

# PATENTS AND LITERATURE

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The objective of this section is to keep readers aware of significant inventions and trends in industrial research, as well as to highlight those areas of research that may lead to new biotechnological opportunities. The topics covered this year included enzymes and cells in organic solvents, applications of polysaccharides, protein engineering, DNA probes for clinical applications, and mammalian cell culture. The subject of this, the last Patents and Literature section of 1986, is microbial transformations and bioconversions.

## Microbial Transformations and Bioconversions

### Patents

This section identifies and gives a brief description of patents from the US patent literature from January 1982 to June 1986. The major search terms were: bio, enzyme, fungal, yeast, bact, and microb; with the cross terms: transformation(s), conversion(s), metabolism, and degradation. Several specific organisms and enzymes were also searched. Both US patent abstracts and titles were searched. Copies of US Patents can be obtained for \$1.50 each from the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, DC 20231.

*Cavazza, C.*

PROCESS FOR ENZYMATICALLY PRODUCING L-CARNITINE

US 4,371,618, Feb. 1, 1983

*Assignee:* Sigma-Tau Industrie Farmaceutiche Riunite S.P.A.

An enzymatic process for producing L-carnitine is described in which a solution of gamma-butyrobetaine, sodium-2-oxoglutarate, a reducing agent and a ferrous salt as a hydroxylation catalyst, is contacted with a pure preparation of the mold *Neurospora crassa*.

Chibata, I., Tosa, T., Mori, T., and Fujimura, M.

IMMOBILIZED AMINOACYLASE

US 4,390,626, June 28, 1983

Assignee: Tanabe Seiyaku Co. Ltd.

An immobilized aminoacylase is prepared by binding aminoacylase to a water-insoluble, porous anion exchanger, such as trimethylammonium-substituted styrene resin and trimethylammonium-substituted silica.

Ensley, B. D., Jr.

MICROBIAL PRODUCTION OF INDIGO

US 4,520,103, May 28, 1985

Assignee: Amgen

Microbial synthesis of indigo dyestuff in indole-free media is described. Indigo production is accomplished by genetic transformation of selected host cells, having the capacity to produce and accumulate indole, to incorporate the capacity for synthesis of an aromatic dioxygenase enzyme. Growth of transformed cells under suitable conditions facilitates aromatic dioxygenase-catalyzed transformation of cellular indole, with formation of indigo from the oxidized reaction products. For example, *E. coli* having endogenous indole production is transformed with a DNA expression vector containing the structural gene for naphthalene dioxygenase, resulting in the microbial synthesis of indigo.

Fujiwara, M., Fujiwara, A., and Miyamoto, C.

PROCESS FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF HYDROXYLATED STEROIDS

US 4,336,332, June 22, 1982

Assignee: Hoffman-La Roche, Inc.

A process is described for producing hydroxylated steroids by fermenting or reacting a steroid with *Botryodiplodia* sp. or its enzymes. The invention process produces steroid compounds that are pharmacologically valuable substances.

Goldberg, I., and Stieglitz, B.

FERMENTATION PROCESS FOR PRODUCTION OF CARBOXYLIC ACIDS

US 4,564,594, Jan. 14, 1986

Assignee: E. I. Du Pont de Nemours and Co.

An improved fermentation process for producing carboxylic acids, especially fumaric acid, is described. The improvement uses growing fungi *Rhizopus* sp. in the presence of an effective amount of an additive selected from the group consisting of fatty acid (12–24 carbons), esters, and triglyceride mixtures.

Goodhue, C. T., Kydd, G. C., Foster, C. H., and McCombs, C. A.

METHOD OF PREPARING 11-BETA,17-ALPHA,20,21-TETRAHYDROXY STEROIDS AND CORRESPONDING 11-BETA,17-ALPHA,21-TRIHYDROXY-20-OXO STEROIDS

US 4,588,683, May 13, 1986

Assignee: Eastman Kodak Company

A method is described for preparing 11-beta,17-alpha,20,21-tetrahydroxy steroids of the pregnane class. The corresponding 17-alpha,20-alpha or -beta, 21-trihydroxy steroid is incubated in the a culture medium capable of effecting the 11-beta-hydroxylation by a fungal culture, such as the genus *Curvularia*. A method for preparing 11-beta,17-alpha,-21-trihydroxy-20-oxo steroids of the pregnane class is also described. The hydroxylation method described above is followed by conversion of the resulting tetrahydroxy steroid into the corresponding trihydroxy-20-oxo steroid.

