ECOLOGICAL DAIRY PRODUCTS: HEALTHY OR JUST A TREND?

Carmen Daniela PETCU, Emilia CIOBOTARU-PÎRVU, Oana Diana OPREA, Oana Mărgărita GHIMPEȚEANU

University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, 105 Independenței Spl, District 5, 050097, Bucharest, Romania

Corresponding author email: carmen28petcu@gmail.com

Abstract

With the development of the food industry, the products have undergone different phases of diversification, so today we meet products that did not exist yesterday or simply were not known, referring, for example, to "BIO", "ECOLOGICAL" or "ORGANIC" products. These can be defined as products of animal or vegetable origin, obtained without the use of chemicals or genetically modified components, which have not been exposed to irradiation, and as a result of their production, the environment has not suffered. In this study, we analyzed samples of dairy products represented by drinking milk, sour-batter milk, kefir, fermented cream, yogurt and fruit yogurt. A comparison was made between conventional products and ecological products of the same type, in terms of ingredients, and their nutritional value. To identify the different features of conventional or ecological dairy products, physico-chemical parameters such as fat content, carbohydrates, proteins, salt or other added substances were analyzed. Regarding the verification of the ecological products labeling, in all the analyzed samples it was found that the ingredients used come from the ecological agriculture, therefore respecting the labeling requirements. At the same time, these products were analyzed organoleptically, observing the appearance, colour, consistency, smell and taste. Analyzing the obtained results, it was found that the ecological products show some changes in the chemical composition and nutritional values. The salt level of the dairy products analyzed, although it is described on the label as part of the natural salt of raw milk, in the case of ecological products, the value obtained is lower, compared to that of conventional products. Ecological fruit yoghurts have a higher content of piece of fruit compared to conventional yogurts. In conclusion, some ecological products have a higher nutritional value compared to conventional dairy products, without registering statistically significant changes.

Key words: ecological agriculture, bio-eco-organic, milk, nutritional value.

INTRODUCTION

Milk and dairy products meet the body's needs in energy and in substances with a plastic and biostimulatory role, positively influencing the health of consumers (Worsley et al., 2003; Usturoi M.G., 2007; Sala C.C., 2008; Claeys W.L. et al., 2013; Claeys W.L. et al., 2014; Ladokun O. et al., 2014; Visoescu I.D. et al., 2015; Nistor C.E. et al., 2019; Oprea O.D. et al., 2019).

Currently, nutrition puts its mark on the pathology of contemporary humans, as a result of the imbalance between the intake and the need for biologically active substances.

Nutrition is a factor with permanent action, which determines the development of metabolic processes, because food represents their source and their moderator (Tăpăloagă D. et al., 2017). Also, maintaining the body's homeostasis depends on the nature of the diet, which influences the functions of the system, especially the enzymatic and hormonal factors

Until recently, the provision of sufficient quantities of food was the primary requirement, but today, special attention is paid to ensuring the integrity of foods and their nutritional value (Savu C. et al., 2002).

It has reached a stage where the concept of "food safety" is increasingly difficult to control and audit (Petcu C.D., 2006; Petcu C.D. et al., 2014), due to the increasing pollution of the atmosphere and due to the development of the industry that generates toxic gas emissions, which is affecting products in general, and food in particular.

The number of harmful elements in the environment has increased greatly and so did the number of preservatives or substitutes of taste or aroma used in the food industry. Ecological agriculture is a production method that preserves soil structure and fertility. promotes a high standard of animal welfare and prohibits the use of substances such as: synthetic pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, genetically modified organisms or growth enhancers, such as antibiotics. Farmers use techniques that help maintain ecosystems and reduce pollution. Only a limited number of additives and technological aids can be used in the ecological processing of food products (European Regulation no. 848/2018; Gonciarov M. et al., 2014: Gonciarov M. et al., 2015: Gonciarov M., 2017; Tapaloaga D. et al., 2018).

Presently, in Romania, the trend of ecological products is expanding. In well developed countries, this is a concept already rooted in the lifestyle of the population. Despite the fact that the natural ingredients based products, without preservatives and dyes, are more expensive, the interest and the degree of information of Romanians has increased recently. Thus, in supermarkets or specialized stores, we can find a diverse range of ecological products.

