

**Innovative pulse and cereal-based food fermentations for human health and sustainable diets**

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# Opening Remarks & Project Introduction

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Project Coordinator



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

# WELCOME TO LEUVEN



Plant-Based Fermented Foods  
for Healthier and More Sustainable Diets

## **HEALTHFERM FINAL CONFERENCE**

25-26 August 2026 – Leuven, Belgium

# WHO'S HERE?

## A truly global community

**251**

ACCEPTED REGISTRATIONS

**40**

COUNTRIES

**6**

CONTINENTS

Academia



57%

Industry



35%

Policy & Stakeholder Organisations



9%

# WHY ARE WE HERE?

To explore what **fermentation** can bring to **healthier** and **more sustainable food systems**

## SHARE

the latest science of HealthFerm and other projects working on fermentation

## CONNECT

researchers, industry, policy and the wider fermentation community

## LOOK AHEAD

at the questions, opportunities and challenges still ahead

# WHY NOW?

The **food context** has changed.

## FOOD SYSTEM

Animal-dominated  
protein supply



Protein diversification\*

## FOOD PROCESSING

Preservation & shelf life



More targeted food transformation

## HEALTH

Nutrients &  
pathogen control



Microbiome, food matrix &  
metabolites

## CONSUMER & MARKET

Niche & traditional foods



Mainstream interest in fermented  
foods & gut health

## SCIENCE & ANALYTICS

Describing processes



Understanding & designing  
processes

\* EU Action Plan for resilience, strategic autonomy and sustainability of the EU protein system (7/7/2026)

# WHY PLANT-BASED DIETS?

## The EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy, sustainable, and just food systems

Lancet 2025; 406: 1625–700

Published Online

October 2, 2025

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(25\)01201-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(25)01201-2)

|                                  | Per capita recommended intake (g/day [range]) | Per capita recommended intake (kcal/day) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Plant foods*                     |                                               |                                          |
| Whole grains†                    | 210 (20–50% of daily energy intake)           | 735                                      |
| Tubers and starchy roots‡        | 50 (0–100)                                    | 50                                       |
| Vegetables§                      | 300 (200–600)                                 | 95                                       |
| Fruits¶                          | 200 (100–300)                                 | 145                                      |
| Tree nuts and peanuts            | 50 (0–75)                                     | 275                                      |
| Legumes                          | 75 (0–150)                                    | 275                                      |
| Animal-sourced foods**           |                                               |                                          |
| Milk or equivalents (eg, cheese) | 250 (0–500)                                   | 145                                      |
| Chicken and other poultry        | 30 (0–60)                                     | 60                                       |
| Fish and shellfish††             | 30 (0–100)                                    | 25                                       |
| Eggs                             | 15 (0–25)                                     | 20                                       |
| Beef, pork, or lamb              | 15 (0–30)                                     | 45                                       |
| Fats, sugar, and salt            |                                               |                                          |
| Unsaturated plant oils‡‡         | 40 (20–80)                                    | 355                                      |
| Palm and coconut oil             | 6 (0–8)                                       | 55                                       |
| Lard, tallow, and butter§§       | 5 (0–10)                                      | ..                                       |
| Sugar (added or free)            | 30 (0–30)                                     | 115                                      |
| Sodium                           | <2                                            | ..                                       |

**Table 1:** Dietary targets for a healthy reference diet for adults, with possible ranges, for a level energy intake of approximately 2400 kcal/day

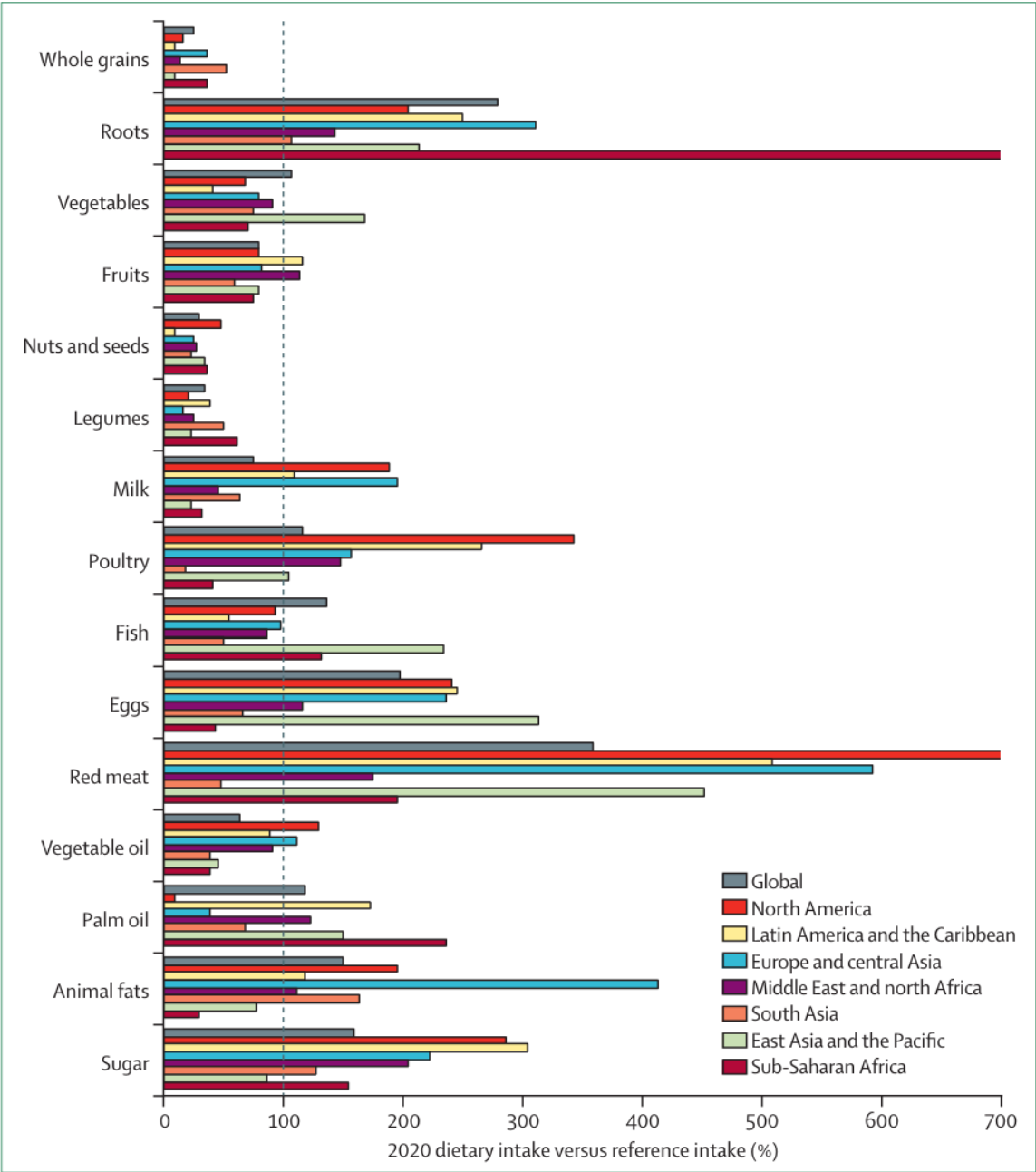


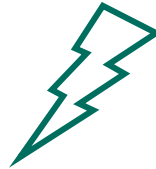
**Figure 2: Differences between adult diets in 2020 and the planetary health diet globally and by region**  
The dashed line represents the reference values of the flexitarian version of the PHD from table 1 (see appendix 1 pp 24–25 for source).<sup>195</sup>

# WHY GRAINS?



## A GLOBAL STAPLE

- Staple foods for billions of people worldwide
- Major source of dietary energy
- Affordable, accessible and widely available
- Versatile & familiar



## MORE THAN CARBOHYDRATES

- Important source of **dietary fibre**
- Micronutrients & bioactive compounds
- Significant contributor to **protein** intake



