

SCREENING OF LACTIC ACID BACTERIA AS STARTER CULTURE FOR COFFEE FERMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

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This study was conducted to screen lactic acid bacteria isolated from fermenting coffee beans as starter culture for coffee fermentation. Characterization was based on the ability to utilize various sugars, tolerate high salt concentration, grow in wide range temperature, produce high amount of lactic acid, produce aroma and inhibit other microorganisms.

A total of 80 lactic acid bacteria strains were isolated from fermenting Robusta coffee. All were Gram positive, catalase negative and aerotolerant organisms. The isolates can utilize glucose, fructose, sucrose and galactose producing varying amount of acids through either homofermentation or heterofermentation. They can grow at wide range temperatures (10-45°C) and high salt concentration (4 percent NaCl, with some up to 6.5 percent). They can metabolize arginine and citrate which are important in flavor development in fermented products. All isolates were able to lower the pH within 4 hours and acid production continued upon further incubation. The highest amount of lactic acid after 24 hours of incubation was produced by the isolate NR053. All isolates were able to inhibit the growth of other microorganisms. Among them, isolates NR053, NR055, NR058, NR095, NR101 and NR110 were selected as potential starter cultures for coffee fermentation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF APPENDIX TABLES	xi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xii
INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	1
Objectives of the Study.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	5
Time and Place of the Study	5
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	6
METHODOLOGY	16
Coffee Fermentation	16
Isolation of Lactic Acid Bacteria.....	16
Characterization of Lactic Acid Bacteria strains	17
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	22
Lactic Acid Bacteria Isolates	22
Oxygen Requirement	23
Carbohydrate Utilization	24

NaCl Tolerance	26
Temperature Tolerance	27
pH Development in Glucose Utilization	28
Lactic Acid Production	29
Arginine Hydrolysis	32
Citrate Hydrolysis.....	33
Antimicrobial Activity	34
Isolates with Potential as Starter Culture	36
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	38
Summary.....	38
Conclusion	39
Recommendations	39
REFERENCES	40
APPENDICES.....	48