Study on Production of Levan by Bacillus subtilis DYU1 in a Fermentor

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ABSTRACT

Levan is a polymer of fructose linked by -(2 - 6) fructofuranosidic bonds present in many plants and microbial products. Levan offers a variety of industrial applications in the fields of cosmetics, foods and pharmaceuticals. Although many investigations on levan formation have been reported, they suffered the disadvantages of low yields and the contamination of impure products. Thus, levan has great potential if it can be produced less expensively. To further investigate the possibility of the use of Bacillus subtilis DYU1 for the efficient production of the levan product, we studied and describe in this study the factors affecting the production of levan by this bacterium and the purification and characterization of the products. After cultivation for 24 h, 40-50 g/L of levan was produced in medium containing 20% (w/v) sucrose by B. subtilis DYU1. The product consisted of two fractions with different molecular masses $(2 \times 107$ and 1×104 Da), and the high molecular mass product $(2 \times 107$ Da) predominated during fermentation process (~ 24 h), which could be easily separated by fractionation using an ethanol gradient. The products were well characterized by Gel permeation chromatography (GPC), Fourier transform infrared (FTIR), and Nuclear magnetic reasonance (NMR). B. subtilis DYU1, which was washed with sterile water, was used to produce levan from a variety of nitrogen substrates, including yeast extract, peptone, urea, NH4Cl, NaNO3 and sweet corn extract. The B. subtilis DYU1 strain was found to be able to assimilate the two inorganic nitrogen substrates examined (NH4Cl and NaNO3), whereas it grew less efficiently in organic nitrogen substrates (especially yeast extract and sweet corn extract). The levan concentration and production rate (VL) were also influenced by the sucrose concentration. The sucrose was available utilized preferentially for levan synthesis. Maximum levan concentration (85 g/L) and VL (2.350 g/L/h) were attained at 25% sucrose concentration. Levan production from B. subtilis DYU1 was also affected by various environmental factors, i.e. pH and temperature, as pH 7 and 37 were favorable for levan production.

Keywords: Bacillus subtilis DYU1 fermentation fructan levan

Table of Contents

授權書 iii 中文摘要 iv 英文摘要 vi viii \mathbf{x} xiv 表目錄 xxv 1. 1 2. 文獻回顧 4 2.1 Levan 4 $2.1.1$ Levan 6 $2.1.2$ Levan 10 2.1.3 Levan 11 2.2 Levan 13 2.3 Levan 16 2.4 levan 18 $2.4.1$ levan 19 24.2 25 2.5 **h**evan 28 2.5.1 **h** levan 32

Figure 1-1 Overall outline of this study 3

Figure 2-1 Chemical structure of various fructans 9

Figure 2-2 Biosynthesis of levansucrase 16

Figure 3-1 The standard calibration curve

of polysaccharide concentration 65

Figure 3-2 The standard calibration curve of glucose concentration 66

Figure 3-3 The standard calibration curve of fructose concentration 66

Figure 3-4 The standard calibration curve of sucrose concentration 67

Figure 3-5 HPLC chromatogram of various saccharide concentration 67

Figure 3-6 The standard calibration curve of levan concentration 69

Figure 3-7 The standard calibration curve of molecular weight 70

Figure 4-1 Effect of different culture temperature on levan poduction by B. subtilis DYU178

Figure 4-2 Effect of different culture temperature on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 79

Figure 4-3 Effect of different culture temperature on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU180

Figure 4-4 Effect of different culture temperature on levan production rate and sucrose consume rate by B. subtilis DYU1 81

Figure 4-5 GPC chromatogram of varous temperature on levan poduction by B. subtilis DYU1 82

Figure 4-6 Arrhenius plots for (a) specific growth rate and (b) volumetric levan production rate 83

Figure 4-7 The time course of levan production and sucrose consumption by B. subtilis DYU1 in fermentation medium containing various sucrose concentration 89

Figure 4-8 Effect of different sucrose concentration on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 90

Figure 4-9 Effect of different sucrose concentration on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 91

Figure 4-10 Effect of different sucrose concentration on levan production rate and sucrose consumption rate by B. subtilis DYU1 92

Figure 4-11 Effect of levan poduction from various NH4Cl concentration by B. subtilis DYU1 97

Figure 4-12 Effect of various NH4Cl concentration on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 at various culture time 98

Figure 4-13 Effect of various NH4Cl concentration on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 99

Figure 4-14 Effect of various NH4Cl concentration on levan concentration and sucrose consumption rate by B. subtilis DYU1 100

Figure 4-15 GPC chromatogram of varous NH4Cl concentration on levan poduction by B. subtilis DYU1 101

Figure 4-16 GPC chromatogram of varous NH4Cl concentration on levan poduction by B. subtilis DYU1 (continued) 102

Figure 4-17 Effect of different metal ions on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 106

Figure 4-18 Effect of different metal ions on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 107

Figure 4-19 Effect of different metal ions on levan production

rate and sucrose consumption rate by B. subtilis DYU1 108

Figure 4-20 Effect of different metal ions on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU 1 109

