

Galactoglucomannan fibres promote a beneficial porcine gut microbiome

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MOTIVATION

Most mammals and their microbiomes are codependent, forming a functional unit known as a **holobiont**. Exchanging metabolites, regulating gene expression, and combating pathogens are vital to the **health** and **performance** of the holobiont ¹⁻². By understanding the **interactions** occurring within these complex systems, we can more effectively improve **animal** and **feed production**, favouring both animal welfare, production efficiency, and the growing needs of the World's increasing **human population** ³⁻⁴.

Mannan fibres made from spruce can be metabolised into **host-accessible compounds** by microbes with carbohydrate-active **enzymes** ⁵⁻⁶. These microbes also ease piglets' transition from milk to **solid feed** ⁷. Hence we ask: can we **jump-start the young porcine microbiome by adding mannan to the pre-weaning diet?** spoiler!



2 THE TRIAL

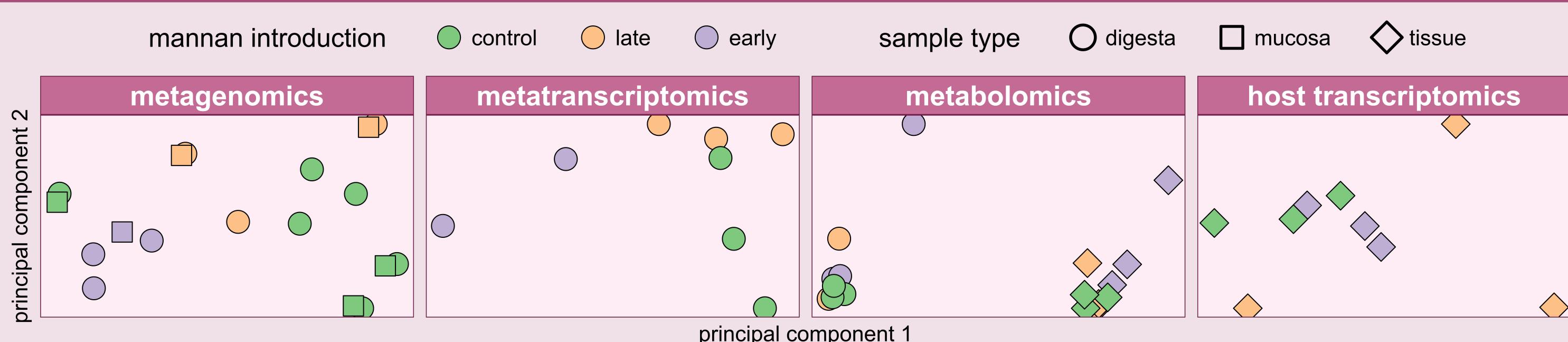
We used **three groups** of 10-day old piglets and gave fibres to two groups: one starting **before** and one **after weaning**.



After one month, we sampled their caeca and generated **four omic data layers**: metagenomics, metatranscriptomics, metabolomics, and host transcriptomics. The datasets were analysed both as **individual omic** layers, and jointly through a **holo-omic** approach. Utilised methods were R-implemented tools for principal component ⁸ and differential abundance ⁹ analyses, and a Python-based package for holo-omic modelling through multiset correlation and factor analysis (MCFA) ¹⁰.

