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Spoilage of dairy products by *Pseudomonas* spp. - An overview

Food spoilage is a serious global problem and it can be considered any change that renders a product unacceptable for human consumption. Microbial spoilage is the most common cause and leads to significant economic losses for the food industry. Microorganisms of the Pseudomonas genus are the psychrotrophics that have been more widely found in microbiota that alter foodstuff, especially milk and dairy products. The defects and alterations of products associated to their growth are caused by the release of enzymes (such as proteases and lipases), or other molecules like fluorescent or colored pigments. These microorganisms are heatsensitive, however most secreted enzymes are heat stable. Therefore, many of these enzymes survive pasteurization and ultra-high temperature (UHT) treatments. Thus, heat-resistant enzymes may cause spoilage problems in UHT milk, sterilized milk and related UHT dairy products (e.g., cream and drinks based on milk). Also, milk powder can contain these thermotolerant enzymes and, as a consequence, products made with this contaminated milk powder (e.g., desserts, chocolate, confectionery, reconstituted milk) may show a similar spoilage mechanism. The activity of these enzymes can cause sensory defects and alter physicochemical properties, causing product instability. It can also be detrimental to cheese quality by causing bitter or rancid flavors, and by impairing milk's coagulation properties. In addition, the well-known ability of *Pseudomonas* spp. to form biofilm on dairy processing plant surfaces is related to post-processing contamination, such as in fresh cheese with colored pigmentation ranging from green to dark blue. Therefore, studies of the mechanisms of spoilage by Pseudomonas spp. are important to help find solutions to extend the shelf life of dairy products.

References

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