

# Isolation of Keratinase-Producing Microorganisms, Analysis of Enzyme Characteristics and Applications

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## ABSTRACT

Six feather-degrading microorganisms with keratinase producing capacity were isolated from poultry farm feather waste soil in Changhua. They were identified by sequence analysis of 16S rDNA, and named as *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1, *Bacillus cereus* Wu2, *Bacillus cereus* Wu3, *Brevibacillus parabrevis* Wu4, *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 and *Bacillus cereus* Wu6, respectively. The optimum initial pH value of medium to Wu1, Wu2, Wu4, Wu5 and Wu6 was pH 5.0, but Wu3 was pH 9.0. The optimum culture temperature to these six strains between 30 and 40°C. The extracellular keratinases produced by six strains grown on feather as carbon and nitrogen source after liquid culture with each optimum cultured conditions for 4 days. Four keratinases (*B. megaterium* Wu1, *Bacillus cereus* Wu3 and *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 and *Bacillus cereus* Wu6) were purified by ammonium sulfate precipitation, Sephadex S-200 HR gel filtration column and DEAE Sephadex A-50 ions exchange column. By these steps, the purity of these enzymes increased by 7.63, 19.48, 2.23 and 4.71 fold, with activity recovery of 13.59%, 26.32%, 16.60% and 10.55%, respectively. The molecular mass of these enzymes determined by SDS-PAGE was 34, 46, 32, 55, 68 kDa, respectively, the keratinase Wu6 was a dimeric protein. These purified enzymes exhibited activity at pH range of pH 4.0-12.0 and pH 6.0-11.0 temperature range of 10-100°C, respectively, with azo-casein as substrate. Optimum pH and temperature of *B. megaterium* Wu1 and *B. cereus* Wu6 keratinases were pH 7, and pH 8, and 50°C, respectively. The proteinase inhibitory effect of metal chelator EDTA and O-phenanthroline characterized three keratinases as metalloproteases. The three bacterial keratinases were completely activated by the presence of Na<sup>+</sup> and Mg<sup>2+</sup>. *B. megaterium* Wu1 and *B. cereus* Wu6 keratinases were stable as powder storage at various temperature, nevertheless the keratinases activity started to drop significantly as liquid storage at room temperature. Further, the keratinase Wu1 showed enhanced stability in the presence of some organic solvents, but reducing agents were inhibited the keratinase activity from *B. megaterium* Wu1 and *B. cereus* Wu6. The Km of *B. megaterium* Wu1 and *B. cereus* Wu6 keratinases with azo-casein as substrate were 0.85 and 3.28 g/L, respectively.