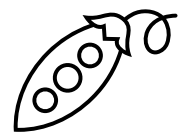
## POTENTIAL FOR HIGH-QUALITY PROTEIN

### Cereals



Rich in  
methionine  
Low in lysine

+



### Pulses

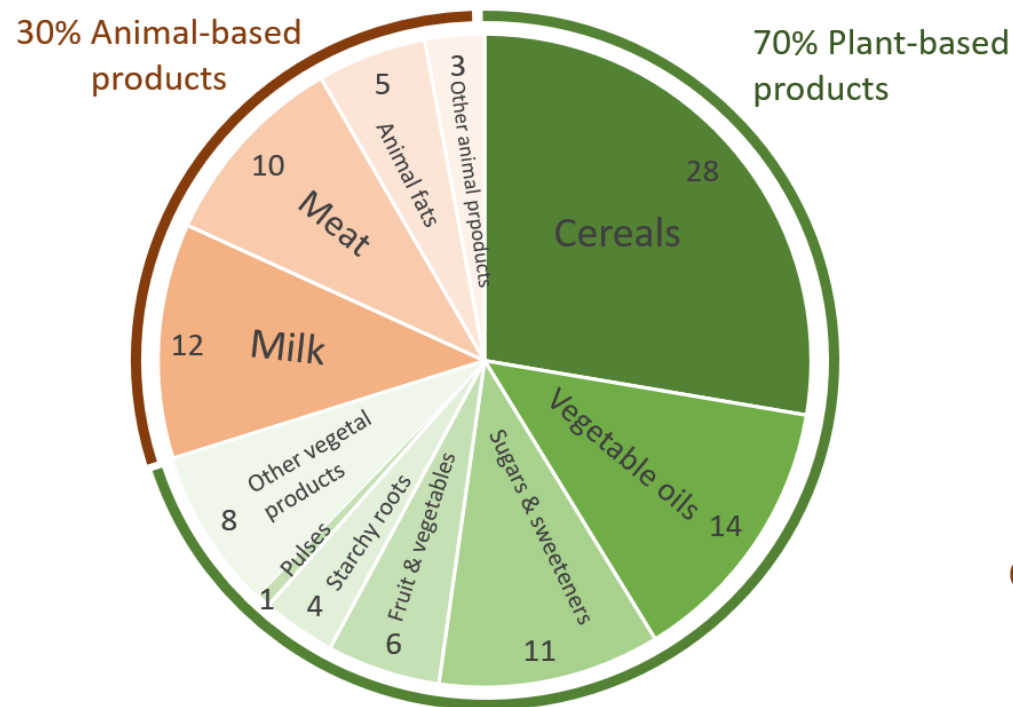
Rich in lysine  
Lower in  
methionine

Complementary  
**amino acid profiles**

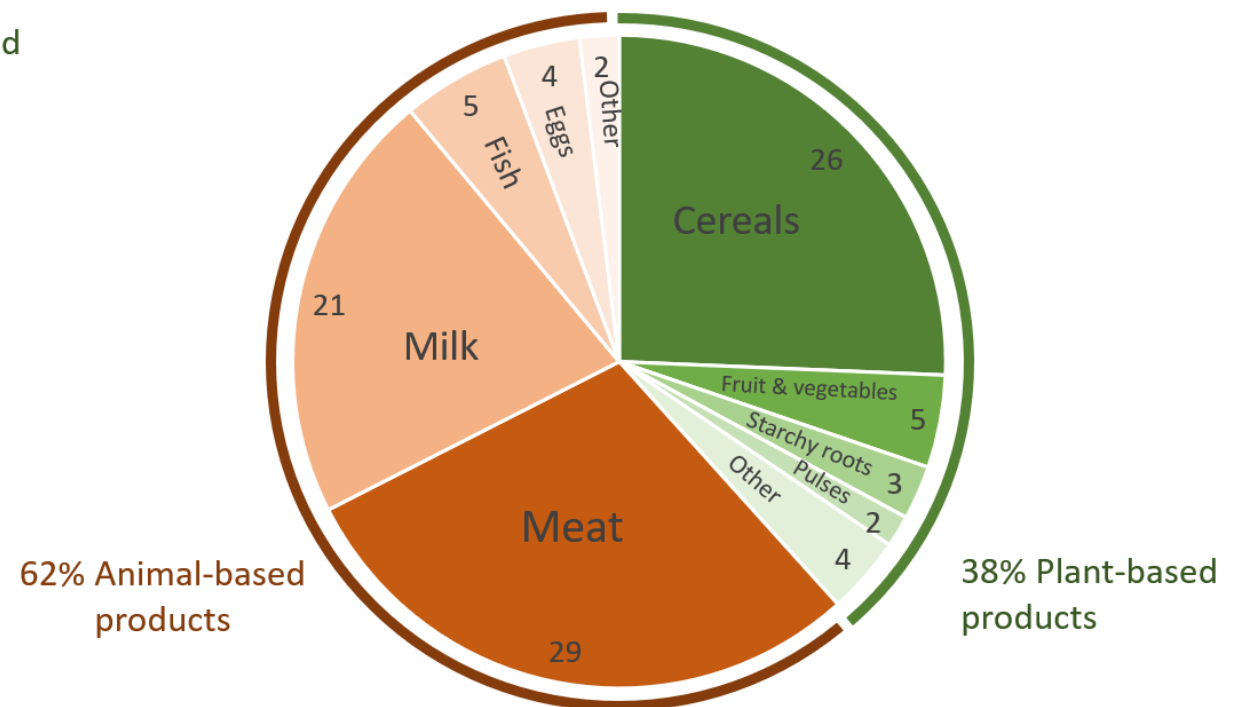
# GRAINS ALREADY MATTER

- Cereals provide more than a quarter of dietary energy and protein supply in the EU.
- Global cereal production is approx. 1 kg/person/day.
- Pulses currently contribute much less but offer potential to diversify plant protein sources.

Contribution of different food sources to  
**dietary energy supply** in the EU, 2023