Higgins, I. J.

BIOTRANSFORMATIONS USING METHANE-UTILIZING BACTERIA

US 4,323,649, Apr. 6, 1982

Assignee: Imperial Chemical Industries Limited

The partial degradation of complex cyclicorganic compounds, such as 1-phenylheptane and *m*-chlorotoluene is performed using methane-utilizing microorganisms, such as *Methylosinus trichosporium* OB3b (NCIB 11131), or enzyme extracts containing methane mono-oxygenase and/or a dehalogenase.

Hill, F. F., Schindler, J., Schmid, R., Preuss, W., and Struve, A.

PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF DEFECTIVE MUTANTS OF MICROORGANISMS

US 4,362,815, Dec. 7, 1982

Assignee: Henkel Kommanditgesellschaft auf Aktien

The production of 17-C-steroid-alpha-propionic acid compounds by microbial side chain degradation on 17-C-side chain steroid substrates is described. Mutant strains are capable of supplying the desired compounds, e.g., delta-4 BNC and/or delta-1,4 BNC in high yields even in the absence of inhibitors that arrest the growth and degradation of the steroid ring. Suitable wild strains and mutants and their choice, production, and use, are described.

Hsieh, J. H.

CONTINUOUS FERMENTATION PROCESS AND BIOCONVERSION-  
PRODUCT RECOVERY

US 4,480,034, Oct. 30, 1984

Assignee: Celanese Corporation

A continuous bioconversion process is described, which employs a cross-flow membrane filtration zone to recover the whole cell-containing retentate stream and the cell-free bioconversion product-containing permeate stream. The retentate stream is recycled to the fermentation zone. In a specific embodiment, toluene is bio-oxidized to muconic acid with *Pseudomonas putida* Biotype A (ATCC 31,916). The muconic acid is recovered as a precipitate from the cell-free permeate fermentation broth, and the fermentation broth is recycled in the process.

Hsieh, J. H., Barer, S. J., and Maxwell, P. C.

MUCONIC ACID PRODUCTIVITY BY A STABILIZED MUTANT  
MICROORGANISM POPULATION

US, 4,535,059, Aug. 13, 1985

Assignee: Celanese Corp.

An improved fermentation process for the bioconversion of toluene to muconic acid is described. The bioconversion system is operated under phosphate-limiting conditions to achieve an increase in specific muconic acid productivity by a stabilized population of *Pseudomonas putida* Biotype A (ATCC 31,916).

Imada, Y., Osozawa, T., Morimoto, Y., and Kinoshita, M.

PROCESS FOR PREPARING ANDROSTANE STEROIDS

US 4,397,946, Aug. 9, 1983

Assignee: Mitsubishi Chemical Industries Ltd.

Androstane steroids are prepared by the microbiological conversion of a sterol substrate with *Mycobacterium* sp., in which the medium used contains at least 0.1 wt% egg yoke.

Knight, J. C., and Wovcha, M. G.

MYCOBACTERIUM FORTUITUM STRAIN

US 4,329,432, May 11, 1982

Assignee The Upjohn Co.

Novel compounds prepared by microbial transformation using mutants to selectively degrade steroids, some with 17-alkyl side chains (2–10 carbon atoms). These compounds can be used as intermediates to make useful steroids.

*Knight, J. C., and Wovcha, M. G.*

PROCESS FOR PREPARING AN INDENEDIONE AND A  
MYCOBACTERIUM CULTURE THEREFOR

US 4,443,541, Apr. 17, 1984

Assignee: The Upjohn Co.

The microbiological conversion of steroids to (2+)-(7aS) 2,3,7,7-tetrahydro-7a-methyl-(1-H)-indene-1,5(6-H)-dione (indenedione) is described.

*Kominek, L. A., and Wolf, H. J.*

PROCESS FOR PREPARING 1,2-DEHYDRO STEROIDS

US 4,524,134, June 18, 1985

Assignee: The Upjohn Co.

An improved microbial bioconversion to produce 1,2-dehydro steroids from their corresponding 1,2-saturated derivatives is described.