Figure 4-21 GPC chromatogram of levan poduction for different growth time and different metal ions of B. subtilis DYU1 110

Figure 4-22 Effect of different metal ions on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 114

Figure 4-23 Effect of different metal ions on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 115

Figure 4-24 Effect of different metal ions on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 116

Figure 4-25 Effect of different metal ions on levan production

rate and sucrose consumption rate by B. subtilis DYU1 117

Figure 4-26 Effect of different CaCl2 concentration (add phosphate buffer) on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 121 Figure 4-27 Effect of different CaCl2 concentration on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 122 Figure 4-28 Time course of levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 at various CaCl2 concentration in the flask 123 Figure 4-29 Time course of levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 at various CaCl2 concentration in the flask 124 Figure 4-30 GPC chromatogram of levan poduction for different CaCl2 concentration of B. subtilis DYU1 125 Figure 4-31 Effect of different mixed amino acid solution (solution A and B) on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 131 Figure 4-32 Effect of different mixed amino acid solution (solution A and B) on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 132

Figure 4-33 Effect of mixed amino acid solution A on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 133 Figure 4-34 Effect of mixed amino acid solution B on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 134 Figure 4-35 Time course of levan production with mixed amino acid solution A by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 135 Figure 4-36 Time course of levan production with mixed amino acid solution B by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 136 Figure 4-37 Time course of levan production with mixed amino acid solution A by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 137 Figure 4-38 Time course of levan production with mixed amino acid solution B by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 138 Figure 4-39 The effect of different initial total sugar concentration on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 in flask culture 142 Figure 4-40 The effect of different initial total sugar concentration on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 in flask culture 143 Figure 4-41 Effect of different total sugar concentration on levan production rate and total sugar consumption rate by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 144

Figure 4-42 Effect of different total sugar concentration on levan production rate and total sugar consumption rate by B. subtilis DYU1

in the flask 145

Figure 4-43 Time course of B. subtilis DYU1 for levan production under various agitation rate in the 5L fermentator 149 Figure 4-44 Effect of different agitation rate on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 150 Figure 4-45 Effect of different agitation rate on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 151 Figure 4-46 Time course of levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 at various agitation rate in the 5L fermentor 152 Figure 4-47 Time course of levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 at various agitation rate in the 5L fermentor 153 Figure 4-48 GPC chromatogram of levan poduction for different agitation rate of B. subtilis DYU1 154 Figure 4-49 Time course of B. subtilis DYU1 for levan production under various aeration rate in the 5L fermentator 158 Figure 4-50 Effect of different aeration rate on levan poduction and apparent viscosity by B. subtilis DYU1 159 Figure 4-51 Effect of different aeration rate on biomass and levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 in the 5L fermentor 160 Figure 4-52 Time course of levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 at various aeration rate in the 5L fermentor 161 Figure 4-53 Time course of levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 at various aeration rate in the 5L fermentor 162 Figure 4-54 GPC chromatogram of levan poduction for different aeration rate of B. subtilis DYU1 163 Figure 4-55 Effect of feed batch on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 167 Figure 4-56 Effect of feed batch on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 in the flask 168 Figure 4-57 Effect of feed batch on levan production by B. subtilis DYU1 in 5L fermentator 171 Figure 4-58 Purified levan by using various agents 174 Figure 4-59 GPC chromatogram of levan poduction for different alcohol concentration of B. subtilis DYU1 175 Figure 4-60 GPC chromatogram of levan poduction for different acetone concentration of B. subtilis DYU1 176 Figure 4-61 Separate high and low molecular weight from levan 180 Figure 4-62 13C NMR of different molarcular weight of the levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 181 Figure 4-63 1H NMR of different molarcular weight of the levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 182 Figure 4-64 HPLC chromstogram of levan with various moleculear weight at different times 183 Figure 4-65 GPC chromstogram of levan with various moleculear weight at different times 184 Figure 4-66 Infrared spectra of the polysaccharide produced by B. subtilis DYU1 186 Figure 4-67 13C NMR and 1H NMR of the fructan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 188 Figure 4-68 Viscosity-shear rate profiles of different concentration aqueous solutions of the levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 196 Figure 4-69 Shear stress-shear rate profiles of different concentration aqueous solutions of the levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 197

Figure 4-70 Effect of pH on the viscosity of the aqueous solutions of the purified levan in various acid-base solution 198

Figure 4-71 1/[$\ln - 1/$ $\ln 0$ against time (min) in various acid-base solution 199

Figure 4-72 Rate constant (kb) vs pH at each different concentration of aqueous solutions of purified levan 200

Figure 4-73 GPC chromstogram of levan with various pH (pH 1-11) at different times 201

Figure 4-74 HPLC chromstogram of levan with various pH (pH 1 and 3) at different times 202

Figure 4-75 HPLC chromstogram of levan with various pH (pH 5 and 7) at different times 203

Figure 4-76 HPLC chromstogram of levan with various pH (pH 9 and 11) at different times 204

