

Could the secret of a long life be found in cheese?

July 20 2017



Emmental cheese. Credit: Wikipedia

Suspected life-extending properties of homemade cheese and yoghurt from the Carpathian Mountains will be analysed at Abertay University in a bid to discover their biological secrets.

PhD researcher Kateryna Tkachencko has arrived at Abertay in Dundee

to take advantage of the University's microbiology expertise, as she delves into the seemingly extraordinary yeasts in products from her home country of Ukraine.

For centuries, locals living across the East Carpathians, which stretch from the Czech Republic to Ukraine, have been creating fermented dairy products based on recipes handed down the generations.

Kateryna has been involved with studies from the Zabolotny Institute of Microbiology and Virology in Kiev, which have discovered an abnormally long life expectancy in the region - with the majority of the population living well into their 90s - and it is thought these foods could hold the key to such longevity.

Her research [project](#) will analyse interactions between yeasts and bacteria and study probiotic effects, with the ultimate hope that whatever seems to be causing the effect can be pinpointed and captured for use on a commercial level.

Having studied the phenomenon since 2014, Katya will now be at Abertay for three months thanks to a research grant from the Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS).

She said: "It was chance conversation with one of my research supervisors in Kiev that alerted me to this interesting reaction and the project has grown from there.

"It is a completely new piece of research, and while I am here at Abertay I will be investigating the antagonistic activity that goes on between the yeast and bacteria in order to better understand the process.

"My previous research is in antibiotic resistance, so while not directly related there is a nice link there.

"These are homemade products that have never been produced on a commercial level so I am interested to discover more about them."

Dr Andrew Spiers, who will be supervising the project in Abertay's Microbial Ecology Laboratory, said the research was just one example of the fascinating work under way at the University.

He added: "At Abertay we are fortunate enough to have some of the best science courses in the UK at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and I'm delighted that Katya has chosen to visit us here.

"These yoghurts might be potential probiotics or reveal mechanisms that could prevent people becoming sick, so it is an exciting project to work on."

Provided by University of Abertay Dundee

Citation: Could the secret of a long life be found in cheese? (2017, July 20) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-07-secret-life-cheese.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.