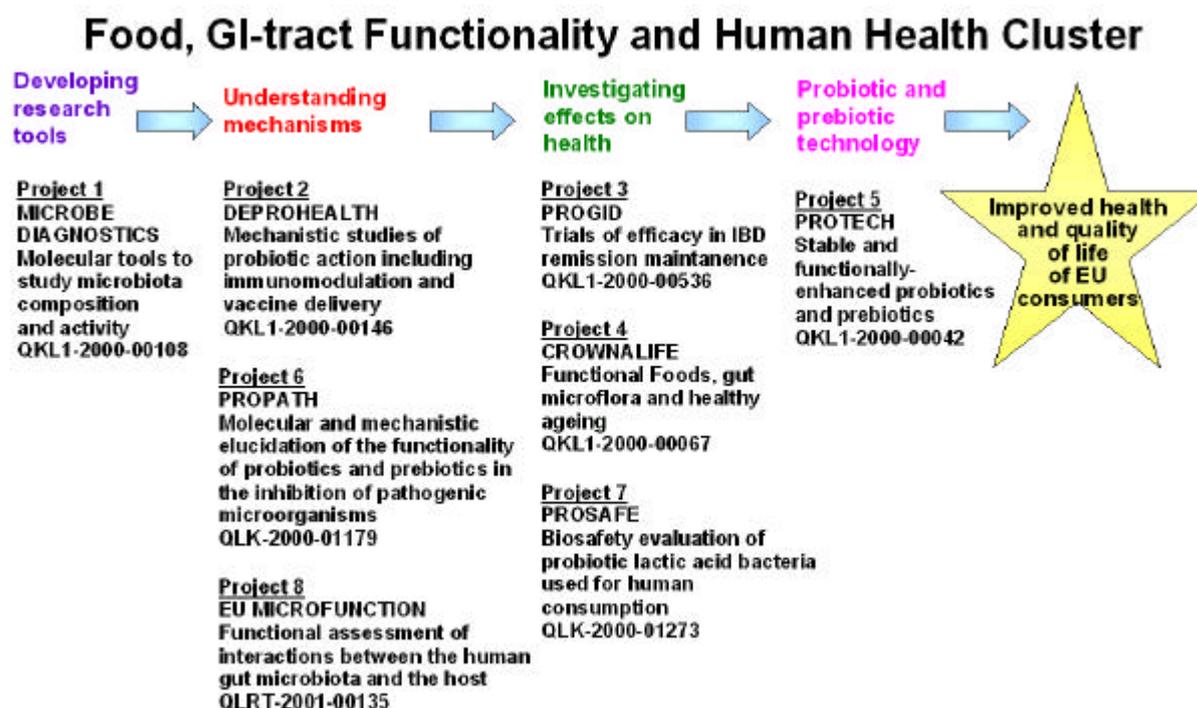


The Cluster gets bigger and better

The PROEUHEALTH cluster has grown substantially in February with the welcome addition of three new European Commission 5th Framework Programme projects. The cluster now includes projects examining the effects of probiotics on intestinal pathogens (PROPATH), interactions between probiotics, prebiotics and the host (EU and MICROFUNCTION), and a project exploring safety considerations for new probiotics (PROSAFE). The PROEUHEALTH cluster is now the largest in Europe, providing the framework for an unprecedented scope of co-operation between research groups in all aspects of

probiotic discovery and development (Figure 1). It boasts 64 research partners from 16 different European countries and even includes a partner in Australia. The cluster projects combined budget is 17 million euros, representing a significant proportion of European Union functional food research.

The 1st PROEUHEALTH Workshop in Saariselkä, Finland (1-3 Feb, 2002) provided the perfect kick-off for these new projects. All eight projects were well represented at the meeting, providing a perfect opportunity for interaction between the groups.



New Cluster Projects

PROPATH

This project will focus on the identification of responsible compounds and the mechanism of inhibition of Gram-negative pathogens by probiotic lactobacilli and bifidobacteria.