*Krasnobajew, V.*

MICROBIOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF IONONE  
COMPOUNDS

US 4,311,860, Jan. 19, 1982

and

US 4,390,556, June 28, 1983

and

US 4,390,557, June 28, 1983

and

US 4,402,989, Sept. 6, 1983

Assignee: Givaudan Corp.

Novel odorant and/or flavorant mixtures are prepared by fermentation of ionone type compounds with microorganisms of the genera *Botryodiplodia*, *Botryosphaeria*, or *Lasiodiplodia*.

*Kula, M. R., Hummel, W., Schutte, H., and Leuchtenberger, W.*

MICROBIOLOGICALLY PRODUCED L-PHENYLALANINE-  
DEHYDROGENASE, PROCESS FOR ITS RECOVERY AND USE

US 4,590,161, May 20, 1986

Assignee: Degussa Aktiengesellschaft; Gesellschaft fur biotechnologisch  
Forschung

A microbiologically produced L-phenylalanine-dehydrogenase and a process for its recovery from *Brevibacterium* sp. (DSM 2448) is described. The new enzyme can be used for the enzymatic conversion of phenyl pyruvic acid *p*-hydroxyphenyl pyruvic acid, indolyl pyruvic acid, or 2-keto-4-(methylmercapto)-butyric acid into the corresponding L-alpha-aminocarboxylic acids.

Kurtzman, C. P., Bothast, R. J., and VanCauwenberge, J. E.  
CONVERSION OF DXYLOSE TO ETHANOL BY THE YEAST  
*PACHYSOLEN TANNOPHILUS*

US 4,359,534, Nov. 16, 1982

Assignee: The United States of America as represented by the Secretary  
of Agriculture

A method is described for converting D-xylose to ethanol relying on the unique ability of the yeast *Pachysolen tannophilus* to ferment this 5-carbon sugar without the use of added enzymes. This process will be particularly useful in the production of ethanolic fuel from plant biomass.

Manecke, G., and Klussman, U.  
POLYMER-CONTAINING BIOCATALYST

US 4,546,078, Oct. 8, 1985

Assignee: Schering Aktiengesellschaft

A biocatalyst is described, which contains microorganisms, such as *Arthrobacter simplex*, *Aspergillus ochraceus*, *Bacillus sphaericus*, *Curvularia lunata*, *Flavobacterium dehydrogenans*, *Mycobacterium* sp., or *Saccharaomyces uvarum*, immobilized on a copolymer of acrolein and 1-vinyl-2-pyrrolidone, cross-linked by reaction with an alkylenedioxidyamine. The preparation of steroids is also described.

Marsheck, W. J., Jiu, J., and Wang, P. T.  
MICROBIAL PROCESS FOR 9-ALPHA-HYDROXYLATION OF  
STEROIDS

US 4,397,947, Aug. 9, 1983

Assignee: G. D. Searle & Co.

Valuable 9-alpha-hydroxy steroids are prepared via microbial enzymatic oxidation by fermentation utilizing *Nocardia canicruria* (ATCC 31548) without the need for the delta-(1)dehydrogenation inhibitor. A method using any delta-(1)dehydrogenase producing organism and a novel bio-reactor technique is also described for preparing these steroids.

Maxwell, P. C.  
PRODUCTION OF MUCONIC ACID

US 4,355,107, Oct. 19, 1982

Assignee: Celanese Corp.

The microbiological oxidation of toluene to muconic acid is achieved with strains of *Pseudomonas putida* Biotype A, which are capable of converting toluene to muconic acid quantitatively by the *ortho* (beta-ketoadipate) pathway. Munonate lactonizing enzyme is not induced in the microorganism, permitting the muconic acid to be produced and accumulated at a concentration of over 1 g/L.

Maxwell, P. C.

PROCESS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF MUCONIC ACID

US 4,588,688, May 13, 1986

Assignee: Celanese Corp.

A process is described for bioconversion of an organic substrate, such as ethylbenzene or catechol, to muconic acid. A procedure is provided for constructing novel strains of microorganisms, such as *Pseudomonas putida* (Biotype A), capable of converting an organic substrate to muconic acid quantitatively by the *ortho* (catechol 1,2-oxygenase) pathway. Muconate lactonizing enzyme is not induced in the microorganisms, permitting the muconic acid to be produced and accumulated at a concentration of over 1 g/L.

McCullough, J. E.