ECOLOGICAL, ORGANIC, BIO are terms that have the same meaning (Figure 1), each being specific to another geographical area.

The term **"organic"** is used for food products in the Anglo-Saxon space (organic food, organic milk).

The term **"bio"** is used especially in the Franco-German space (agriculture biologique). The term **"eco"** or **"ecological"** is used in Romania, being the term accepted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (www.madr.ro).



Figure 1. The relationship between the terms bio, ecological, organic and natural

The term **"natural"** or **"natural 100%"** applied on the label of some products is only a marketing strategy, which does not necessarily offer the guarantee of a quality product and certainly does not indicate an ecological

product. The legislation does not refer to the labeling and classification of products using the term "natural" (www.agrointel.ro).

Labeling of ecological products

In recent years, major advances have been made in terms of healthy food. The world has begun to get rid of unhealthy habits and place greater emphasis on the food quality and safety. This can be observed from the increased number of consumers interested to read the label and to check the packaging, this being the consequence of the ascertainment that most of the additives and chemicals used in the treatment of products can trigger pathological conditions (Petcu C., 2015).

The provisions regarding the labeling of products obtained from ecological agriculture, (Figure 2), established in Regulation (EC) no. 848/2018 regarding ecological production and labeling of ecological products are very precise and are intended to offer consumers complete confidence in ecological products, as products obtained and certified according to strict rules of production, processing, inspection and certification (Regulation (EC) No. 848/2018).



Figure 2. Logo used on the labels of ecological products

The Romanian ecological food products can be easily identified by the buyers because they have the "ae" logo on the label or packaging (Figure 3), which means product obtained in Romania from the ecological agriculture (www.madr.ro).



Figure 3. The logo of ecological agriculture (www.madr.ro)

The use of "ae" on the label is mandatory in the case of local products. However, to facilitate the identification of ecological products on the store shelves, the logo "ae" can also be applied to imported products, if they are also certified in Romania by an inspection and certification body accredited to us (www.tradițiisibiu.ro - Guide "Ecological products", 2012).

The logo "ae" (Ecological Agriculture), owned by M.A.D.R. (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development), guarantees that the product so labeled comes from ecological agriculture and is certified by an approved inspection and certification body. The rules for the use of the "ae" logo are included in Annex No. 1 at the Common Order for the modification and completion, at the Annex to the Order of the Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development no. 317/2006 and at the President of the National Consumer Protection Authority no. 190/2006 for the approval of the specific rules regarding the labeling of ecological food products (www.madr.ro).

The right to use the logo "ae" (Ecological Agriculture) on the products, labels and packaging of the ecological products belongs to the producers, processors and importers registered with the M.A.D.R. (www.madr.ro).

The Community logo offers the recognition of ecological certified products throughout the European Union (Figure 4).



Figure 4. EU ecological logo for the certification of ecological products (www.madr.ro)

Consumers who buy products bearing the national logo as well as the Community logo can be confident that:

- at least 95% of the ingredients of the product were obtained according to the ecological production method;

- the product complies with the ecological production rules;

- the product bears the name of the manufacturer, processor or seller, as well as the name or code of the inspection and certification body;

- the label "ecological" is granted only to the producers inspected and certified by the inspection body;

- the inspection and certification bodies authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture may grant producers the right to use the ecological logo, if the results of the inspection carried out are in accordance (Gonciarov M., 2017).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to identify the differences between ecological and conventional dairy products, physico-chemical parameters were analyzed such as: fat content (butirometric method or by using the Funke Gerber®LactoStar dairy analyzer), carbohydrates, proteins, salt (by using the Funke Gerber®LactoStar dairy analyzer) and other added substances. At the same time, these products were analyzed organoleptically, following the appearance, colour, consistency, smell and taste.

A number of 20 types of conventional and ecological dairy products were analyzed, represented by 1.5% fat drinking milk, 3.5% fat drinking milk, 3.7% fat drinking milk, 2% fat sour-batter milk, 3.5% fat kefir, 3.5% fat yogurt, 25% fat fermented cream, banana yogurt, strawberry yogurt and peach yogurt.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results obtained from the comparative analysis of conventional and ecological products were examined, finding that the ecological products show some changes in chemical composition and nutritional values.