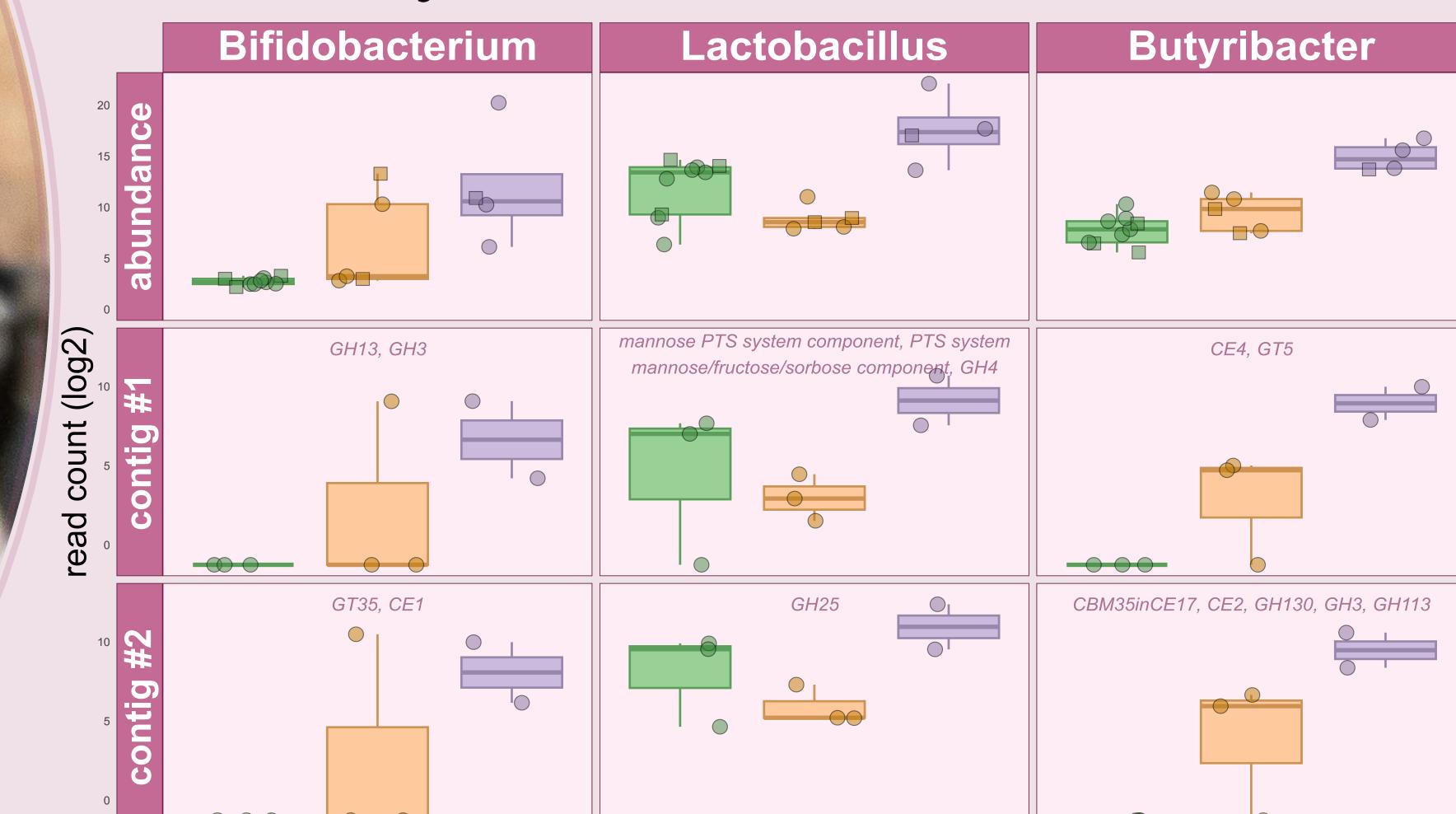
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SELECTIVE PROMOTION



Individual principal component analyses show **gradients** that correspond with duration of **mannan exposure**. Among the differentially abundant populations in control and mannan piglets are

Bifidobacterium longum (\log_2 fold change 8.3), **Lactobacillus johnsonii** (LFC 5.9), and **Butyribacter** sp. (LFC 5.7). Many of their differentially expressed genes yield enzymes for mannan **degradation**, like glycoside **hydrolases** and **transferases**, and carbohydrate **esterases**.

