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Dynamics of microbial ecology during cocoa fermentation and drying: towards the identification of molecular markers

Yasmine Hamdouche , Guehi Tagro , Noel Durand , Kra Brou Didier Kedjebo , Didier Montet , Jean Christophe Meile



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**Highlights**

- Microbial communities exhibited dynamic changes during cocoa fermentation & drying.
- Bacterial ecology of cocoa beans is highly altered during post-harvest processing.
- *Gluconobacter xylinum* and *Clostridium* sp were only detected in drying step.
- *Gluconobacter xylinum* and *Clostridium* sp could be molecular markers of quality.

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