CLAIMS

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. A shelf-stable fermented dairy product comprising a fermented dairy component, a stabilizer, and a puree composition, wherein the dairy product has a pH ranging from about 4.4 to about 4.5, wherein the stabilizer is a physical stabilizer, a chemical stabilizer, or a physical stabilizer and a chemical stabilizer and ranges from about 0.001% to about 10% by weight.

2. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to Claim 1, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a flavor liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

3. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to Claims 1 or 2, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a sweetness liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

4. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-3, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a tartness liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

5. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-4, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a texture liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

~~6. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-5, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy component is selected from the group consisting of yogurt, sour cream, buttermilk and combinations thereof.~~

~~7.~~6. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-5~~6~~, wherein the stabilizer is ~~physical or chemical stabilizer and is~~ selected from the group consisting of a hydrocolloid or a high gelling whey~~wehy~~ protein concentrate.

~~8.~~7. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to Claim ~~7~~6, wherein the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting of pectin, gelatin, carrageenan, agar, acacia

gum, sodium alginate, xanthan gum, locust bean gum, carboxymethyl cellulose, high gelling whey protein concentrate and combinations thereof.

~~9.~~8. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-7, wherein the puree composition comprises a pureed vegetable selected from the group consisting of sweet potatoes, carrots, peas, green beans and squash and combinations thereof.~~The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-8, wherein the stabilizer is a physical stabilizer and ranges from about 0.001% to about 10% by weight.~~

~~10.~~9. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-~~9~~8, wherein the puree composition comprises a pureed fruit selected from the group consisting of apple, orange, pear, peach, strawberry, banana, cherry, pineapple, kiwi, grape, blueberry, raspberry, mango, guava, cranberry, blackberry and combinations thereof.

~~11.~~10. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-10 further comprising at least one of: at least one ~~a~~ prebiotic, at least one probiotic, at least one symbiotic, at least one phytonutrient, at least one amino acid, at least one antioxidant, at least one vitamin, at least one mineral, and combinations thereof.

~~12. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to Claim 11, wherein the prebiotic is selected from the group consisting of partially hydrolyzed guar gum, fructooligosaccharides, inulin, lactulose, galactooligosaccharides, acacia gum, soyoligosaccharides, xylooligosaccharides, isomaltooligosaccharides, gentiooligosaccharides, lactosucrose, glucooligosaccharides, pecticoligosaccharides, resistant starches, sugar alcohols and combinations thereof.~~

~~13. The shelf-stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-12 further comprising a probiotic.~~

~~14. The shelf stable fermented dairy product according to Claim 13, wherein the probiotic is selected from the group consisting of Saccharomyces, Debaromyces, Candida, Pichia, Torulopsis, Aspergillus, Rhizopus, Mucor, Penicillium, Torulopsis, Bifidobacterium, Bacteroides, Clostridium, Fusobacterium, Melissococcus, Propionibacterium, Streptococcus, Enterococcus, Lactococcus, Staphylococcus, Peptostrepococcus, Bacillus, Pediococcus, Micrococcus, Leuconostoc, Weissella, Aerococcus, Oenococcus, Lactobacillus and combinations thereof.~~

~~15. The shelf stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-14 further comprising a component selected from the group consisting of synbiotics, phytonutrients and combinations thereof.~~

~~16. The shelf stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-15 further comprising an amino acid.~~

~~17. The shelf stable fermented dairy product according to Claim 16, wherein the amino acid is selected from the group consisting of~~ Isoleucine, ~~Alanine,~~ Leucine, ~~Asparagine,~~ Lysine, ~~Aspartate,~~ Methionine, ~~Cysteine,~~ Phenylalanine, ~~Glutamate,~~ Threonine, ~~Glutamine,~~ Tryptophan, ~~Glycine,~~ Valine, ~~Proline,~~ Serine, ~~Tyrosine,~~ Arginine, ~~Citrulline,~~ Histidine ~~and combinations thereof.~~

~~18. The shelf stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-17 further comprising an antioxidant.~~

~~19. The shelf stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-18 further comprising a vitamin.~~

~~20. The shelf stable fermented dairy product according to any one of Claims 1-19 further comprising a mineral.~~

~~21.~~11. A method of making a shelf-stable fermented dairy product, the method comprising:

adding a stabilizer to a fermented dairy component under shear to create a shelf-stable fermented dairy mixture;

homogenizing the fermented dairy mixture;

adding a puree composition to the fermented dairy mixture; and

heat processing the fermented dairy mixture to render the fermented dairy mixture commercially sterile to form the shelf-stable fermented dairy product, wherein the dairy product has a pH ranging from about 4.4 to about 4.5, wherein the stabilizer is a physical stabilizer, a chemical stabilizer, or a physical stabilizer and a chemical stabilizer and ranges from about 0.001% to about 10% by weight.

~~22.~~12. The method according to Claim 11~~21~~, wherein adding the stabilizer to the fermented dairy component under shear comprises stabilizing proteins in the fermented dairy component by coating with the physical stabilizer.

~~23.~~13. The method according to Claim~~s~~ 11~~21~~ or 12~~22~~, wherein the fermented dairy mixture is heated to a temperature above 185°F.

~~24.~~14. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-13~~23~~, wherein the method is performed under aseptic conditions.

~~25.~~15. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-14~~24~~, wherein at least one of thickeners, flavors, sweeteners, acidulants and colors is added to the mixture before the heat processing.

~~26.~~16. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-15~~25~~, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a flavor liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

~~27.~~17. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-16~~26~~, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a sweetness liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

~~28.~~18. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-17~~27~~, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a tartness liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

~~29.~~19. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-18~~28~~, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product has a texture liking score of at least 5 based on a 9-point hedonic scale of a quantitative central location test.

~~30.~~20. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-19~~29~~, wherein the fermented dry or fresh dairy component is selected from the group consisting of yogurt, sour cream, buttermilk, kefir cheese and combinations thereof.

~~31. The method according to any one of Claims 21-30, wherein the stabilizer is a physical or chemical stabilizer.~~

~~32.~~21. The method according to Claim 11~~31~~, wherein the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting of pectin, gelatin, carrageenan, agar, acacia gum, sodium alginate, xanthan gum, locust bean gum, carboxymethyl cellulose, high gelling whey protein concentrate and combinations thereof..

~~33.~~22. The method according to any one of Claims 11-21, wherein the puree composition comprises a pureed vegetable selected from the group consisting of sweet potatoes, carrots, peas, green beans and squash and combinations thereof.~~The method according to Claim 31, wherein the stabilizer ranges from about 0.001% to about 10% by weight.~~

~~34.~~23. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-21~~33~~, wherein the puree composition comprises a pureed fruit selected from the group consisting of apple, orange, pear, peach, strawberry, banana, cherry, pineapple, kiwi, grape, blueberry, raspberry, mango, guava, cranberry, blackberry and combinations thereof.

~~35.~~24. The method according to any one of Claims 11~~21~~-21~~34~~, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product further comprises at least one of: at least one a prebiotic, at least one probiotic, at least one symbiotic, at least one phytonutrient, at least one amino acid, at least one antioxidant, at least one vitamin, at least one mineral, and combinations thereof.

~~36. The method according to Claim 35, wherein the prebiotic is selected from the group consisting of partially hydrolyzed guar gum, fructooligosaccharides, inulin, lactulose, galactooligosaccharides, acacia gum, soyoligosaccharides, xylooligosaccharides, isomaltooligosaccharides, gentiooligosaccharides, lactosucrose, glucooligosaccharides, pecticoligosaccharides, resistant starches, sugar alcohols and combinations thereof.~~

37. The method according to any one of Claims 21-36, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product further comprises a probiotic.

38. The method according to Claim 37, wherein the probiotic is selected from the group consisting of Saccharomyces, Debaromyces, Candida, Pichia, Torulopsis, Aspergillus, Rhizopus, Mucor, Penicillium, Torulopsis, Bifidobacterium, Bacteroides, Clostridium, Fusobacterium, Melissococcus, Propionibacterium, Streptococcus, Enterococcus, Lactococcus, Staphylococcus, Peptostrepococcus, Bacillus, Pediococcus, Micrococcus, Leuconostoc, Weissella, Aerococcus, Oenococcus, Lactobacillus and combinations thereof.

39. The method according to any one of Claims 21-38, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product further comprises a component selected from the group consisting of synbiotics, phytonutrients and combinations thereof.

40. The method according to any one of Claims 21-39, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product further comprises an amino acid.

41. The method according to Claim 40, wherein the amino acid is selected from the group consisting of Isoleucine, Alanine, Leucine, Asparagine, Lysine, Aspartate, Methionine, Cysteine, Phenylalanine, Glutamate, Threonine, Glutamine, Tryptophan, Glycine, Valine, Proline, Serine, Tyrosine, Arginine, Citrulline, Histidine and combinations thereof.

42. The method according to any one of Claims 21-41, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product further comprises an antioxidant.

43. The method according to any one of Claims 21-42, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product further comprises a vitamin.

44. The method according to any one of Claims 21-43, wherein the shelf-stable fermented dairy product further comprises a mineral.