Contribution of different food sources to  
**protein supply** in the EU, 2023



# CHALLENGES OF GRAIN-BASED FOODS

## Nutritional quality

- Protein digestibility
- Mineral bioavailability
- Antinutritional factors

## Sensory quality

- Off-flavours
- Aroma
- Texture

## Technofunctionality

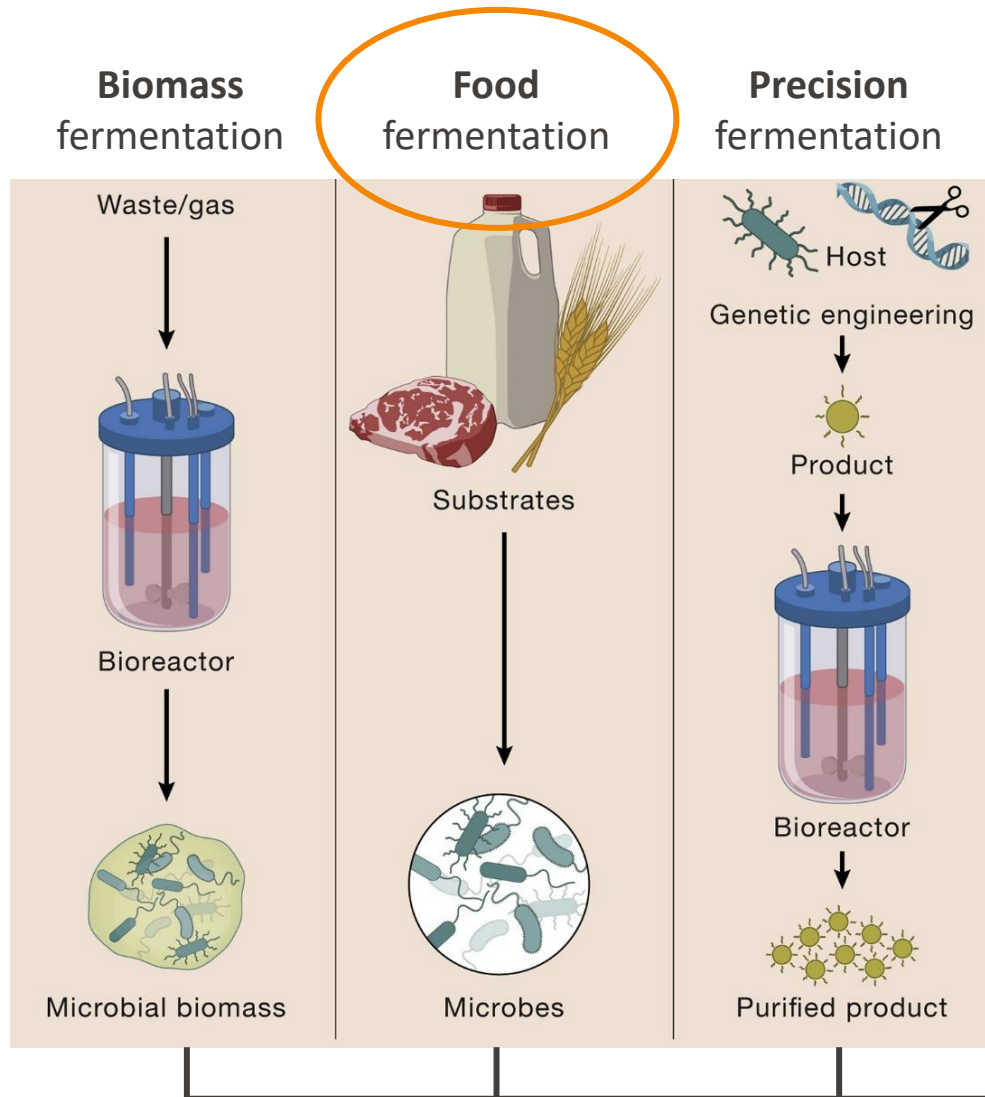
- Protein solubility
- Food structure

## Dietary fibre

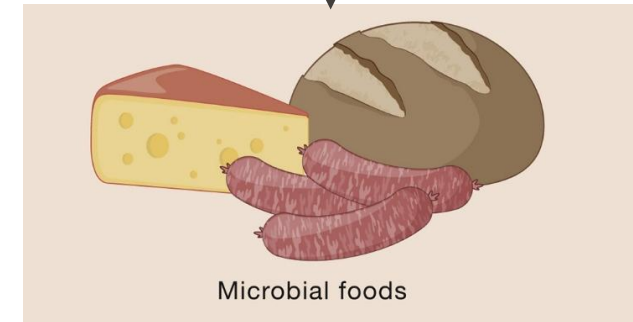
- Recalcitrant structures
- Limited gut fermentability

**Fermentation:**  
A tool to address  
several of these  
challenges?

# WHAT IS FOOD FERMENTATION?



Jahn et al. Cell 186 (3) (2023)



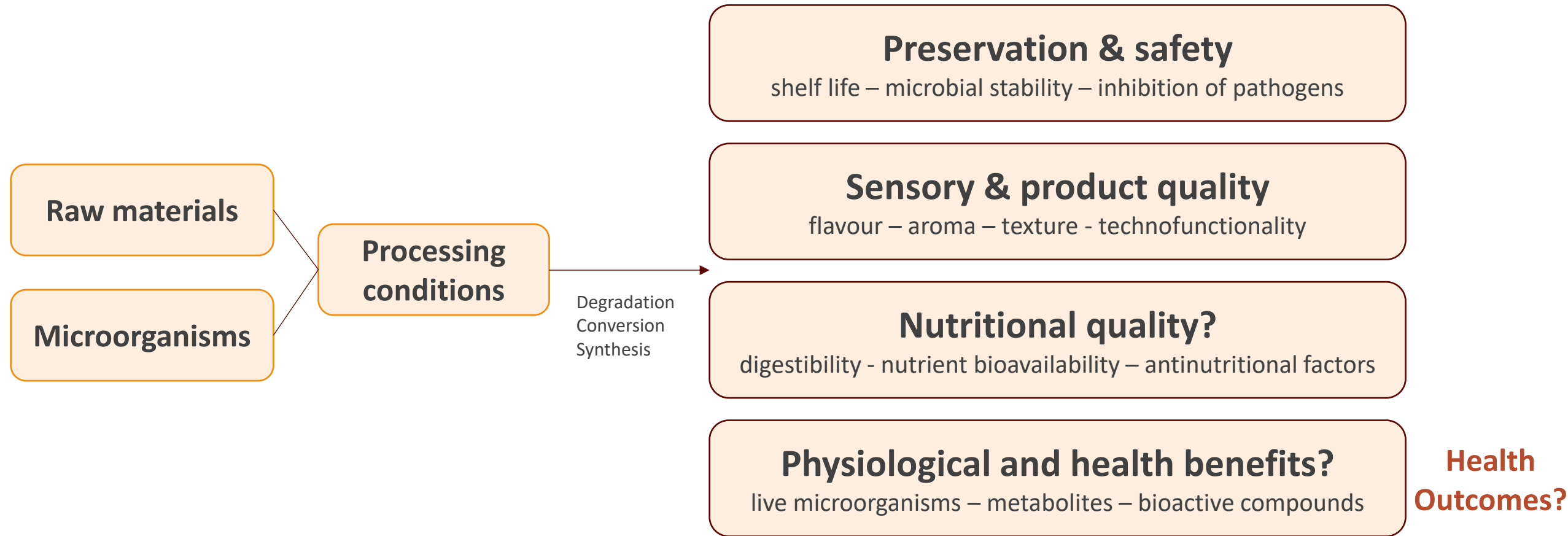
Fermented foods and beverages are “**foods made through desired microbial growth and enzymatic conversions of food components**”.

ISAPP (2020)

Marco et al. Nat Rev Gastroenterol Hepatol 18, 196–208 (2021)

# WHY FERMENTATION?

- One process, many possibilities

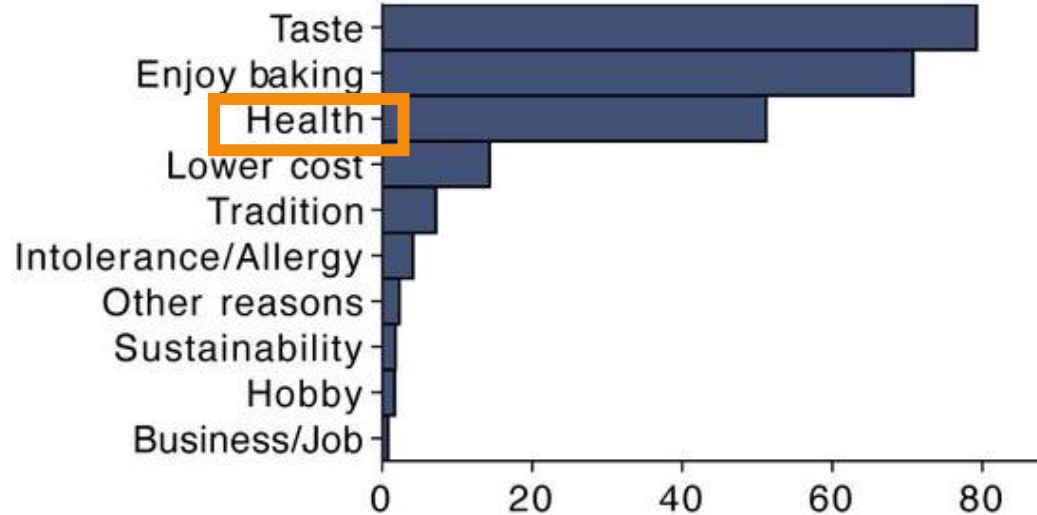


Microbial metabolism can reshape multiple dimensions of a food at the same time.

