b. drying the mixture to form said milk powder composition, wherein the drying step occurs within 0.1-60 minutes from the addition of the lactase to the milk composition.

A process for the manufacture of a milk powder composition comprising 5-70 % lactose and lactase comprising the steps of co-drying a lactase solution and a milk composition to form said milk powder composition also forms part of the invention.

In a third aspect, the invention provides a process for the manufacture of a milk powder composition comprising 5-70 % lactose and lactase comprising the step of spray-drying a solution of lactase onto a milk powder to yield said milk powder composition.

A milk powder obtainable by any of the processes of the invention is also part thereof.

The invention also pertains to the use of a process according to any of claims 1 to ~~8~~6 for stabilising lactase in a milk powder composition.

In a further aspect, a milk powder composition comprising lactose and lactase, wherein the lactase is physically associated with the milk powder particles also forms part of the invention.

Finally, an aspect of the invention is concerned with a milk powder composition according to claim 8~~s 10 to 13~~, for alleviating the symptoms of lactose intolerance in mammals.

Claims

1. Process for the manufacture of a milk powder composition comprising 5-70% lactose and lactase comprising the steps of

   a. mixing lactase with a milk composition in the presence of water and

   b. spray-drying the mixture to form said milk powder composition, wherein the drying step occurs within 0.1 to 120 minutes from the mixing of the lactase with the milk composition in the presence of water, and wherein the temperature during the process steps is at most 75 °C.

2. Process for the manufacture of a milk powder composition comprising 5-70% lactose and lactase comprising the step of spray-drying a lactase solution onto a milk powder to yield said milk powder composition, wherein the temperature during the process steps is at most 75 °C.~~the step of co-drying a lactase solution and a milk composition to form said milk powder composition.~~

~~3. Process for the manufacture of a milk powder composition comprising 5-70% lactose and lactase comprising the step of spray-drying a lactase solution onto a milk powder to yield said milk powder composition.~~

~~4.~~3. Process according to any of claims 1 to ~~3~~2, wherein the lactase is selected from *Aspergillus oryzae, Aspergillus niger, Bacillus spp., Escherichia coli, Saccharomyces fragilis, Saccharomyces lactis, Kluyveromyces spp*. lactase or any mixtures thereof.

~~5.~~4. Process according to any of claims 1 to ~~4~~3, wherein the milk composition is selected from low-fat milk, whole milk, reconstituted milk, milk powders with

maltodextrin and/or vegetable fats, whey powders, whey fractions, buttermilk powders, fermented milk powders, dietary or nutritional formulas containing lactose, cream powders, dairy creamers with vegetable fat and/or milk fat, health care or clinical care formulas containing lactose or any mixtures thereof.

~~6.~~5. Process according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the milk powder composition has a water content of 1-9%, preferably 2-7%.

~~7.~~6. Process according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the temperature during the process steps is ~~at most 75°C, preferably~~ at most 70°C.

~~8. Process according to claims 1 or 2, wherein the drying is carried out by any of spray-drying, freeze-drying, vacuum drying, roller drying.~~

~~9.~~7. Use of a process according to any of claims 1 to ~~8~~6 for stabilising lactase in a milk powder composition.

~~10. Milk powder composition obtainable by the process of any of claims 1 to 8.~~

~~11.~~8. Spray-dried ~~M~~milk powder composition comprising lactose and lactase obtainable by a process according to claims 1 to 2, wherein the lactase is physically associated with the milk powder particles, for use in alleviating the symptoms of lactose intolerance in mammals.

~~12. Milk powder composition according to claim 11, wherein the amount of lactose is 5-70 wt%.~~

~~13. Milk powder composition according to claim 11 or 12, wherein the amount of lactase is 0.001-4 wt%, preferably 0.01-2 wt%, more preferably 0.05 to 0.5 wt% based on dry weight.~~

~~14. Milk powder composition according to claims 10 to 13, for alleviating the symptoms of lactose intolerance in mammals.~~

~~15.~~9. Spray-dried ~~M~~milk powder composition according to claim ~~14~~8, wherein the mammals are humans.