Co-ordinator: Prof. Luc de Vuyst, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels, Belgium

Partners: Dr Alain Servin, Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale, France, Prof. Dr Ingolf F. Nes, Agricultural University of Norway, Norway, Prof. Dr George Kalantzopoulos, Agricultural University of Athens, Greece, Dr Andreas Mentis, Hellenic Pasteur Institute, Greece, Dr Lorand Savu, Dexter Com Srl, Romania, Dr Thierry Dauvrin & Dr Christian Renard, Beldem S.A., Belgium.

PROSAFE

The objective of this project is to assess the biosafety of probiotic bacteria. The partners will cover taxonomic descriptions, surveys of antibiotic resistance, immunological effects and genetic stability and safety in the human gut. The project aims to provide recommendations for biosafety testing of new probiotics.



Co-ordinator: Prof. Herman Goossens, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Partners: Dr. Jean Swings, Universiteit Gent, Belgium, Dr. Wolfgang Witte, Robert Koch Institut, Germany, Dr. Marie-Bénédicte Romond, Université de Lille, France, Dr. Philippe Moreillon, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, Dr. Anne Mensink, Numico Research B.V., The Netherlands, Prof. Dr Emmanuel Wiertz, Universiteit Leiden, The Netherlands.

EU AND MICROFUNCTION

EU and Microfunction will examine the effects of probiotics, prebiotics and synbiotics on the human gut microflora and gastrointestinal function. Host/microbe interactions will be investigated through novel model systems and newly developed molecular techniques.



Co-ordinator: Prof. Glenn Gibson, University of Reading, United Kingdom.

Partners: Dr Arthur C. Ouwehand & Prof. Seppo Salminen, University of Turku, Finland, Prof. Dr Willem M de Vos, Wageningen University, The Netherlands, Prof. Dr Göran Molin, Lund University, Sweden, Prof. Dr Marika Mikelsaar, University of Tartu, Estonia, Dr Jan van Loo, Orafti, Belgium, Dr Marie-Louise Johansson Hagslatt, Probi AB, Sweden, Dr Patricia Conway, University of New South Wales, Australia.

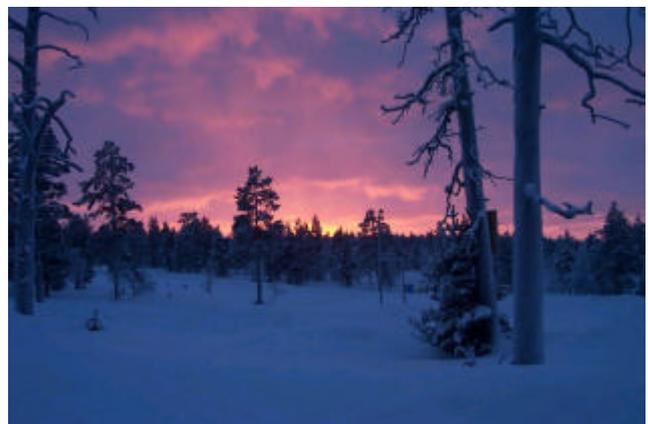
PROEUHEALTH meet in the frozen north

1st PROEUHEALTH Workshop, Saariselkä, Finland (1 - 3 Feb, 2002)

Prior to the Saariselkä meeting, many of us questioned the wisdom of locating a congress in frozen far north of Lapland in the depths of winter. However, the venue for the 1st PROEUHEALTH Workshop proved to be an inspired choice with a magical environment ensuring an unforgettable, friendly and productive meeting for the 170 delegates who attended. So the Cluster Co-ordinator again showed gifted insight, and our collective thanks is extended to Tiina and the team organising the meeting.

Following closed project meetings for the cluster projects, the scientific programme of the congress provided attendees with an overview of the scope of the cluster's

research programmes and latest results. A technical workshop was also held to discuss the latest molecular technologies available for GI-tract microbial community analysis and for monitoring microbial activity *in situ*. Look forward to another exciting venue and scientific programme in the 2nd PROEUHEALTH Workshop to be held in Taormina, Sicily, 2-5 March 2003.



