

New review article suggests sheep milk may be the next functional dairy food

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A paper published in *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety* explored the physicochemical and nutritional characteristics of sheep milk and development of sheep milk dairy products containing prebiotics and/or probiotics.

According to the authors, [cow milk](#) is the most commonly consumed [milk](#), dominating the world milk production with 782 million tons in 2013. Eighty-five percent of the world milk production is derived from cattle, followed by milks from other species such as buffalo (11%), goat (2.3%), sheep (1.4%), and camel (0.2%). However, sheep milk-producing farms represent a significant part of the agrarian economies in many countries, especially those bordering the Mediterranean Sea and in the Middle East.

Sheep milk is an excellent source of nutrients and is mainly used for cheese production due to its high total solids content, contributing to a high cheese yield. However, the functional benefits of this food matrix remain unexplored by the [dairy industry](#).

"Sheep milk has many [functional] qualities that need to be explored. It's much more than a simple delicatessen to produce fine cheeses," lead author Celso Fasura Balthazar, MSc. explained.

More studies are needed to investigate the effects of the addition of probiotic microorganisms and, especially, prebiotic components in sheep [dairy products](#), such as cheese, yogurt, ice creams, and other dairy

desserts.

More information: C.F. Balthazar et al. Sheep Milk: Physicochemical Characteristics and Relevance for Functional Food Development, *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/1541-4337.12250](https://doi.org/10.1111/1541-4337.12250)

Provided by Institute of Food Technologists

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