Keywords : keratinase、feather waste、metalloproteases

## Table of Contents

目錄	封面內頁	中文摘要	iii	英文摘要	v	誌謝	vii	目錄	ix	圖目錄	xiv	表目錄	xxiii	1. 緒論	1	1.1 前言	1	1.2 研究動機與目的	5	1.3 文獻回顧	8	1.3.1 羽毛之簡介	8	1.3.2 家禽羽毛廢棄物的處理現況	8	1.3.3 角蛋白之簡介	14	1.3.4 蛋白質的分類	18	1.3.4.1 外切勝??	18	1.3.4.2 內切勝??	20	1.3.5 角蛋白質之簡介	26	1.3.5.1 角蛋白質的生產菌株	27	1.3.5.2 影響菌株生產角蛋白質的環境因子	32	1.3.5.3 角蛋白質的生化特性	38	1.3.5.4 角蛋白質降解角蛋白的機制	43	1.3.5.5 角蛋白質的應用	47	2. 本土性角蛋白分解菌株之篩選與特性分析	52	2.1 前言	52	2.2 材料與方法	53	2.2.1 藥品	53	2.2.2 使用儀器	55	2.2.3 菌株篩選	55	2.2.3.1 樣本來源	56	2.2.3.2 篩選角蛋白分解菌株之培養基	56	2.2.3.3 菌種鑑定	59	2.2.4 選菌株之特性分析	60	2.2.4.1 培養基初始酸鹼值對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	60	2.2.4.2 培養溫度對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	60	2.2.4.3 不同氮源對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	61	2.2.4.4 不同碳源對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	61	2.2.4.5 不同角蛋白基質對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	62	2.2.5 分析方法	62	2.2.5.1 角蛋白質活性的分析	62	2.2.5.2 蛋白質定量之分析方法	63	2.2.5.3 氨氮濃度分析	64	2.3 結果與討論	66	2.3.1 角蛋白分解菌株篩菌結果	66	2.3.2 培養基初始酸鹼值對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	75	2.3.3 培養溫度對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	93	2.3.4 不同氮源對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	111	2.3.5 不同碳源對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	129	2.3.6 不同角蛋白基質對菌株生產角蛋白質活性的影響	147	2.4 結論	166	3. 角蛋白降解之純化與特性分析	171	3.1 前言	171	3.2 材料與方法	172	3.2.1 藥品	172	3.2.2 儀器設備	174	3.3 實驗方法	175	3.3.1 角蛋白質之純化步驟	175	3.3.1.1 粗酵素液製備	175	3.3.1.2 硫酸銨沉澱	175	3.3.1.3 膠體過濾層析	176	3.3.1.4 離子交換樹脂層析	176	3.3.1.5 十二烷基硫酸鈉聚丙烯醯胺凝膠電泳	177	3.3.2 角蛋白質之一般特性性質測定	178	3.3.2.1 角蛋白質之最適pH	178	3.3.2.2 角蛋白質之最適溫度	181	3.3.2.3 角蛋白質之pH穩定性	181	3.3.2.4 角蛋白質之熱穩定性	181	3.3.2.5 角蛋白質貯存性試驗	182	3.3.3 角蛋白質之生化特性性質測定	182	3.3.3.1 蛋白質抑制劑對酵素活性之影響	182	3.3.3.2 金屬離子對酵素活性之影響	183	3.3.3.3 有機溶劑對酵素活性之影響	183	3.3.3.4 還原劑對酵素活性之影響	184	3.3.3.5 酵素動力學	184	3.4 結果與討論	185	3.4.1 酵素純化	185	3.4.2 角蛋白質之活性之一般特性性質測定	203	3.4.2.1 最適活性反應pH值	204	3.4.2.2 最適活性反應溫度	208	3.4.2.3 貯存性試驗	212	3.4.3 角蛋白質之生化特性性質測定	216	3.4.3.1 蛋白質抑制劑對角蛋白質活性之影響	216	3.4.3.2 金屬離子對角蛋白質活性之影響	220	3.4.3.3 有機溶劑對角蛋白質活性之影響	活
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性之影響 227 3.4.3.4 還原劑對角蛋白活性之影響 233 3.4.3.5 酶素反應動力學 237 3.5 結論 240 4. 角蛋白降解菌株於生化反應器之操作 243 4.1 前言 243 4.2 材料與方法 243 4.2.1 藥品 243 4.2.2 儀器設備 244 4.2.3 實驗方法 246 4.3 結果與討論 248 4.4 結論 264 參考文獻 268 圖目錄 Figure 1-1 Schematic of this study procedure 7 Figure 1-2 The appearance conformation of feather 9 Figure 1-3 The structure of (A)The  $\alpha$ -helix and (B)  $\beta$ -sheet structure 16 Figure 1-4 The structure of (a) hydrogen bond and (b) disulfide bridge 17 Figure 2-1 Appearance of molds cultured with the screened strains and micromorphology of gram strain isolate keratinolytic 68 Figure 2-2 Phylogenetic tree basedon 16S rDNA sequence comparisons of strain Wu1 and selected bacteria 69 Figure 2-3 Phylogenetic tree basedon 16S rDNA sequence comparisons of strain Wu2 and selected bacteria 70 Figure 2-4 Phylogenetic tree basedon 16S rDNA sequence comparisons of strain Wu3 and selectedbacteria 71 Figure 2-5 Phylogenetic tree basedon 16S rDNA sequence comparisons of strain Wu4 and selectedbacteria 72 Figure 2-6 Phylogenetic tree basedon 16S rDNA sequence comparisons of strain Wu5 and selectedbacteria 73 Figure 2-7 Phylogenetic tree basedon 16S rDNA sequence comparisons of strain Wu6 and selectedbacteria 74 Figure 2-8 The effect of initial pH on keratinase activity production by Bacillus megaterium Wu1 76 Figure 2-9 The effect of initial pH on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate Bacillus megaterium Wu1 77 Figure 2-10 The effect of initial pH on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu2 79 Figure 2-11 Effect of initial pH on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate by Bacillus cereus Wu2 80 Figure 2-12 The effect of initial pH on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu3 82 Figure 2-13 Effect of initial pH on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of Bacillus cereus Wu3 83 Figure 2-14 The effect of initial pH on keratinase activity production by Brevibacillus parabrevis Wu4 85 Figure 2-15 Effect of initial pH on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate by Brevibacillus parabrevis Wu4 86 Figure 2-16 The effect of initial pH on keratinase activity production by Bacillus thuringiensis Wu5 87 Figure 2-17 Effect of initial pH on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of Bacillus thuringiensis Wu5 88 Figure 2-18 The effect of initial pH on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu6 90 Figure 2-19 Effect of initial pH on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of Bacillus cereus Wu6 91 Figure 2-20 The effect of temperature on keratinase activity production by Bacillus megaterium Wu1 94 Figure 2-21 Effect of incubation temperature on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of Bacillus megaterium Wu1 95 Figure 2-22 The effect of temperature on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu2 97 Figure 2-23 Effect of incubation temperature on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of Bacillus cereus Wu2 98 Figure 2-24 The effect of temperature on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu3 100 Figure 2-25 Effect of incubation temperature on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate by Bacillus cereus Wu3 101 Figure 2-26 The effect of temperature on keratinase activity production by Brevibacillus parabrericus Wu4 103 Figure 2-27 Effect of different incubation temperature on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate by Brevibacillus parabrericus Wu4 104 Figure 2-28 The effect of temperature on keratinase activity production by Bacillus thuringiensis Wu5 105 Figure 2-29 Effect of different incubation temperature on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate by Bacillus thuringiensis Wu5 106 Figure 2-30 The effect of temperature on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu6 108 Figure 2-31 Effect of different incubation temperature on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate by Bacillus cereus Wu6 109 Figure 2-32 The effect of various nitrogen sources on keratinase activity production by Bacillus megaterium Wu1 113 Figure 2-33 The effect of nitrogen sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of Bacillus megaterium Wu1 114 Figure 2-34 The effect of various nitrogen sources on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu2 115 Figure 2-35 The effect of nitrogen sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of Bacillus cereus Wu2 116 Figure 2-36 The effect of various nitrogen sources on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu3 118 Figure 2-37 Effect of different nitrogen sources on keratinase activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate by Bacillus cereus Wu3 119 Figure 2-38 The effect of various nitrogen sources on keratinase activity production by Brevibacillus parabrevis Wu4 121 Figure 2-39 The effect of nitrogen sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of Bacillus megaterium Wu4 122 Figure 2-40 The effect of various nitrogen sources on keratinase activity production by Bacillus thuringiensis Wu5 123 Figure 2-41 The effect of nitrogen sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of Bacillus thuringiensis Wu5 124 Figure 2-42 The effect of various nitrogen sources on keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereus Wu6 126 Figure 2-43 The effect of nitrogen sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of Bacillus cereus Wu6 127 Figure 2-44 The effect of various carbon sources keratinase activity production by Bacillus megaterium Wu1 130 Figure 2-45 The effect of various carbon sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of Bacillus megaterium Wu1 131 Figure 2-46 The effect of various carbon sources keratinase activity production by Bacillus cereusWu2 133 Figure 2-47 The effect of various carbon sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate,

