

Production of Biopolymers by Commercial Natto Spores

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ABSTRACT

Bacillus subtilis natto Takhashi strain, a commercial natto starter commonly used to prepare fermented soybeans products Natto, was manipulated by cultivating in appropriate media for simultaneous or selective production of poly (γ -glutamic acid) and levan. The simultaneous production of poly (γ -glutamic acid) and levan was obtained when the bacteria was cultivated in a basal medium containing both sucrose and L-glutamate. The selective production of the poly (γ -glutamic acid) or levan was obtained when the bacteria was cultivated in the medium without the presence of sucrose or L-glutamate, respectively. The products were well characterized by GPC, NMR, amino acid analysis. *Bacillus subtilis* natto Takhashi strain selectively produced a large quantity of extracellular γ -Poly glutamic acid (γ -PGA) when it was grown on 100 ml Medium E culture (Glutamic acid : 2% , $C_3H_4(OH)(COOH)_3$: 1.2% , Glycerol : 8% , NH_4Cl : 0.7% , $FeCl_3 \cdot 6H_2O$: 0.004% , $MnSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$: 0.0104% , $CaCl_2 \cdot 2H_2O$: 0.015% , $MgSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$: 0.05% , K_2HPO_4 : 0.05%). The optimum pH, temperature and agitation speed were 7.4, 37 °C, and 175 rpm respectively. Under such condition *Bacillus subtilis* natto Takhashi strain produced a maximum of 1.7 g of γ -Poly glutamic acid (γ -PGA) in 100 ml of Medium E culture. *Bacillus subtilis* natto Takhashi strain selectively produced a large quantity of extracellular levan, when it was grown on 100 ml of 20% sucrose solution (Sucrose : 20% , $MgSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$: 0.05% , $NaH_2PO_4 \cdot 2H_2O$: 0.3% , $Na_2HPO_4 \cdot 12H_2O$: 0.3%). The optimum pH, temperature and agitation speed were 7, 37 °C and 175 rpm respectively. Under such condition *Bacillus subtilis* natto (Takhashi strain) produced a maximum of 5.06 g of levan in 100 ml medium. When *Bacillus subtilis* natto Takhashi strain was grown on 100 ml medium containing both sucrose and glutamic acid (Sucrose : 5% , Glutamic acid : 1.5% , $MgSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$: 0.05% , $NaH_2PO_4 \cdot 2H_2O$: 0.3% , $Na_2HPO_4 \cdot 12H_2O$: 0.3%), it produced 1.2 g of a mixture containing levan and γ -PGA after cultivation at 37 °C, 175 rpm, pH 7 for 21 hr. The levan product consisted of two fractions of different molecular weight (1,790,000 and 11,000 Da), which was easily separated by ethanol fractionation. The effects of sucrose concentrations, initial pH, fermentation temperature, agitation speed on the levan productivity were also described.

Keywords : levan ; γ -Poly glutamic acid (γ -PGA) ; *Bacillus subtilis* natto Takhashi strain ; fermentation ; biopolymers ; shaking flask

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