Although the salt level of the product is described on the label as being part of the natural salt of milk, in the case of the ecological 1.5% fat drinking milk, this level is lower compared to conventional products (Table 1).

Table 1. Differences and similarities between conventional 1.5% fat drinking milk and ecological 1.5% fat drinking milk

CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT		ECOLOGICAL PRODUCT		
Conventional 1.5% fat drinking		Ecological 1.5% fat drinking		
milk		milk		
Ingredients: semi-degreased, standardized, homogenized and pasteurized cow's milk.		Ingredients: semi-degreased, homogenized and pasteurized at high temperature cow's milk, from ecological production. Contains milk lactose.		
Nutritional inform	<u>nation/100 ml</u> ict	Nutritional information/100 ml product		
Energetic value	185kJ/44 kcal	Energetic value	185kJ/44 kcal	
Fats	1.5 g	Fats	1.5 g	
of which saturated fatty acids	1 g	of which saturated fatty acids	0.9 g	
Carbohydrates	4.5 g	Carbohydrates	4.5 g	
of which sugars	4.5 g	of which	4.5 g	
Protein	3.1 g	sugars	_	
Salt	0.1 g*	Protein	3.1 g	
Calcium	118 mg	Salt	0,06 g*	
*the natural salt of a	(14.75%) milk	Calcium	125 mg (15.6%)**	
		**from the daily reference nutritional value		
Storage temperat	ure: +2+4°C	Storage temperature: +2+4°C		
		B		

Products with a high fat content are perceived by consumers as "creamy". Thus, ecological products with a higher fat content have an increased sensory score in terms of pleasing taste (Worsley A., 2003; McCarthy K.S. et al., 2017). Ecological 3.7% fat drinking milk is also recommended in children's nutrition, benefiting from a high intake of vitamins and minerals (Table 2). Table 2. Differences and similarities between conventional 3.5% fat drinking milk and ecological 3.7% fat drinking milk

CONVENTIONA	L PRODUCT	ECOLOGICA	L PRODUCT		
Conventional 3.5% fat		Ecological 3.7% fat drinking			
drinking milk Ingredients: semi-degreased, homogenized and pasteurized at high temperature cow's milk. Contains milk lactose.		milk Ingredients: 99.83% organic whole milk, minerals (iron, zinc, iodine), vitamins (A, D ₃ , C, E, B ₁ , B ₆ , K ₁ , niacin, folic acid, biotin, pantothenic acid), natural flavors.			
Nutritional inform	ation/100 ml	Nutritional information/100 ml			
produc	et	prod	product		
Energetic value	260kJ/62	Energetic	273kJ/65		
0	kcal	value	kcal		
Fats	3.5 g	Fats	3.7 g		
of which saturated fatty acids	2.1 g	of which saturated fatty acids	2.0 g		
Carbohydrates	4.5 g	Carbohydrates	4.7 g		
of which	4.5 g	of which	4.7 g		
sugars		sugars			
Protein	3.2 g	Protein	3.3 g		
Salt	0.1 g*	Salt	0.1 g*		
Calcium	125 mg (5.6%)**	Vitamins ș	i minerals		
*the natural salt of	milk	Calcium	120 mg		
**from the daily re	ference	*Phosphorus	90 mg		
nutritional value		Iron	1.4 mg		
		Zinc	1.5 mg		
		Iodine	8.5 µg		
		*Magnesium	12 mg		
		*Potassium	140 mg		
		*Sodium chloride	85 mg		
		Vitamin A	80 µg		
		Vitamin D ₃	1.7 µg		
		Vitamin C	5 mg		
NWA A		Vitamin E	1 mg		
1. A.	Carlo a	Vitamin B ₁	0.15 mg		
	11	*Vitamin B2	0.14 mg		
	hio?	Vitamin B ₆	0.2 mg		
LAPTE		*Vitamin B ₁₂	0.4 μg		
ARDEALULUI	X X	Vitamin K ₁	4.7 μg		
inima Arda		Niacin	1.8 mg		
ANTE ECO. COS CALENCIA DE CALENCIA DE CALE		Folic acid	20 µg		
		Biotin	15 µg		
	3.9%	Pantothenic	0.6 mg		
a din 1952 1L n.e		acid			
		*Vitamin and r	*Vitamin and mineral content		
		is due exclusi	vely to their		
		naturally occurr	naturally occurring presence in		
		cow's milk			
		Storage temperature: +2+6°C			

Following the salt level in the ecological 2% fat sour-batter milk, compared to a conventional dairy product, a lower salt level is observed, although in both cases the salt content is described on the label, as being part of the natural salt of milk.

