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# ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

### Application of whey protein-pectin nano-complex carriers for loading of lactoferrin

Running title: Whey protein-pectin nano-complex for lactoferrin

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#### **Research Highlights:**

- The complex of whey protein and pectin can be formed at pH values of 3-4.
- Lactoferrin was successfully loaded into WPI-pectin complex nano-particles.
- Complex formation was influenced by pH, WPI-HMP ratio, and acidifying method.
- WPI-HMP ratio of 2:1 via pre-blending at pH= 3.5 resulted in optimum LF carriers.

#### Abstract

Our aim was to entrap lactoferrin (LF) in complex nano-particles of whey protein isolate (WPI)-high methoxyl pectin (HMP) with the ratios of 2:1, 1:1, and 1:2 through acidification at pH values of 3, 3.5, and 4. The zeta-potential, size, sedimentable-complex yield, LF content, encapsulation efficiency, SEM, AFM, FTIR, and DSC of nano-particles were investigated. Our results revealed that almost all

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