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# Impact of probiotic intervention on microbial load, development and performance of farmed Atlantic cod

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# Why probiotics in cod rearing?



To remedy survival problems at early rearing stages by providing an alternative method to enhance fish performance

## Selection of two potential probiotic bacteria from cod larviculture

- Arthrobacter bergerei from rearing water
- Enterococcus thailandicus from algal concentrate

## **Based on several criteria:**

#### In vitro testing

- competitive exclusion
- metabolite production
- hemolytic activity
- strain identification
- growth characteristics
- adhesion capacity

Application via rearing water at pre- and posthatch stage

- increased larval survival
- increased growth (19.3%)
- increased tolerance
- microbiota control
- presence of both probionts

# **Beneficial effects validated at 2 rearing stages**

## Larviculture: pre-hatch to 36 dph

- Combined application via rearing water (-3,-1, 1, 4, 8, 14, 21, 28 dph)
- Microbial analysis of rearing water and larval gut
- Larval development (immunological proteins, proteolytic activity)
- Larval survival and growth (dry weight and length)

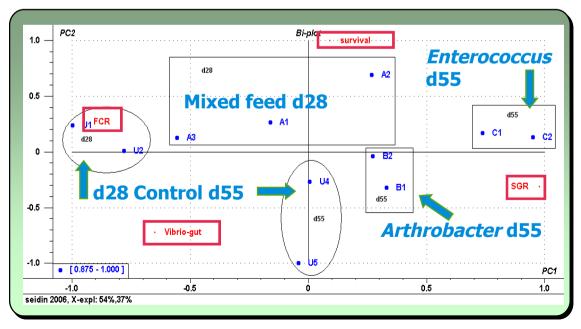
## Juvenile rearing (10-g fish): 28- and 55-day feeding trials

- Two-day acclimatisation period at 7.5°C (80 fish tank<sup>-1</sup>)
- Combined and separate application via dry feed (10<sup>7-9</sup> g<sup>-1</sup>)
  - Feed types: A (mixed), B (Arthrobacter), C (Enterococcus)
- Juvenile specific growth rate (SGR)
- Survival, feed conversion ratio (FCR)
- Microbial analysis of rearing water, juvenile gills and gut wall

# **Enhanced performance in larvae and juveniles**

- Both administration pathways were effective
- Faster development at
  both cod stages
- immunological proteins
- proteolytic activity
- gut microbiota stimulation





*Enterococcus*-feed
reduced gut *Vibrio* load and
enhanced juvenile survival
Control: poor feed
utilisation, lower SGR and
survival; higher gut *Vibrio*counts

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 Possible to stimulate cod development, growth and viability as well as to control the microbiota by regular addition of these probiotic bacteria via the rearing water or dry feed.

 Probiotic diet at juvenile stage is profitable, especially under non-optimal conditions.

 Probiotic intervention may shorten in-house juvenile growing time, enhance health and lead to better feed utilisation; the basis for sustainable cod farming.

More research on application dose and long-term effects





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