# FROM FERMENTATION TO HEALTH?

- If you read the media and hear people's sentiments: YES!

HealthFerm questionnaire (1091 respondents):  
“Why do you bake sourdough bread?”



A majority (84%) perceived sourdough as healthier than yeast-leavened bread



- Fermentation has the potential to:
  - Improve bioavailability of minerals
  - Increase protein digestibility
  - Reduce antinutritional factors such as phytate, FODMAPs and (con)vicine
  - Enrich foods with health-promoting compounds such as folates, vitamin B12 and EPS, but also bioactive peptides and short-chain fatty acids (SCFA)
  - Make foods a source of (harmless or possibly beneficial) live microorganisms
  - ...

These effects are **product- and process-specific** and do not apply to all fermented foods  
Potential does not necessarily translate into **measurable benefits in humans**



A better understanding of the **health benefits** of fermented foods is needed

## Harvesting information from existing data

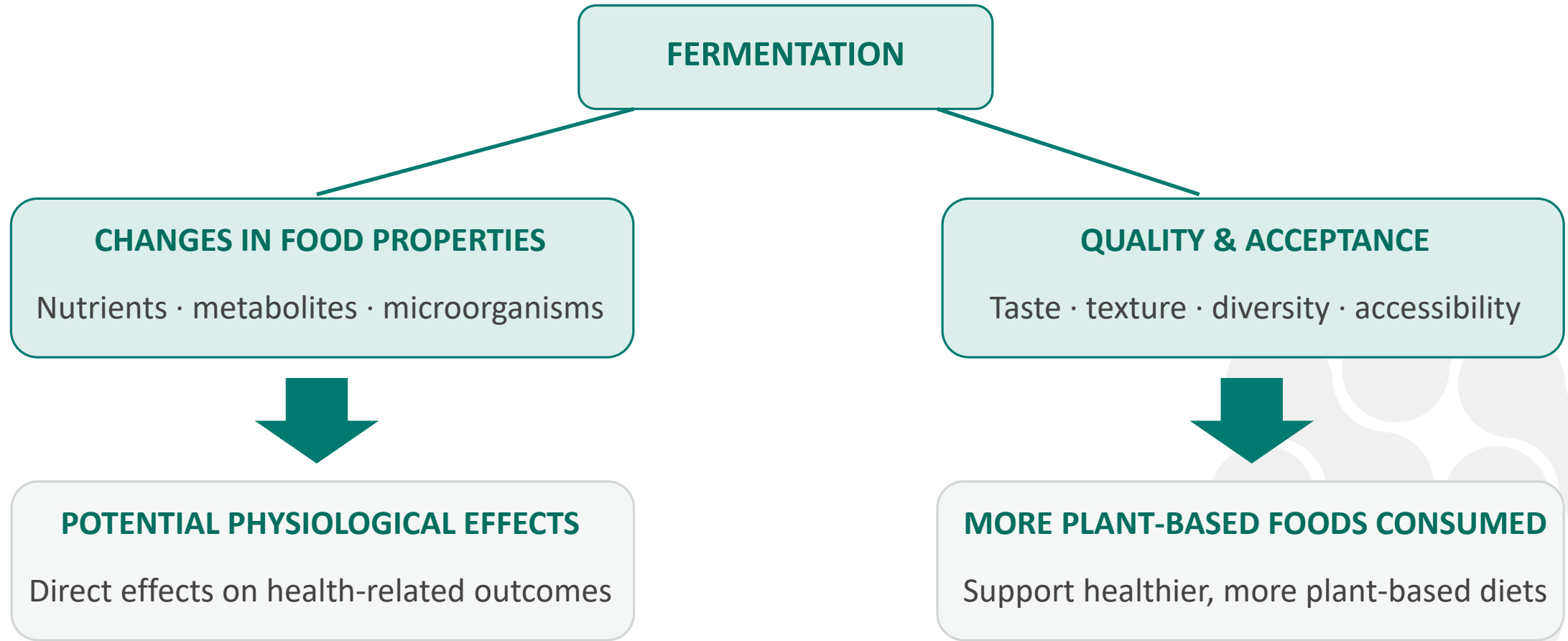
eg. Higher estimated **intake of live microbes** was associated with favourable cardiometabolic health indicators in NHANES  
Promising associations, but **no proof of causality**

## New well-designed Randomised Controlled Trials

with thoroughly characterised products

# A BROADER VIEW ON HEALTH

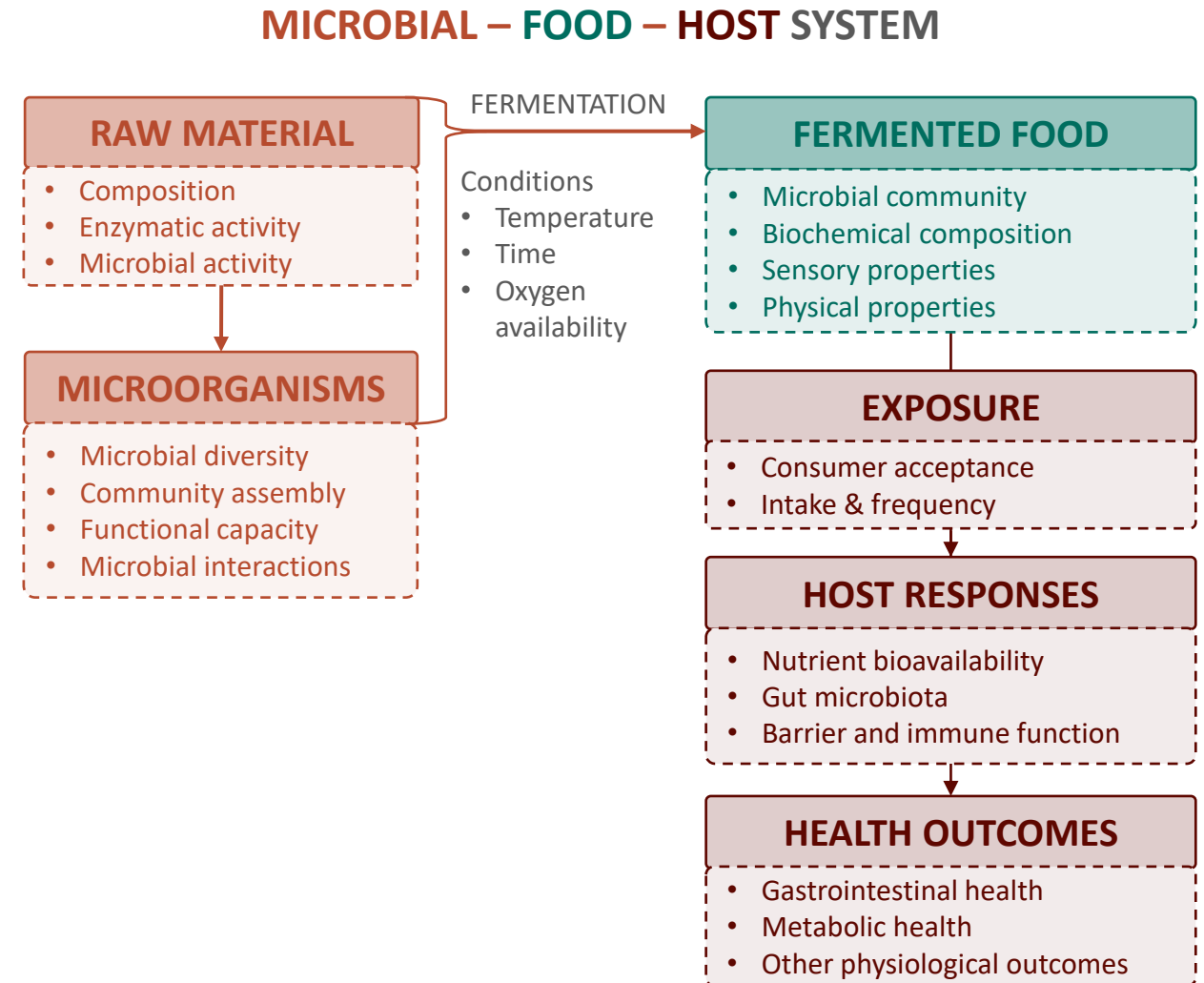
The public-health value of fermentation may follow more than one route.