CROWNALIFE win the Nordic Challenge

The social programme at the Saariselkä congress proved particularly entertaining with delegates witnessing cluster co-ordinators enduring ancient Lappish initiation ceremonies; having the privilege of freezing to death whilst sledding through the white countryside staring at the back end of seven huskies; or opting for the motorised and less organically fragrant version of cross snow travel.



However, the highlight for most was the Inter-project Nordic Challenge. This constituted a series of events testing the survival skills and teamwork of project members in sled driving, fire lighting, and cross-country skiing, all carefully monitored by a rigorous drug testing regime. After a vigorous competition CROWNALIFE emerged as the champion team. But really, comedy was the winner. Just remember skiers deft display of balance, poise and balletic grace on skis, or the sight of 100 snow-bound delegates in matching, red, figure-ballooning Santa suits; enough to keep us all smiling until next year.



Photos from Saariselkä available on the web

Photos from the Saariselkä meeting can be downloaded from the PROEUHEALTH website <http://proeuhealth.vtt.fi>



While you are there visit the Science Platform pages for descriptions of all the projects, contact details of all the partners, and use the on-line forum to discuss issues in your research with other members of the cluster.

News from the Consumer Platform

Leaflets designed to convey to consumers the benefits stemming from the PROEUHEALTH cluster now available in 10 European languages. The leaflets explain the research projects in the cluster in a style suitable for consumers unfamiliar with the scientific jargon used by probiotic researchers. They are particularly suitable to partners who regularly interact with the general public, and who want information in addition to the brochure that can be disseminated to their target audience. You can view the consumer leaflets in the Consumer Platform pages of the PROEUHEALTH website <http://proeuhealth.vtt.fi>. To obtain copies of the consumer leaflets, printed on glossy paper, contact the Consumer Platform:

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News from the Industry Platform

The PROEUHEALTH Industry Platform continues to grow with more than 50 European companies now registered members. These companies benefit from access to descriptions of the work programmes of the cluster projects and regular updates of publicly released results from the cluster in a summarised format tailored to industry needs. They also have access to cluster events including the workshops. The industry platform facilitates communication between companies and the top researchers in the field, allowing industry to have a say in the direction of research they would like to see and potentially support. Companies wanting more information about the PROEUHEALTH Industry Platform can contact the Industry Platform:

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News from the Science Platform

The Science Platform of the PROEUHEALTH Cluster provides a forum for interaction between the scientists in different projects within the cluster. The power of the cluster is that it provides ready access to a wealth of knowledge, experience and ideas through the skills of the partners.

Don't be shy to tap into this pool of expertise to help not only in day-to-day lab work, but also to share ideas for future directions and form partnerships. Remember that your 6th Framework projects should be in the planning stages now.

In Saariselkä a technical workshop was held in molecular methods for GI-tract microbial community analysis. The topics for workshops in the next PROEUHEALTH meeting in Taormina have been set.

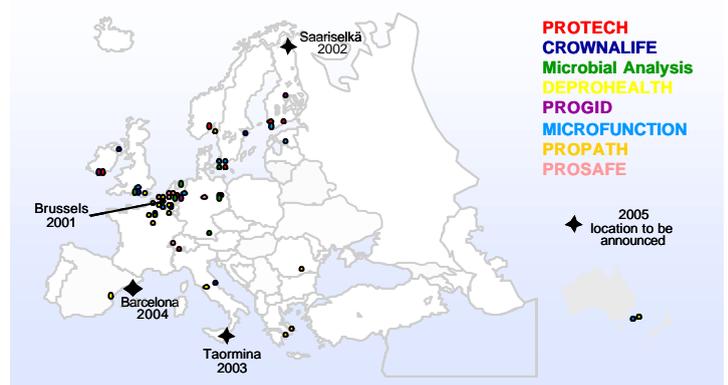
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Brochures available

New brochures with the updated cluster structure are now available from the Cluster Co-ordinator. These glossy brochures are a great way of disseminating to your visitors the size and scope of the European collaborative effort in probiotic and intestinal health research that your research forms an integral part. Ask the Cluster Co-ordinator to send you copies!

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Places Involved



PROEUHEALTH



Cluster Coordinators