maximum keratinase production rate of *Bacillus cereus* Wu2 134 Figure 2-48 The effect of various carbon sources keratinase activity production by *Bacillus cereus* Wu3 135 Figure 2-49 The effect of various carbon sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of *Bacillus cereus* Wu3 136 Figure 2-50 The effect of various carbon sources keratinase activity production by *Brevibacillus parabrevis* Wu4 138 Figure 2-51 The effect of various carbon sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of *Brevibacillus parabrevis* Wu4 139 Figure 2-52 The effect of various carbon sources keratinase activity production by *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 141 Figure 2-53 The effect of various carbon sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 142 Figure 2-54 The effect of various carbon sources keratinase activity production by *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 143 Figure 2-55 The effect of various carbon sources on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, maximum keratinase production rate of *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 144 Figure 2-56 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity production by *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 149 Figure 2-57 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 150 Figure 2-58 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity production by *Bacillus cereus* Wu2 152 Figure 2-59 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of *Bacillus cereus* Wu2 153 Figure 2-60 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity production by *Bacillus cereus* Wu3 154 Figure 2-61 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of *Bacillus cereus* Wu3 155 Figure 2-62 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity production by *Brevibacillus parabrevis* Wu4 157 Figure 2-63 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of *Brevibacillus parabrevis* Wu4 158 Figure 2-64 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity production by *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 160 Figure 2-65 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity, specific activity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 161 Figure 2-66 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity production by *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 162 Figure 2-67 The effect of various keratinous substrates on keratinase activity, specificactivity and initial keratinase production rate, max keratinase production rate of *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 163 Figure 3-1 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. megaterium* Wu1 on Sephadryl S-200 HR column. 187 Figure 3-2 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. megaterium* Wu1 on DEAE Sephadex A-50 column 189 Figure 3-3 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. cereus* Wu3 on Sephadryl S-200 HR column (first time) 191 Figure 3-4 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. cereus* Wu3 on Sephadryl S-200 HR column (second time). 192 Figure 3-5 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B.cereus* Wu3 on DEAE Sephadex A-50 column 194 Figure 3-6 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. thuringiensis* Wu5 on Sephadryl S-200 HR column 196 Figure 3-7 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. thuringiensis* Wu5 on DEAE Sephadex A-50 column 197 Figure 3-8 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. cereus* Wu6 on Sephadryl S-200 HR column 200 Figure 3-9 Elution profile after chromatography of keratinase from *B. cereus* Wu6 on DEAE Sephadex A-50 column 201 Figure 3-10 Effect of pH on the activity of purified keratinase from *B. megaterium* Wu1 205 Figure 3-11 Effect of pH on the activity of purified keratinase from *B. cereus* Wu6. 206 Figure 3-12 Effect of temperature on the activity of purified keratinase from *B. megaterium* Wu1 209 Figure 3-13 Effect of temperature on the activity of purified keratinase from *B. cereus* Wu6 211 Figure 3-14 The relative activity curves of liquid and powder keratinase of *B. megaterium* Wu1 under various storage temperature. 213 Figure 3-15 The relative activity curves of liquid and powder keratinase of *B. cereus* Wu6 under various storage temprature 214 Figure 3-16 The influence of inhibitor on keratinase activity from *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 217 Figure 3-17 The influence of inhibitor on keratinase activity from *Bacillus cereus* Wu6. 219 Figure 3-18 The influence of metal ions on keratinase activity from *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 221 Figure 3-19 The influence of metal ions on keratinase activity from *Bacillus cereus* Wu6. 225 Figure 3-20 Effect of organic solvents on activity of *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 keratinase 228 Figure 3-21 Effect of organic solvents on activity of *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 keratinase 231 Figure 3-22 Effect of reducings agents on keratinase activity of *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 235 Figure 3-23 Effect of reducings agents on keratinase activity of *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 236 Figure 3-24 Lineweaver-Burk plot of the *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 enzyme sample 238 Figure 3-25 Effect of various azo-casein concentration of the *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 enzyme sample. 238 Figure 3-26 Lineweaver-Burk plot of the *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 enzyme sample 239 Figure 3-27 Effect of various azo-casein concentration of the *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 enzyme sample 239 Figure 4-1 The illustration of continuous stirred tank reactor bioreactor in this study 245 Figure 4-2 Effect of various mixed type in CSTR on keratinase activity production by *B. megaterium* Wu1 249 Figure 4-3 Effect of various mixed type in CSTR on keratinase activity production by *B. cereus* Wu3 253 Figure 4-4 Effect of various mixed type in CSTR on keratinase activity production by *B. thuringiensis* Wu5 257 Figure 4-5 Effect of various bioreactor on keratinase activity production by *B. cereus* Wu6 261 Figure 4-6 The keratinase activity produced by *Bacillus megrterium* Wu1, *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 and *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 that cultured in 120 L bioreactor 265 表目錄 Table 1-1 The statistics of the slaughtered poultry and carcass Weight 2 Table 1-2 The amino acid contents of the feather under various treatment 3

