

**Working to improve the health of the good bifidobacteria, so they in return may help us.**



Lisa Waddington, Danielle Dorais, Nana Annan, Antonela Borza (Left to Right)

Regular consumption of bifidobacteria has been proven to improve the health of the gastro-intestinal tract. However, in many cases it's difficult to ensure that these fastidious anaerobes remain healthy and active during storage of the delivery food. Our HQP team is currently exploring if micro-encapsulation (microcaps) in food grade hydrogels will improve the health and survival of bifidobacteria. Based at Dalhousie University, the team is also collaborating and transferring among laboratories from Ryerson, Lakehead and St. Francis Xavier Universities as well as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's research station in Kentville, NS. Nana Annan (PDF) has been leading the daily work on developing micro-caps methods since January 2005. Shortly she will get assistance from Danielle Dorais (two-time USRA-scholar) and Antonela Borza (M.Sc. candidate) who will work on testing specific micro-cap matrices involving coating and/or phase-separation. Ph.D. candidate Lisa Waddington will - once finished with her comprehensive exams - add her investigation of the physiology of the encapsulated bacteria to the project. Their research will hopefully open up new avenues for successful commercial applications of these good bacteria.