In contrast to the conventional product, the calcium content is also written on the label of the ecological product (Table 3).

Table 3. Differences and similarities between conventional and ecological 2% fat sour-batter milk

CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT		ECOLOGICAL PRODUCT		
Conventional 2% fat sour-batter milk		Ecological 2% fat sour-batter		
Ingredients: pasteurized cow's milk, milk proteins, selected lactic acid cultures.		Ingredients: high temperature pasteurized cow's milk from ecological production, selected lactic acid cultures.		
Nutritional inform	mation/100 g	Nutritional information/100 g		
Energetic value	190kJ/45	Enorratio volvo 195kJ/		
	kcal		46kcal	
Fats of which saturated fatty acids	2 g 1.2 g	of which saturated fatty acids	2 g 1.2 g	
Carbohydrates	3.6 g	Carbohydrates	3.8 g	
of which sugars	3.6 g	of which sugars	3.8 g	
Protein	3.2 g	Protein	3.3 g	
Salt	0.1 g	Salt	0.06 g	
		Calcium 125 mg (15.6%)* *from the daily reference nutritional value		
Storage temperature	e: +2+6°C	Storage temperatur	e: +2+6°C	
lapter BA		BIO		

Following the evaluation of some assortments of kefir, it was concluded that there is no difference in their nutritional values. The only difference identified is given by the origin of the raw material, in the case of the ecological kefir, the milk comes from the ecological agriculture (Table 4).

Table 4. Differences and similarities between conventional and ecological kefir

CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT		ECOLOGICAL PRODUCT			
Conventional 3.5% fat kefir		Ecological 3.5% fat kefir			
Ingredients: high temperature pasteurized cow's milk, selected lactic acid cultures. Contains milk lactose.		Ingredients: high temperature pasteurized cow's milk from ecological production, selected lactic acid cultures. Contains milk lactose.			
<u>Nutritional inform</u> produc	nation/100 g	Nutritional information/100 g product			
Energetic value	247kJ/59k cal	Energetic value	245kJ/ 59kcal		
Fats	3.5 g	Fats	3.5 g		
of which saturated fatty acids	2.1 g	of which saturated fatty acids	2.1 g		
Carbohydrates	3.7 g	Carbohydrates	3.7 g		
of which sugars	3.7 g	of which sugars	3.7 g		
Protein	3.1 g	Protein	3.1 g		
Calcium	125 mg (15.6%)**	Salt 0.00 125 Calcium (15.			
*the natural salt of milk **from the daily reference nutritional value		*the natural salt of milk **from the daily reference nutritional value			
Storage temperatu	re: +2+6°C	Storage temperature: +2+6°C			
		BIO CHEFIR BIO			

By studying the differences between conventional and ecological 3.5% fat yogurt, it is found that in the case of ecological products a high level of carbohydrates and proteins is observed (Table 5).

Table 5. Differences and similarities between conventional and ecological 3.5% fat yogurt

CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT		ECOLOGICAL PRODUCT		
Conventional 3.5% fat yogurt		Ecological 3.5% fat yogurt		
Ingredients: pasteurized whole milk, yogurt starter cultures.		Ingredients: pasteurized cow's milk, selected yogurt starter cultures. Ingredients from ecological agriculture.		
Nutritional inform produc	nation/100 g t	Nutritional information/100 g product		
Energetic value	249 kJ/60 kcal	Energetic value	291 kJ/70	
Fats	3.5 g	Fats	kcal	
saturated fatty acids	2.3 g	of which saturated fatty	2.1 g	
Carbohydrates	3.9 g	acids	45 a	
Protein	3.9 g	of which sugars	4.5 g	
Salt	01g	Protein	59	
Calcium	120 mg	Salt	0.1 g	
*from the daily reference nutritional value Storage temperature: +2+6°C		Storage temperatur	e: +2+6°C	
Natural Beneficial				

Nutritionally, the carbohydrate level is lower in the case of conventional 25% fat fermented cream, and the protein level is lower in the case of the ecological 25% fat fermented cream (Table 6).