**Both routes may contribute to public health.**

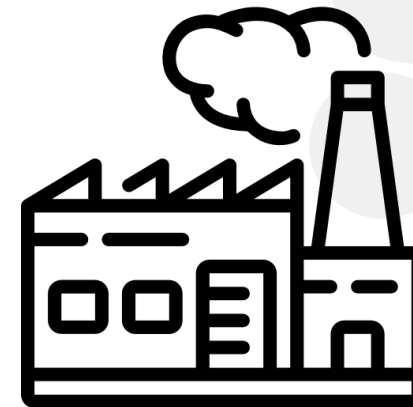
# A BROADER VIEW ON HEALTH

- To understand health effects, we need to connect what happens during fermentation with what is present in the food and **what reaches and affects** the host.



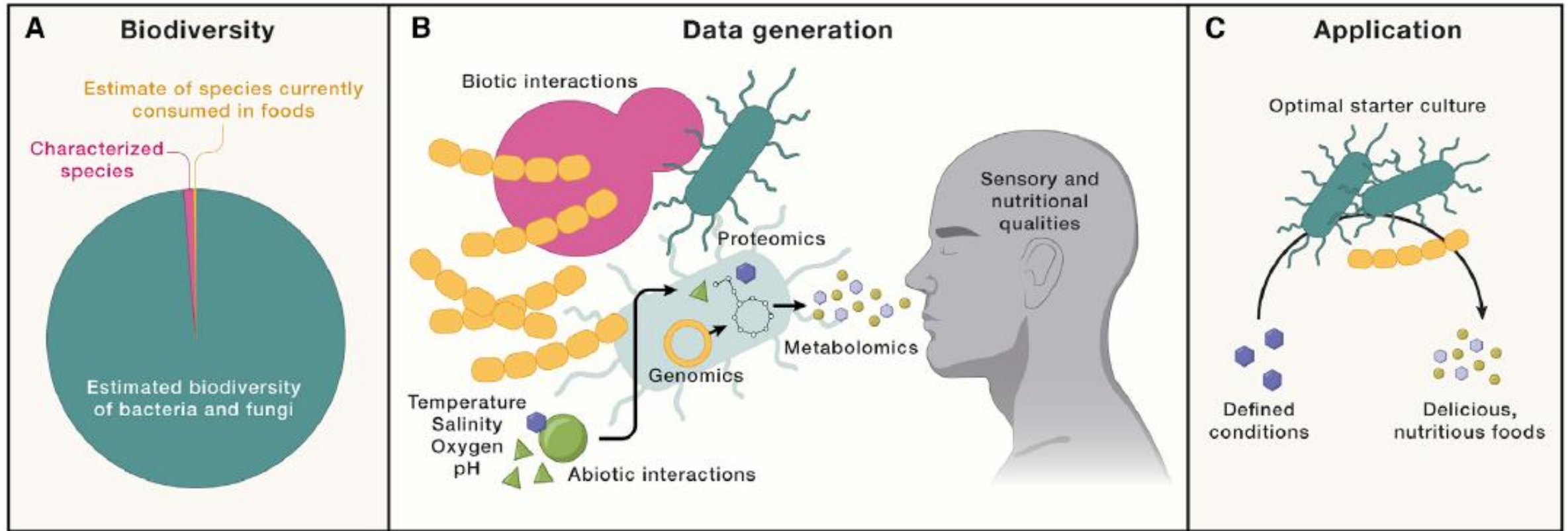
We need a better understanding of the impact of **fermentation**, as part of **food production**, on the composition and structure of the **food matrix** and the **(bio)chemical conversions** that occur during fermentation

- Not only microbiology, but **food (bio)chemistry**, **food technology**...
- Find **(new) microorganisms** that can work the matrix for optimal health benefits – LAB, yeasts, moulds

