



Media Release

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Dairy Products: What Is their Influence on Inflammation?

An international team led by Agroscope has published a study on the influence of dairy products on inflammatory responses in the human body. The study's conclusion: Despite persistent beliefs to the contrary, dairy products exert a slightly anti-inflammatory effect, and individuals with an impaired metabolism are particularly likely to benefit from consuming products from this food group.

Dairy products are regularly portrayed negatively on the grounds that they promote inflammatory processes – and hence non-transmissible chronic diseases – in humans, and can thus be harmful to one's health. These assertions, however, are largely contradicted by the information available from relevant scientific studies on the subject. In the past, much research was conducted on the influence of milk and dairy products on the human immune system, especially on inflammatory responses. Owing to inconsistent studies and the absence of a suitable evaluation method, however, a critical summary of the various results was lacking.

A critical evaluation

The aim of the study led by Agroscope and published in the scientific journal *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition* was to gain an overview of the human studies conducted that addressed the issue of the influence of dairy products on inflammatory responses in people. Here, the goal was to discover whether these dairy products had an anti- or pro-inflammatory effect.

Anti-inflammatory properties

All in all, the analysis of the 52 studies points to a slightly anti-inflammatory effect. It was also shown that dairy products have an anti-inflammatory effect for those with a compromised



metabolism (e.g. overweight individuals) in particular, whilst having a pro-inflammatory effect in people who are hypersensitive to dairy products (milk allergy).

The researchers came to these conclusions by searching relevant international literature databases. Altogether, they found 52 studies with 71 study results dealing with this topic. Because there is no method enabling results from very different study designs to be assessed according to existing standards, the authors decided to develop an 'inflammation score'. This made it possible to summarise all results with inflammation parameters, while at the same time bearing in mind the quality of the study. For individuals not suffering from a milk allergy, the 'inflammation score' evaluation method ultimately determined dairy products to have a slightly anti-inflammatory effect, and people with a compromised metabolism might benefit particularly from consuming products from this food group.

This paper was published as part of the COST Action FA1005 INFOGEST project 'Improving Health Properties of Food by Sharing our Knowledge on the Digestive Process'. Detailed information can be found in the original publication entitled 'Dairy Products and Inflammation: A Review of the Clinical Evidence' at the following [link](#).

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