Table 6. Differences and similarities between conventional and ecological 25% fat fermented cream

25% fat	Ecological 25% f	INODUCI	
25 70 1at		at formantad	
	Ecological 25% fat fermented		
rized cream	Ingredients: high	temperature	
cid cultures.	pasteurized crean	n from cow's	
	milk from ecologic	al production,	
	selected lactic acid cultures.		
	Contains milk lactose.		
ation/100 g			
	Nutritional inform	mation/100 g	
1016	produ	ct	
kJ/246	Energetic value	1020kJ/247	
kcal		kcal	
25 g	Fats	25 g	
1.5	of which	1.5	
15 g	saturated fatty	15 g	
2.5	acids	2.2	
2.5 g	Carbonydrates	3.3 g	
2.5 g	of which sugars	3.3 g	
2.9 g	Protein	2.3 g	
0.1 g	Salt 0.06 g*		
	"the natural salt of	miik	
e: +2+6°C	Storage temperature: +2+6°C		
1 and			
aug	dia.		
tice selector	4.0		
A state of the sta		Bin	
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and and a set of the set			
BEGAL			
		A REAL PROPERTY AND A REAL	
	ation/100 g 1016 kJ/246 kcal 25 g 15 g 2.5 g 2.9 g 0.1 g	rized cream Ingredients: high pasteurized cream ation/100 g milk from ecologic 1016 kJ/246 kcal 25 g 15 g Carbohydrates 2.5 g Of which saturated fatty acids 2.5 g Carbohydrates 0.1 g Protein s: +2+6°C Storage temperatu	

Yoghurts with added fruit were evaluated, comparing products with different fat content. The added fruit quantity was especially monitored, not performing the nutritional values comparison, as in the prior situations, because the results would not have been eloquent, with the samples being of different categories and with different declared fat content.

The amount of fruit added to the conventional product is 2%, while in the case of the ecological product, the banana content is 15%. In both situations, pectin (E440) is used as a stabilizer, and the results are presented in table 7.

Table 7. Differences and similarities between conventional and ecological banana yogurt

Table 8. Differences and similarities between conventional and ecological strawberries yogurt

CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT	ECOLOGICAL PRODUCT		CONVENT	TIONAL UCT	ECOLOGICAL	PRODUCT
Conventional 2.6% fat banana	Ecological 3.1% fat banana	ľ	Conventional 1.9% fat		Ecological 3.1% fat strawberries	
Ingredients: pasteurized whole milk, sugar, bananas 2% (with the addition of: sugar, juice and mashed banana concentrate, water, modified starch, flavour, stabilizer: pectin, acidifier: citric acid), milk proteins, selected yogurt starter cultures.	Ingredients: 85% organic yogurt - pasteurized cow's milk from ecological agriculture, selected yogurt starter cultures (<i>L.</i> <i>bulgaricus, S. thermophilus</i>); organic banana preparation 15% - organic sucrose, organic mashed banana 30%, organic Tapioca starch, concentrated organic lemon juice, natural flavours, stabilizer (pectin E440).		strawberrie Ingredients: past partially skimme strawberries 2' addition of: gluc syrup, dyes: car beet juice, bet flavour), milk modified starch agent, pectin, se starter cu	s yogurt eurized milk, d milk, sugar, % (with the cose-fructose rot juice, red a-carotene, c proteins, thickening lected yogurt ltures.	yogur Ingredients: 85% ecc - pasteurized cow ecological agricult yogurt starter c <i>bulgaricus, S. the</i> organic strawberrie 15% - organic suc mashed strawberrie: Tapioca starch, c organic lemon ju flavours etabilizer	t ological yogurt 's milk from ture, selected ultures (<i>L.</i> <i>ermophilus</i>); es preparation rose, organic s 30%, organic oncentrated tice, natural (resetin F440)
Nutritional information/100 g	Nutritional information/100 g		Nutritional infor	mation/100 g	Nutritional infor	mation/100 g
5 J 397 kJ/94	414		produ	<u>ict</u>	produc	<u>2t</u>
Energetic value kcal	Energetic value kJ/98		value	342 KJ/81 kcal	Energetic value	414 KJ/98 kcal
Fats 2.6 g	Fats 3.1 g		Fats	1.9 g	Fats	3.1 g
saturated fatty 1.7 g acids	of which saturated fatty 1.8 g		of which saturated fatty	1.2 g	of which saturated fatty	1.8 g
Carbohydrates 14.7 g	acids		Carbohydrates	13 σ	Carbohydrates	12.8 g
of which sugars 14.5 g	Carbohydrates 13.0 g		of which	12.1 g	of which sugars	11.9 g
Protein 3 g	of which sugars 11.8 g		sugars		Protein	4.6 g
103 mg	Fiber 0.1 g		Protein	3 g	Fiber	0.1 g
Calcium (13%)**	Salt 0.1 g		Salt	0.09 g	Salt	0.1 g
*the natural salt of milk **from the daily reference nutritional value			Calcium ***from the daily	(15%)* reference		
			nutritional value			
Storage temperature: +2+8°C	Storage temperature: +2+6°C		Storage temperate	ure: +2+6°C	Storage temperatu	re: +2+6°C
banane	lawit up bio		Delic		1 bio	Lunge A
			т1	C	. 1 1	1 • 1