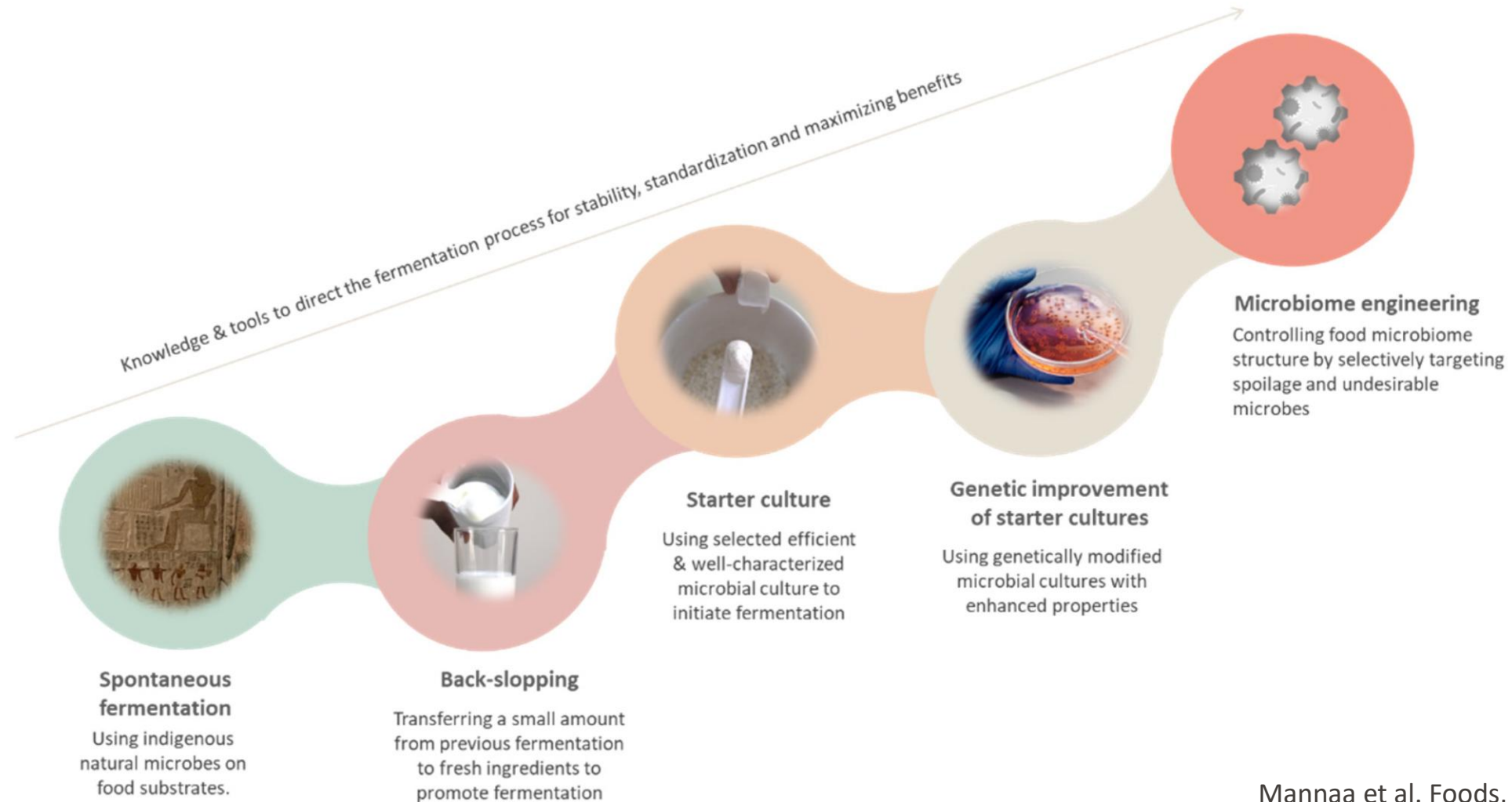


# NEEDS IN THE FIELD OF GRAIN-BASED FERMENTATIONS

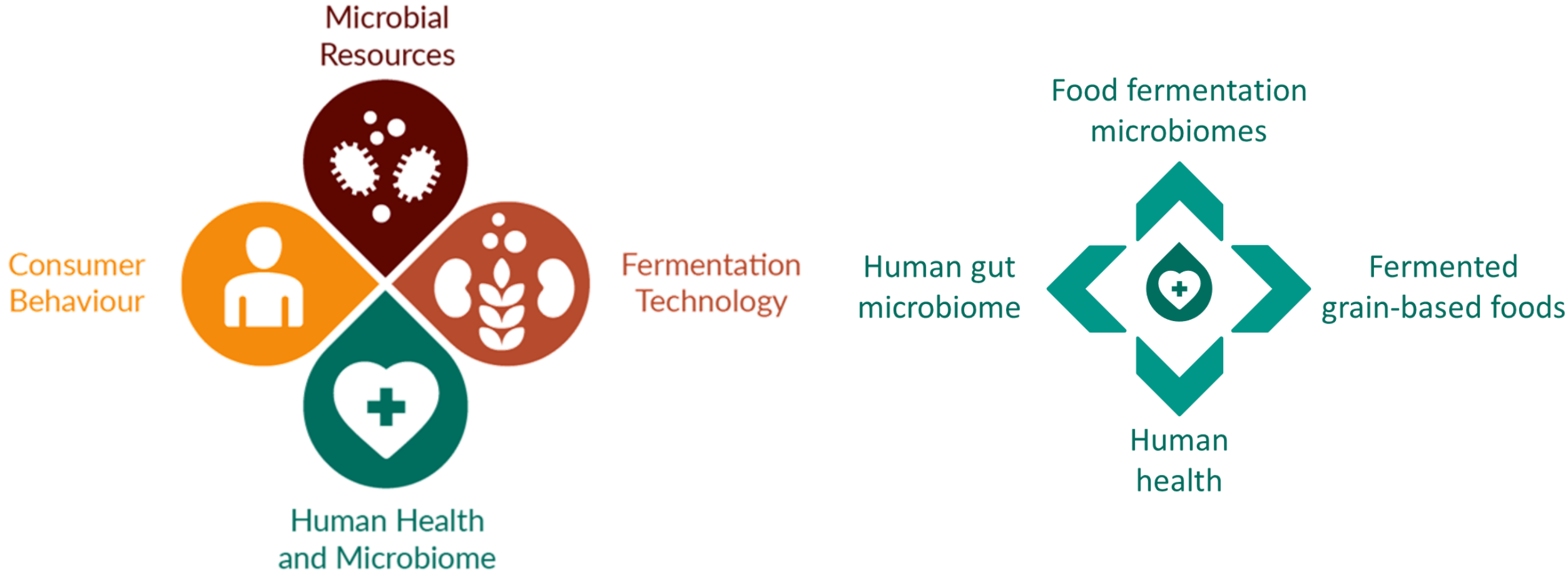
**Microbial biodiversity** should be exploited for food fermentation



## Engineering microbial communities for food production



# THE HEALTHFERM OBJECTIVE



**HealthFerm** aims to enable an **evidence-based** transition in society and industry from traditional to **sustainable plant-based fermented** foods and diets that deliver **health benefits** to consumers **by design**

# THE HEALTHFERM CONSORTIUM



**23 PARTNERS**  
11 countries

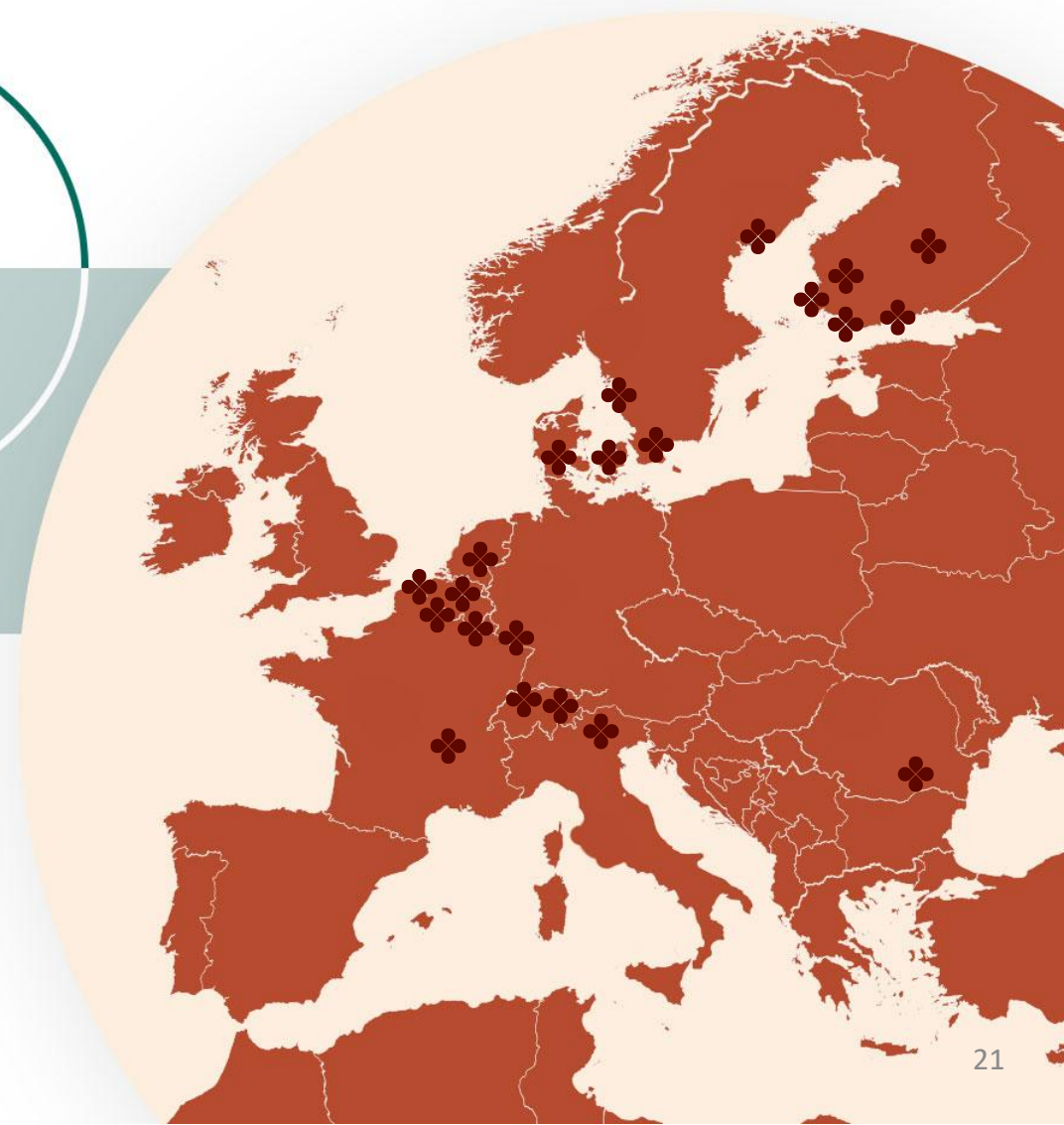


**13.1 MIO €**  
**BUDGET**



**4.5 YEARS**  
**2022-2027**

**Coordinator:** **KU LEUVEN**



# THE HEALTHFERM CONSORTIUM

Coordinator:

**KU LEUVEN**



UNIVERSITY OF  
COPENHAGEN



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



novonesis



unibz Freie Universität Bozen  
Libera Università di Bolzano  
Università Liedia de Bulsan



planted.



