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## **Prebiotics Should Not Be Overshadowed by Probiotics for Gut Health**

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### **Abstract**

There is mounting evidence to support the importance of gut function in human health, resulting in much emphasis being placed on the benefits of probiotics. But what about prebiotics? According to research, these 'novel fibres' may be just as beneficial to gut health, as well as have the potential to be promoted within the food industry.

Prebiotics are the support system for probiotics in the gut, which means that they are vital for supporting a healthy gut micro-biome. There are multiple food sources of these non-digestible food components to choose from, including garlic, onion, banana, whole oats and apples, to name only a few. These may be added to foodstuffs as a way to increase their prebiotic content.

With the consumer leaning towards whole foods and placing increased importance on gut health, prebiotics are positioned to be the next big health trend.

Currently, probiotics fall within the scope of medicine. Where does this leave prebiotics? Interestingly enough, the draft regulations relating to the labelling and advertising of foodstuffs (R.429/2014) include an allowance for a nutrient-content claim for prebiotics, as well as a function claim (a claim that describes the physiological role and function of a nutrient) that may be included on the food label. Analysis to support these claims would be essential. It must be kept in mind that this regulation is still only a draft and could change before publication.

With consumer purchasing behaviour being the driving force behind new product development, could prebiotic claims be on your marketing horizon?

### **Biography: Gabrielle Jackson**

Gabrielle is a registered dietitian; after finishing her community service in northern KZN, she started a private practice in Johannesburg. At FACTS she assists with nutrition, health and food labelling projects, seeing clients in Gauteng, and providing regulatory talks and training. Other activities she is involved in include health promotion campaigns and media interactions. This diversity in experience gives her a good perspective on how the food industry is perceived by the general public, as well as how food labelling and food allergies affect individuals. When Gabrielle is not consulting or seeing patients, she enjoys spending time in the kitchen. Other passions include playing golf as often as possible, doing yoga, and even trying a creative hand at sewing, woodwork, and design.