

Update: What do the changes to the *Lactobacillus* taxonomy mean to you & your business?

Based on the results of high-throughput whole genome sequence analyses, scientists have concluded that the bacterial genus of *Lactobacillus* was too heterogeneous. In March 2020, the genus *Lactobacillus* consisted of 261 species that genetically, are extremely diverse. Last week, a global group of scientists published [a paper announcing the formal split of the genus](#) into 25 different genera. This split will introduce novel genera & will lead to a significant amount of name changes for bacteria that were previously identified as part of the genus *Lactobacillus*. The authors of the paper also created a [website](#) that can be consulted to search for the new names of these bacteria.



Since many bacterial species that were previously identified as part of the *Lactobacillus* genus are widely used in industrial fermentation, & some of these species have great importance in food & health, practical & legal implications of the name changes will be far reaching. Even with most of the new genus names being deliberately chosen to start with the letter 'L', as an attempt to minimise the implications for the industry, the name changes will still imply that updates are required to e.g. product authorisations & labels. Communication about the name changes with competent authorities such as EFSA & FDA, among other national agencies & other different stakeholders, will be key to ensure compliance & ensure products can continue to be sold. Potential issues with intellectual property may also arise.

Pen & Tec can help if you are unsure how the changes will affect you & your business.

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