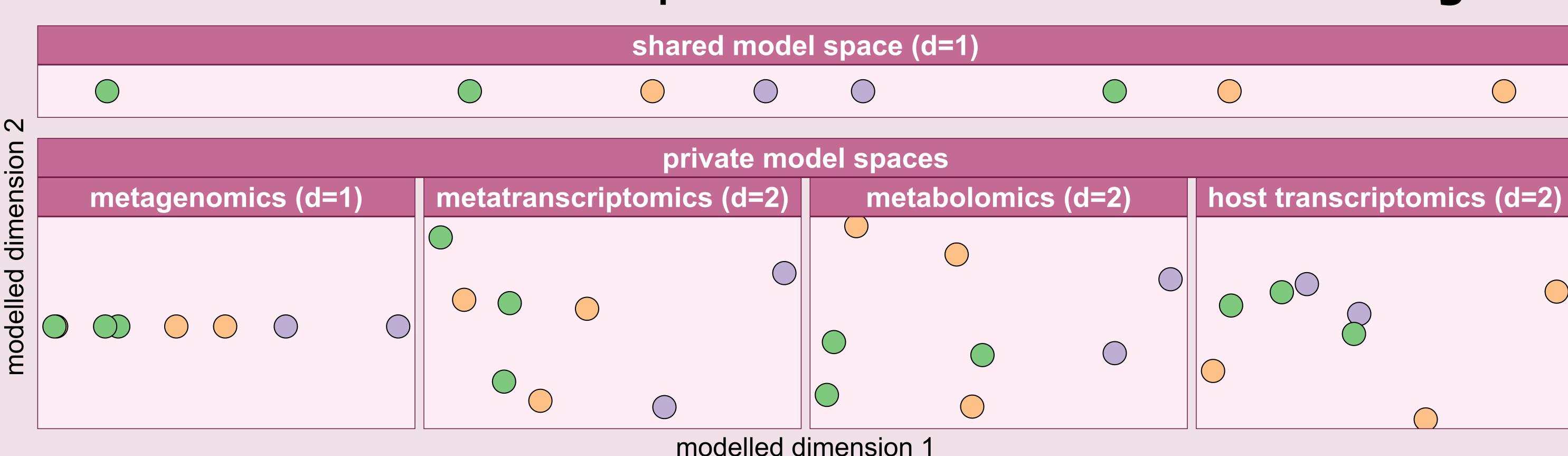


Thus yes, we can jump-start their microbiome!

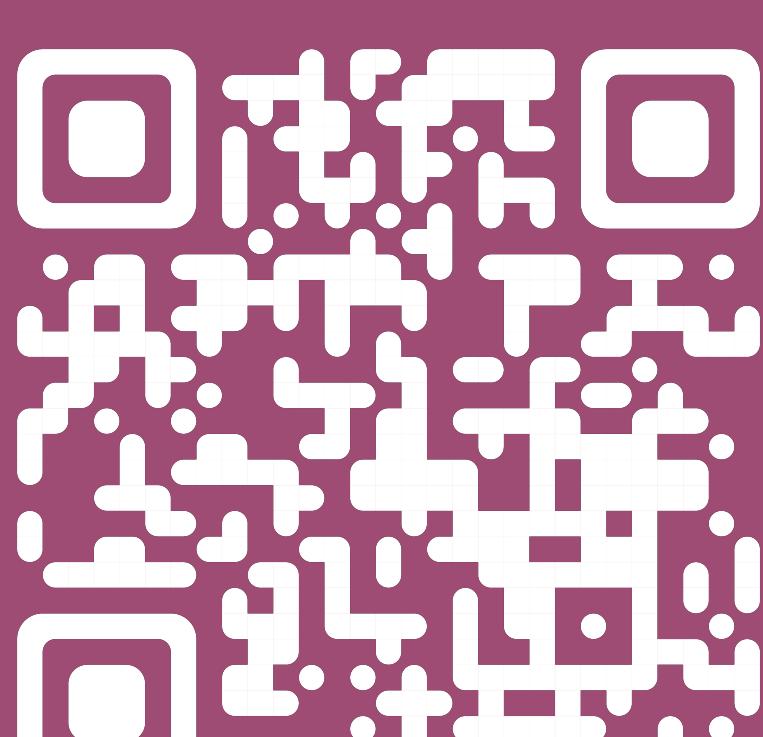
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HOLO-OMIC MODEL

The created MCFA model reconstructs the full dataset as **matrices** across **three feature spaces**: one **shared** by all omic layers; one **private** to each dataset; and an omic-specific **residual**. The inferred features fit well with mannan exposure, hence the model will be used to learn more about the **interactions** across the porcine **holo-omic boundary**.



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