Table 1-3 Some important microorganism keratinases: source, production condition and keratinase activity 28 Table 1-4 Characterization of keratinase from various strain 39 Table 2-1 The pre-culture medium 57 Table 2-2 Casein medium 57 Table 2-3 Feather powder medium 58 Table 2-4 The used PCR primer in this study 60 Table 2-5 The optimal culture condition of isolated strains 170 Table 3-1 The contents of various concentration of separation gel 179 Table 3-2 The contents of stacking gel 179 Table 3-3 The contents of medicament of SDS-PAGE 180 Table 3-4 Purification of keratinase from *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1 186 Table 3-5 Purification of keratinase from *Bacillus cereus* Wu3 190 Table 3-6 Purification of keratinase from *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 195 Table 3-7 Purification of keratinase from *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 198 Table 3-8 Compared with various bacteria on purification results 203 Table 4-1 The feathers were degraded in the various bioreactors by *B. megaterium* Wu1 250 Table 4-2 The feathers were degraded in the various bioreactors by *B. cereus* Wu3 254 Table 4-3 The feathers were degraded in the various bioreactors by *B. thuringiensis* Wu5 258 Table 4-4 The feathers were degraded in the various bioreactors by *B. cereus* Wu6 262 Table 4-5 The feather degraded by *Bacillus megaterium* Wu1, *Bacillus thuringiensis* Wu5 and *Bacillus cereus* Wu6 in 120 L bioreactor 266

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