ETH zürich



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

2022



2023



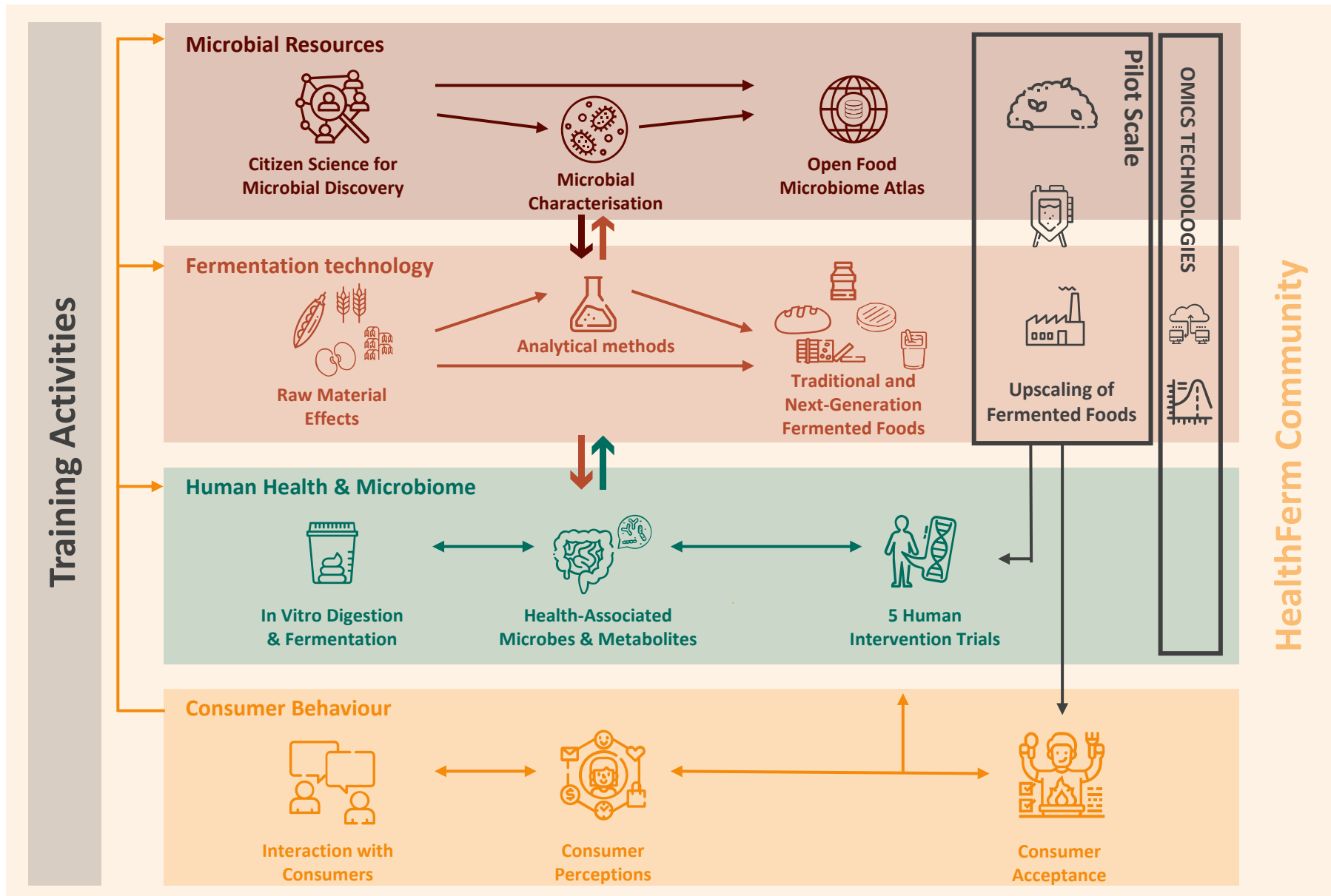
2024



2025



# WHAT HAVE WE DONE?



# CHOICES WE MADE

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- **Citizen science project** for microbial discovery
- **Plant-based raw materials:** cereals & pulses
- **Traditional and next-generation fermented foods**
- **Human intervention studies** to investigate the health impact and related mechanisms of fermented food consumption
- Omics technologies for **food and human microbiomes**
- **Integration of social sciences** in all aspects of the project
- **Interdisciplinarity but also stand-alone** research questions
- **Education and ecosystem** building



# LET'S GET STARTED

Two days to share, connect and look ahead

*Across disciplines, sectors and perspectives*



HealthFerm

Plant-Based Fermented Foods  
for Healthier and More Sustainable Diets

**HEALTHFERM FINAL CONFERENCE**

25-26 August 2026 – Leuven, Belgium Free to attend

## 25 AUGUST 2026 DAY 1: MICROBIOME & HEALTH

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>09:25–10:30</b>   | <b>Session 1: Microbial Diversity &amp; Functional Design for Next-Generation Fermentations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 09:25–09:50          | • Food Fermentation Microbiomes: A Blueprint for Designing Foods of the Future - Dr Nicholas Bokulich, Professor, ETH Zurich                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 09:50–10:10          | • From Microbial Diversity to Function: Starter Cultures for Plant-Based Fermentations - Dr Rossana Coda, Researcher, University of Helsinki                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10:10–10:30          | • How Genomics can Support Improved Starter Culture Selection - Dr Stefan Weckx, Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>10:30 - 11:10</b> | <b>Coffee Break &amp; Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>11:10–12:00</b>   | <b>Session 1: Microbial Diversity &amp; Functional Design for Next-Generation Fermentations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 11:10–11:30          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches</li> <li>• From SNVs to Function: Integrating Genomic Variation and Regulation for the Selection of Optimal Starter Cultures in Food Fermentations<br/>Gabriela Samaniego Vinachi, Doctoral Researcher, Vrije Universiteit Brussel</li> <li>• The Chemical Diversity of Cereal-Based Fermented Foods through Untargeted LC-MS Metabolomics - Jan Patrick Tan, Doctoral Researcher, ETH Zurich</li> <li>• Substrate-Driven Phenotype Switching of <i>Leuconostoc Mesenteroides</i> GSL1 from Optimum to Pulse-Based Food-Like Conditions<br/>Chiara Viretto, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Bolzano</li> </ul> |
| 11:30–12:00          | • Should we be Eating More Microbes? - Dr Maria Marco, Professor, UC Davis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>12:00–13:30</b>   | <b>Lunch and Networking Break, Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Session 1 is chaired by **Prof. Nicholas Bokulich**, ETH Zurich, leading the microbial resources work in HealthFerm

## 25 AUGUST 2026 DAY 1: MICROBIOME & HEALTH

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:00–13:30 | <b>Lunch and Networking Break, Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 13:30–15:15 | <b>Session 2: Fermented Foods, Gut Microbiota &amp; Human Health</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 13:30–13:55 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Benefits of Fermentation-Driven Changes in Plant Fiber Structure - Dr Kristin Verbeke, Professor, KU Leuven</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 13:55–14:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Human Gut Microbiome: Variation, Diagnostics and Modulation - Dr Jeroen Raes, Professor, VIB (Flemish Institute for Biotechnology)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 14:15–14:35 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learnings on the Health Impact of Plant Based Fermented Foods in Humans – Can Protein-Fibre Interaction in Plant Foods Contribute to the Health Impact? - Dr Marjukka Kolehmainen, Professor, University of Eastern Finland</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 14:35–14:55 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fermented Plant-Based Foods and Cardiometabolic Health: Does Fermentation Matter? - Dr Rikard Landberg, Professor, Chalmers University of Technology</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 14:55–15:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metabolomics in Fermentation Research - Dr Kati Hanhineva, Professor, University of Turku</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 15:15–15:45 | <b>Coffee Break &amp; Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 15:45–16:00 | <b>Session 2: Fermented Foods, Gut Microbiota &amp; Human Health</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 15:45–16:00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches</li> <li>• Short-Chain Fatty Acids: the Site of Administration Matters - Riet Rosseel, Doctoral Researcher, KU Leuven</li> <li>• Gut-related Health Effects of Oat-based Yogurt Alternative in Individuals with Increased Cardiometabolic Risk - Vilma Liikonen, Doctoral Researcher, University of Eastern Finland</li> <li>• Investigating the Effects of Plant-Based Fermented Foods on the Gut Microbiota by Making Use of an In Vitro Colon Model - Emma Lemmens, Doctoral Researcher, VIB (Flemish Institute for Biotechnology)</li> </ul> |

