

# Effect of Organic Acid Substrates on the Composition of Poly (hydroxybutyrate-co-hydroxyvalerate) Produced by Alcaligene

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## ABSTRACT

The bio-polymer, PHBV (poly-hydroxybutyrate-co- hydroxyvalerate), having physical properties similar to poly-propylene, is a kind of polyester produced by microorganisms. The application of PHBV is quite extensive because it is suitable for current polymer processing. Since PHBV is biodegradable, its usage is even more significant for environmental protection. The *Alcaligenes eutrophus* (*Ralstonia eutropha*) was under various time of feeding sodium propionate or valerate in order to study: the microbial growth rate, the PHBV accumulation, the consumption of carbon、nitrogen、sodium propionate and valerate substrates during fermentation. Results show that, the microbial growth rate, biomass increase and PHBV accumulation at different stage of feeding propionate and valerate from the largest to smallest have the order of later, middle and early. The order of the mass fraction in biomass from high to low is early, middle and later stage when the propionate was fed. For the valerate case, early stage is the highest, and the middle and the later stage are about the same. Therefore, feeding propionate or valerate at the early stage can produce a PHBV product with a higher HV mole fraction. For the carbon sources, average specific glucose and propionate consuming rates were explored. The specific consuming rate is the substrate consumption per unit residual biomass within a unit time. The specific consuming rate is the substrate consumption per unit residual biomass within a unit time. The average specific consuming rate of propionate fed at an early stage is the highest, and the PHBV has the highest HV mole fraction and the average specific PHV production rate is the highest for this stage. The mass fraction of PHBV in biomass among three stages has no substantial difference. All of them contain about 58% PHBV, but higher than those of feeding propionate. The HV:HB mole ratio in PHBV, just like the case of feeding propionate, is the highest when the valerate was fed at an early stage (HB:HV = 0.23 : 0.77); while the middle and the latter stages have no substantial difference (about 0.76:0.24). The order of average specific carbon source (glucose and valerate) consuming rates is later > middle > early. The specific microbial growth rates are early > middle > later. This may suggest that organic acidic substrates such as propionate and valerate are toxic to *Alcaligenes eutrohus*.

Keywords : PHBV ; feedback culture ; sodium propionate ; valerate ; specific growth rate ; specific consumption rate

## Table of Contents

封面內頁	頁次	簽名頁	授權書	1	iii	中文摘要	iv	英文摘要	ix
要	vi	誌謝	viii	目錄	xv	圖目錄	xix	第一章 緒論	1
錄	xiii	表目錄	xv	第二章 文獻回顧	3	2.1 生物分解性塑膠背景	3	2.2 PHB與PHBV簡介	5
第二章 文獻回顧	3	2.1 生物分解性塑膠背景	3	2.2 PHB與PHBV簡介	5	2.2.1 合成	5	2.2.2 物性	8
介	5	2.2.1 合成	5	2.2.2 物性	8	2.2.3 價格	10	2.2.4 應用情形	12
格	10	2.2.4 應用情形	12	2.2.5 台灣分解性塑膠之研發	13	2.3 微生物的代謝作用	15	2.3.1 一次代謝的生合成	15
發	13	2.3 微生物的代謝作用	15	2.3.1 一次代謝的生合成	15	2.3.2 二次代謝的生合成	15	2.3.3 微生物生長和產物形成的關係	17
成	15	2.3.2 二次代謝的生合成	15	2.3.3 微生物生長和產物形成的關係	17	2.4 PHB(V)的代謝過程	18	2.5 PHB(V)製法	24
係	17	2.4 PHB(V)的代謝過程	18	2.5 PHB(V)製法	24	2.5.1 菌種	24	2.5.2 基質	26
菌種	24	2.5.1 菌種	24	2.5.2 基質	26	2.5.3 生產技術	28	2.5.4 產品回收	31
術	28	2.5.2 基質	26	2.5.3 生產技術	28	2.5.4 產品回收	31	2.5.4.1 溶劑法	31
非溶劑法	32	2.5.4 產品回收	31	2.5.4.1 溶劑法	31	2.5.4.2 非溶劑法	32	2.5.5 PHB(V)測定	32
2.5.5.2 NMR測定法	34	2.5.5.1 GC測定法	33	2.6 發酵槽簡介	36	2.6.1 發酵槽硬體結構	36	2.6.2 發酵槽滅菌	39
36	36	2.6.2 發酵槽滅菌	39	第三章 丙酸鈉在不同饋料時間對 <i>Ralstonia eutropha</i> 生產PHBV之影響	42	3.1 前言	42	3.2 材料與方法	44
42	42	3.1 前言	42	3.2 材料與方法	44	3.2.1 實驗材料	45	3.2.1.1 菌株	45
實驗材料	45	3.2.1.1 菌株	45	3.2.1.2 培養基	45	3.2.1.3 儀器設備	46	3.2.1.4 藥品	47
儀器設備	46	3.2.1.2 培養基	45	3.2.1.3 儀器設備	46	3.2.1.4 藥品	47	3.2.2 培養條件	47
活化	47	3.2.2 培養條件	47	3.2.2.1 活化	47	3.2.2.2 預培養	48	3.2.2.3 發酵槽培養	48
法	50	3.2.2.2 預培養	48	3.2.2.3 發酵槽培養	48	3.2.3 分析方法	50	3.2.3.1 菌體量	50
源消耗量分析	51	3.2.3.1 菌體量	50	3.2.3.2 葡萄糖消耗量	50	3.2.3.3 氮源消耗量分析	51	3.2.3.4 PHBV分析	52
51	51	3.2.3.2 葡萄糖消耗量	50	3.2.3.3 氮源消耗量分析	51	3.2.3.4 PHBV分析	52	3.3 結果與討論	54



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