

China's MARA to approve FrieslandCampina Ingredients' 2'-FL production strain

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Manufacturers of infant formula in China will soon be able to access a unique range of prebiotic ingredients, following the approval of FrieslandCampina Ingredients' production strain of 2'-Fucosyllactose (2'-FL). The green signal from China's MARA (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs) paves the way for Aequival 2'-FL, a human milk oligosaccharide ingredient, to be launched in the world's largest early life nutrition (ELN) market. Final nutrition fortifier approval of Aequival 2'-FL will mean FrieslandCampina Ingredients will soon become the only provider of both human milk oligosaccharides (HMOs) and galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS) in China. This united proposition is highly appealing to brand owners in the ELN sector thanks to the complementary benefits the two types of oligosaccharide may offer when combined.

"This is great news both for us and for our Chinese customers – current and future," stated Cindy Zhao, general manager, FrieslandCampina Ingredients China, in the announcement. "The Chinese market has very specific circumstances that a combined GOS & HMO offering is the ideal response to. Here, health benefits are a significant priority for people selecting an infant milk formula: approximately 90 per cent of parents say they are looking for them. For instance, gut health is a priority for 80 per cent of parents of young children, and emerging scientific research is shedding a light on the gut health benefits that prebiotics like GOS and HMOs may have."

Scientists from FrieslandCampina Ingredients have particularly explored the possible benefits of combining GOS and 2'-FL, inspired by the variety and diversity of structures that exist in human milk. For instance, in vitro research has shown that these two types of oligosaccharide stimulate the beneficial bacteria *Bifidobacterium longum* in a species-specific manner. This suggests there is a clear opportunity for Chinese infant milk formula brands to respond directly to parental concerns about gut health. Nearly 30 per cent of Chinese parents already recognise that prebiotics are beneficial in this area.

2'-FL is an ingredient found in an increasing number of infant milk formula products in other parts of the world and is trusted by brand owners to deliver health benefits in infancy thanks to a growing body of research showing its value to infant health.

“From the point of final approval, Chinese customers will be able to purchase GOS and 2'-FL from one trusted and experienced supplier with a long heritage in the Chinese infant nutrition market,” Zhao continued. “In doing so, they can increase the diversity of oligosaccharide structures in their formulations and thereby unlock exciting new opportunities to differentiate their products, add more value for consumers and attract more parents to their brands.”