Session 2 is chaired by **Prof. Kristin Verbeke**, KU Leuven, leading the human health & microbiome work in HealthFerm

## 25 AUGUST 2026 DAY 1: MICROBIOME & HEALTH

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>16:00–17:25</b> | <b>Session 3: Fermentation Research in Europe</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 16:00–16:25        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harnessing Milk- and Water-Kefirs as Representative Fermented Beverage-Associated Communities - Dr Paul Cotter, Head of Food Biosciences, Teagasc</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| 16:25–16:45        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design of Microbial Solutions for Sustainable and Healthy Fermented Food in Europe: Perspectives &amp; Challenges Illustrated by the DOMINO Project<br/>Dr Stéphane Chaillou, Research Director at MICALIS Institute, INRAE</li> </ul> |
| 16:45–17:05        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathways for Post-Project Valorization and Mid-Term Impact in Horizon Europe<br/>Dr Guido Giudetti, Project Officer, EU Research Executive Agency</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| 17:05–17:25        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on Success: The Next Chapter of the HealthFerm Community<br/>Léna Prochnow, Senior Research and Impact Manager, EURICE</li> </ul>                                                                                             |
| <b>17:25–17:30</b> | <b>Closing First Day</b><br>Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, HealthFerm Coordinator, KU Leuven                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>17:30–19:30</b> | <b>Networking Activity - Happy Hour</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Session 3 is chaired by **Léna Prochnow**, EURICE, leading the CDE work in HealthFerm

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>09:05–10:30</b>   | <b>Session 4: Innovative Fermentation Technologies for Plant-Based Foods</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 09:05–09:30          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fermentation Induced Changes in Plant Based Raw Materials–Possibilities and Challenges - Dr Kati Katina, Professor, University of Helsinki</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 09:30–09:50          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlocking the Potential of Pulses Through Tailored Fermentation and Criteria-Driven Starter Selection - Dr Raffaella Di Cagno, Professor, University of Bolzano</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 09:50–10:10          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilising the Potential of Oats Through Fermentation Technology<br/>Dr Arno Wouters, Professor, KU Leuven</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 10:10–10:30          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid Processing Approaches for Meat Biomimetics - Dr Nesli Sözer, Professor, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>10:30–11:00</b>   | <b>Coffee Break &amp; Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>11:00–12:20</b>   | <b>Session 4: Innovative Fermentation Technologies for Plant-Based Foods</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 11:00–11:20          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding from Dairy to Alternatives - An Industrial Research Perspective<br/>Dr Riitta Partanen, Head of Research, Valio</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 11:20–11:40          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tempeh: Solid-State Fermentation for Healthier Foods - Dr Maud Langton, Professor, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 11:40–11:55          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed Fermentation Processes for Healthy and Appealing Oat Products<br/>Silvia Cera, Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki</li> <li>• Innovative Faba Bean Sourdough Fermentation for the Production of Nutritious Whole Wheat Bread - Eline Lambrechts, Doctoral Researcher, KU Leuven</li> <li>• From Soaking to Fermentation: Soluble Fiber and <math>\beta</math>-Glucan Changes in Oat and Faba Bean Foods - Olivia Zehnder-Wyss, Doctoral Researcher, ETH Zurich</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 11:55–12:20          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-Sour Fermentations in Plant-Based Foods - Dr Dennis Sandris Nielsen, Professor, University of Copenhagen</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>12:20 - 13:30</b> | <b>Lunch and Networking Break, Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

Session 4 is chaired by **Prof. Kati Katina**, Univ. of Helsinki, leading the fermentation technology research in HealthFerm

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>12:20 - 13:30</b> | <b>Lunch and Networking Break, Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>13:30–15:15</b>   | <b>Session 5: Consumer Insights, Behaviour &amp; Policy Pathways for Fermented Foods</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>13:30–13:55</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive Lessons from Consumer Studies on Plant-Based Fermented Foods - Dr Armando Perez-Cueto, Professor, Umeå University</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>13:55–14:15</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From Expectations to Experience - How Tasting Fermented Plant-Based Foods Shapes Consumption Intentions - Dr Michael Bom Frøst, Professor, University of Copenhagen</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>14:15–14:35</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding Fermentation Behaviour and Acceptance: Outputs from a Socio-anthropological Approach and its Complementary Nature with Behavioural and Economical Approaches - Dr Maxime Michaud, Researcher, Institute Lyfe/Umeå University</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>14:35–14:50</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Highlight Session with 3 PhD Pitches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beyond the Prototype: How Meal Design Shapes Acceptance of Plant-Based Fermented Foods - Jean-Paul Garin, Doctoral Researcher, Umeå University</li> <li>Fermenting as a Social Practice - Maxence Blanchet, Doctoral Researcher, Lyfe Institut</li> <li>Public Perceptions of Policy Strategies Supporting a Plant-Based Transition in Europe - Arturo Turillazzi, Doctoral Researcher, Umeå University</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>14:50–15:15</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel: Consumer Acceptance of Plant-Based (Fermented) Foods - Moderated by Dr Armando Perez-Cueto, Professor, Umeå University<br/> <b>Panellists:</b> Dr Hans de Steur, Professor, Ghent University; Betty Chang, Research Area Lead, EUFIC &amp; Anda Penka, Founder &amp; CEO, Fermentful</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>15:15–15:35</b>   | <b>Coffee Break &amp; Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

Session 5 is chaired by **Prof. Armando Perez-Cueto**, Umea Univ., leading the consumer research in HealthFerm

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| <b>15:15–15:35</b> | <b>Coffee Break &amp; Poster Session</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>15:35–17:00</b> | <b>Session 6: Research, Industry &amp; Policy Pathways for Fermented Foods</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 15:35–15:50        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shaping the Future of Food Fermentation Research: Challenges, Opportunities and Priorities</b> - Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, HealthFerm Coordinator, KU Leuven</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 15:50–16:10        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Boosters and Hurdles towards Innovation in Fermented Foods</b> - Antonio del Casale, Co-founder &amp; CEO, MICROBION - Microbiology Open Innovation</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 16:10–16:30        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Food2040 and the Future of Microbiome and Fermented Foods Research</b> - Pierre-Mathieu Pelissier, European Commission</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 16:30–17:00        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closing Panel: From Research on Traditional Fermentation to Market-Ready Innovations: Needs &amp; Bottlenecks</b> - Moderated by Dr Adam Adamek, Commercial Innovation Architect in Food Biotech, Impact Brussels<br/> <b>Panellists:</b> Stefan Capelle, Group Fermentation Director, Puratos; Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, HealthFerm Coordinator, KU Leuven; Ruth Roldan Torres, Scientific Officer, EFSA</li> </ul> |
| <b>17:00–17:10</b> | <b>Closing Remarks</b><br>Dr Christophe Courtin, Professor, HealthFerm Coordinator, KU Leuven                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>17:10–18:00</b> | <b>HEALTHGRAIN</b> Forum Early Career Networking Event                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>17:10–18:00</b> | <b>Closing Coffee &amp; Networking</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |