NEWS RELEASE

"For Ever Brighter Smiles"
MORINAGA MILK

October 15, 2026

A Morinaga Milk Industry researcher receives the "Director-General, Innovation and Environment Policy Bureau's Award" at the "FY2026 Industrial Standardization Awards"

As project leader, led revisions to an international standard for the enumeration of bifidobacteria

Morinaga Milk Industry Co., Ltd. is pleased to announce that the efforts of its researcher, who served as project leader in leading revisions to an international standard for the enumeration of bifidobacteria, were recognized in the "FY2026 Industrial Standardization Awards" hosted by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, where he won the "Director-General, Innovation and Environment Policy Bureau's Award." The awards ceremony was held on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at the Toshi Center Hotel in Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo.



Prizewinner
Masamichi Muto, Section Head of Microbial Technology Research Section, Biotics Research Institute, R&D Division, Morinaga Milk Industry, Co., Ltd.

Name of award
Director-General, Innovation and Environment Policy Bureau's Award (Standards Development, Accreditation, and Certification Category), FY2026 Industrial Standardization Awards

Main achievements
This award was given in recognition of the leadership shown by our researcher, who served as project leader in relation to the revision of "Milk products − Enumeration of bifidobacteria − Colony-count technique (ISO 29981 | IDF 220)" by ISO/TC 34/SC 5 (Milk and milk products), leading the revision of an international standard applied to fermented milk products, powdered formula, etc.

Because enumeration of bifidobacteria is a fundamental technology for assessing the quality and safety of important microorganisms that are widely used in fermented milk products and powdered formula, etc., and is thus directly linked to quality assurance in the food sector and to ensuring consumer confidence and product reliability, it is a valuable analytical method. As well as enhancing the reliability of quality assessment in the food sector, this initiative helped Japan communicate, and raise awareness of, its bifidobacteria research and technology at the international level.

Comment from the prizewinner

"It was a great honor to receive such a distinguished award. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those involved within the Company, including experts in Japan and overseas who provided guidance and cooperation during the progress of this initiative.

In the roughly eight years since this project to revise the international standard was launched at the International Dairy Federation (IDF) in 2016, we have worked constantly on coordination and the formation of consensus among countries that each had their own ideas and requests. In particular, we implemented an interlaboratory study jointly over a total of fourteen such bodies (eight from Europe, six from Japan), and the test was fraught with difficulties, including refrigerated transportation, coordinating bacterial enumeration analyses on the same day, and statistical analysis, but by working with experts in Japan and overseas, we were able to overcome these challenges one step at a time. It was in this context that we led the discussion of enumeration methods, and I am very glad that we were able to contribute to the success of the revision.

The publication of this standard has enabled the enumeration of bifidobacteria in milk and dairy products to be conducted with greater stability, and I hope that this will contribute to the further spread and expansion of products incorporating bifidobacteria, and to improvements in quality assurance in the food sector. Going forward, in addition to continuing to broadcast the value of bifidobacteria research originating in Japan to the world, we will strive to develop the food industry and improve quality through standardization activities, and contribute to the safety and security of consumers."

Related information

■ What are the Industrial Standardization Awards?

This is an awards system sponsored by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry that seeks to recognize the efforts of individuals and organizations who have formulated, spread, and promoted international standards and Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS), or accomplished market creation or helped resolve societal issues, etc. through standardization, as well as individuals who are expected to engage even more actively in such endeavors going forward.

The Industrial Standardization Awards (METI website)
https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/economy/hyojun-kijun/keihatsu/hyosho/index.html

■ News release from January 21, 2025

Proposed revision to an international standard on new bifidobacteria enumeration has been adopted, and the standard issued - enables more stable enumeration of bifidobacteria in dairy products -
https://www.morinagamilk.co.jp/release/newsentry-4490.html

■ Morinaga Milk's bifidobacteria research

The human intestine contains around 40 trillion bacteria of several hundred different types, including bifidobacteria that generate organic acids such as acetic acid and lactic acid, and which are a leading example of bacteria that play a beneficial role in health through regulation of the intestinal environment. For more than 50 years, Morinaga Milk has prioritized research and development on bifidobacteria that live in the human gut and have a positive effect on health. It discovered Bifidobacterium longum BB536 from infants in 1969, and is ranked No.1 globally in the number of clinical research papers on human-residential bifidobacteria (HRB).

*According to investigations by KnowledgeWire, as of January 2026. (No. 1 in the world for corporation-submitted numbers of research articles on PubMed and the Ichushi WEB database (JAMAS))

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