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Nielsen Launches Healthy Eating Index

Published March 1, 2010

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To better predict healthy eating patterns among consumers, The Nielsen Company has created a Healthy Eating Index. Although the company has in the past reported on healthy eating trends, most insights have been focused on individual characteristics or product claims like "organic" or "fat free." The missing piece of the puzzle, according to Nielsen, has been a single measure that includes a combination of several key healthy eating indicators across multiple categories. The Nielsen Healthy Eating Index, the company claims, can track healthy eating choices over time and monitor the impact of industry health and wellness initiatives. The index is calculated by adding supermarket sales for products with health claims on their label, like "natural" or "reduced calorie." Sales are also added from some inherently healthy categories like fresh produce. Importantly, Nielsen makes adjustments to give more weight to key healthy eating indicators with relatively low sales like omega and antioxidant claims. Other health claims with strong sales like "reduced fat" and "natural" are given less weight to avoid having fluctuations in commodity prices adding volatility to the Index.

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Nebraska Cultures Sponsors Clinical Study on DDS-1 Probiotic

Published February 23, 2010

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Nebraska Cultures Inc., Walnut Creek, CA, is sponsoring a study that will evaluate the efficacy of Dr. Shahani's DDS-1 strain of *L. acidophilus* in humans. The study, titled "Survival and persistence of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* DDS-1 and other lactobacilli in human subjects," specifically seeks to determine whether healthy bacteria can survive an extended time in the human gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

Because of the low pH, the presence of bile salts and the competitive environment of the human intestinal tract, questions have arisen regarding the survivability (and therefore efficacy) of probiotics as a category. For accuracy and relevance to Dr. Shahani's original strain of probiotic, the study will employ human trial subjects who ingest controlled amounts of specified bacteria strains, and who are then tested after an extended period of time to see what, if any, of the bacteria can still be detected.

The study will be conducted by the University of Nebraska, Department of Food Science and Technology, under the guidance of noted probiotic scientist Robert Hutkins, as well as Jens Walter and Steven Frese. The study will assess the ability of a commercially available, widely studied probiotic strain, *Lactobacillus acidophilus* DDS-1, and two other lactobacilli to survive through the stomach and persist in the human gastrointestinal tract.

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