Analyzing conventional fruit yogurt, the amount of strawberries present in the product is 2%, while in the case of the ecological product, the strawberry content is 15% (Table 8).

In the case of conventional and ecological peach yogurt, there is not much difference in their fruit content, thus, the conventional product contains 23% fruit preparation and the ecological product contains 25% fruit preparation (Table 9).

Table 9. Differences and similarities between conventional Peach&Apricot yogurt and ecological Peach&Passion fruit yogurt

CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT		ECOLOGICAL PRODUCT		
Conventional creamy yogurt with		Ecological yogurt with pieces		
(23% fru	its)	iuice (25% fruits)		
Ingredients: yos	gurt, fruit	Ingredients: yogurt, peach		
preparation (36% pe	eaches, sugar,	(12.5%), sugar,	(12.5%), sugar, passion fruit	
20% apricots, natu	ral flavour),	juice (2.5%), c	juice (2.5%), corn starch,	
sugar.		ingredients from ecological		
		agriculture.		
Nutritional inform	ation/100 g	Nutritional infor	Nutritional information/100 g	
produc	<u>t</u>	produ	<u>et</u>	
Ensertienslas	435 kJ/103	Energetic	416 kJ/99	
Energetic value	kcal	value	kcal	
Fats	3.2 g	Fats	2.7 g	
of which		of which		
saturated fatty	2.2 g	saturated fatty	1.7 g	
acids		acids		
Carbohydrates	14.4 g	Carbohydrates	14 g	
of which sugars	13.6 g	of which	13 g	
Protein	3.3 g	sugars	2.0	
Salt	0.16 g	Protein 3.9 g		
		Salt	0.13 g	
Storage temperatur	re: +2+6°C	Storage temperate	ure: +4+8°C	
Cermos Puser real	J	BU		

CONCLUSIONS

For the analyzed samples, regarding the ecological products labeling verification, it was found that the ingredients used come from the ecological agriculture, having met the requirements regarding their labeling.

In the case of the comparative study between conventional and ecological products, it was observed that, although the salt is described on the packaging as being part of the natural salt of milk, in the case of ecological products its level is lower, a fact that most probably correlates with the food that animals raised in ecological systems receive.

The organoleptic examination of the 20 types of products analyzed showed that all products have normal characteristics, without modification of an alterative nature or taste not specific to the assortment.

Analyzing fruit yogurt (banana yogurt and strawberry yogurt), it was found that ecological products have a higher percentage of fat, namely 3.1% fat, compared to conventional products, and the salt level is similar, registering insignificant variations. between product types.

Regarding the storage temperature, there were no major differences between the conventional and the ecological products, this being in the range $+2 \dots + 8^{\circ}$ C.

Some ecological dairy products, including drinking milk, 2% fat sour-batter milk and 3.5% fat yogurt have a higher nutritional value compared to conventional dairy products of the same type, without significant variation.

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