Figure 4-77 Effect of pH on the hydrolysis of the levan solution 205

Figure 4-78 HPLC chromstogram of levan with various pH (pH 1-11) after 24 h 206

Figure 4-79 Viscosity-shear rate profiles of different concentration aqueous solutions of the levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 214 Figure 4-80 Shear stress-shear rate profiles of different concentration aqueous solutions of the levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 215

Figure 4-81 Effect of temperature on the viscosity of the aqueous solutions of the levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 216

Figure 4-82 1/[$\ln 1/$ [$\ln 0$ against time (min) at different temperature 217

Figure 4-83 Rate constant (kb) vs temperature at each different concentration aqueous solutions of levan produced by B. subtilis DYU1 218

Figure 4-84 Arrhenius plots of levan degradation at different levan concentration (by B. subtilis DYU1 from this study) 219 Figure 4-85 Temperature behavior of B. subtilis DYU1 Levansucrase 222

Figure 4-86 The time course of activity of crude levansucrase from B. subtilis DYU1 224

Table 2-1 Levan production by various microorganisms 22

Table 2-2 The levansucrase product strain and its properties 30

Table 2-3 The effect of metal ions on the activity of levansucrase 38

Table 3-1 Composition of nutrient broth (NB) 60

Table 3-2 Composition of sucrose medium (SM) on levan production 61

Table 4-1 Amino acid composition of solution A and B 130

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1. Abdel-Fattah, A. F., Mahmoud, D. A. R. and Esawy, M. A. T. 2005. Production of levansucrase from Bacillus subtilis NRC 33a and enzymic synthesis of levan and fructo-oligosaccharides. Current Microbiology 51: 402-407.2.Allen, D. G. and Robinson, C. W. 1989. Hydrodynamic and mass transferr in Aspergillus niger fermentations in bubble column and loop bioreactors. Biotechnology and Bioengineering 34: 731-740.3.Allen, D. G. and Robinson, C. W. 1990. Measurement of rheological propertyes of filamentous fermentation broths. Chemical Engineering Science 45: 37-48.4.Ammar, Y. B., Matsubara, T., Ito, K., Iizuka, M., Limpaseni, T., Pongsawasdi, P. and Minamiura, N. (2002) Characterization of a thermostable levansucrase from Bacillus sp. Th4-2 capable of producing high molecular weight levan at high temperature. Journal of Biotechnology 99: 111-119.5.Archbold, H. K. 1938. Physiological studies in plant nutrition. VII. The role of fructoseans in the carbohydrate metabolism of the barley plant. Annals of Botany 2: 403-1938.6.Arrhenius, S. 1889. On the reaction velocity of the inversion of cane sugar by acids. Zeitschrift fur Physikalische Chemie. 4: 226-232.7.Arvidson, S. A., Todd Rinehart, B. and Gadala-Maria, F. 2006. Concentration regimes of solutions of levan polysaccharide from Bacillus sp. Carbohydrate Polymers 65: 144-149.8.Atkins, P. 2001. The elements of physical chemistry. (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press Inc., New York.9.Avigad, G. 1968. Levans. In Bikales, N. M. (Ed.), Encyclopedia of polymer science and technology. p. 711-718. Johb Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York.10.Bae, I. Y., Oh, IK. Lee, S. Yoo , SH. Lee, H. G. 2008. Rheological characterization of levan polysaccharides from Microbacterium laevaniformans. International Journal of Biological Macromolecules 42: 10-13.11.Barrow, K. D., Collins, J. G., Leigh, D. A., Rogers, P. L. and Warr, R. G. 1984. Sorbitol production by Zymomonas mobilis. Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology 20: 225-232.12.Beker, M. J., Shvinka, J. E., Pankova, L. M., Laivenienks, M. G. and Mezhbarde, I. N. 1990. A simultaneous sucrose bioconversion into ethanol and levan by Zymomonas mobilis. Applied Biochemistry and Biotechnology 24/25: 265-274.13.Bekers, M., Linde, R., Danilevich, A., Kaminska, E., Upite, D., Vigants, A. And Scherbaka, R. 1999. Sugar beet diffusion juice and syrup as media for ethanol and levan production by Zymomonas mobilis. Food Biotechnology 13: 107-119.14.Bekers, M., Upite, D., Kaminska, E., Grube, M., Laukevics, J., Vina, I., Vigants, A. and Zikmanis, P. 2003. Fructan biosynthesis by intra- and extracellular Zymomonas mobilis levansucrase after simultaneous production of ethanol and levan. Acta Biotechnologica 1: 85-93.15.Bekers, M., Upite, D., Kaminska, E., Laukevices, J., Grube, M., Vigants, A. And Linde, R. 2005. Stability of levan produced by Zymomonas mobilis. Procsee Biochemistry 40: 1535-1539.16.Bekers, M., Vigants, A., Laukevics, J., Toma, M., Rapoports, A., Zikmanis, P. 2000. The effect of osmo-induced stress on product formation by Zymomonas mobilis on sucrose. International Journal of Food Microbiology 55: 147-150.17.Belghith, H., Song, K. B., Kim, C. H. and Rhee, S. K. 1996. Optimal conditions for levan formation by an

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