METHOD OF INCREASED PRODUCTION OF PENICILLIN

ACYLASE AND PLASMID EMPLOYED THEREIN

US 4,554,250, Nov. 19, 1985

Assignee: E. R. Squibb & Sons, Inc.

A method is described for enhancing penicillin acylase production. A *Bacillus subtilis* plasmid containing an insert of a chromosomal DNA fragment of *Bacillus megaterium*, which includes the appropriate gene for enhancing penicillin acylase production, is cloned into *B. megaterium*. The *B. megaterium* is then employed in the production of penicillin acylase.

Mitchell, T. G., Barnes, A. G., Jackson, J. S., and Bevan, P. C.

SMOKE FLAVOR ENHANCING AGENTS

US 4,441,514, Apr. 10, 1984

Assignee: British-American Tobacco Co. Ltd.

A method for enhancing the smoke flavor of a smoking material by treating it with an agent comprising 3-hydroxysclareol, particularly with the compound 3-beta-hydroxysclareol. The smoke-enhancing agent is prepared by microbial transformation of sclareol.

Okii, T., Yoshimoto, A., Matsuzawa, Y., Inui, T., Takeuchi, T., and Umezawa, H.

RHODAMYCIN ANTIBIOTICS

US 4,316,011, Feb. 16, 1982

Assignee: Sanraku-Ocean Co. Ltd.

New anthracycline glycoside derivatives of rhodomycin-group, epsilon-rhodomycin RDC, epsilon-isorhodomycin RDC, beta-rhodomycin RDC, gamma-rhodomycin RDC, gamma-rhodomycin RDRs, and beta-pyrromycin RDC having potent anticancer activities and reduced toxicities and

a process for their production by microbiological conversion are described.

*Okii, T., Yoshimoto, A., Kouno, K., Inui, T., Takeuchi, T., and Umezawa, H.*

#### PROCESS FOR PRODUCING ANTHRACYCLINE GLYCOSIDES

US 4,337,312, June 29, 1982

*Assignee:* Sanraku-Ocean Co. Ltd.

A process for producing daunomycin and baumycins having potent antitumor activity and low toxicity by the microbial conversion of anthracyclones, such as aklavinone and epsilon-rhodomyconone, is described.

*Okii, T., Yoshimoto, A., Kouno, K., Inui, T., Takeuchi, T., and Umezawa, H.*

#### 2-HYDROXYACCLACINOMYCIN A AND 2-HYDROXYAKLAVINONE AND PROCESS FOR PREPARING SAME

US 4,386,198, May 31, 1983

*Assignee:* Sanraku-Ocean Co. Ltd.

The production of new anthracycline compounds, such as, 2-hydroxyacclacinomycin A, having potent antitumor activity and reduced toxicity, and 2-hydroxyaklavinone as a useful precursor for producing anthracycline glycosides by microbial conversion are described.

*Sawada, Haruji, and Taguchi, H.*

#### METHOD FOR PRODUCTION OF URSODEOXYCHOLIC ACID BY MEANS OF MICROBIAL TRANSFORMATION

US 4,579,819, Apr. 1, 1986

*Assignee:* Kabushiki Kaisha Yakult Honsha

A one-step method of producing ursodeoxycholic acid by microbial transformation is described in which lithocholic acid is subjected to the action of a ursodeoxycholic acid-producing microorganism.

*Seely, R. J.*

#### PRODUCT AND PROCESS FOR STIMULATING BACTERIAL ACTION IN AN ANAEROBIC DIGESTION SYSTEM

US 4,529,701, July 16, 1985

*Assignee:* American Genetics International, Inc.

A method for stimulating bacterial action in an anaerobic digestion system is described. The product includes an inhibitory-ion-regulating component and an inorganic-pyrophosphate-containing compound. The process includes forming and then adding a mixture of this product to the anaerobic digestion system to stimulate and enhance bacterial growth and metabolism.



Sih, C. J.

PROCESS FOR PREPARING STEROIDS

US 4,444,884, Apr. 24, 1984

Assignee: Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

A method for enhancing the degradation of the side chain of sterols with branched chains at C-24 utilizing microbiological means is described, in which an exogenous source of bicarbonate ion is included in the medium in which the degradation is carried out.

Sonoyama, T., Kageyama, B., and Honjo, T.

PROCESS FOR PRODUCING 2-KETO-L-GULONIC ACID

US REISSUE 30,872, Feb. 23, 1982

Assignee: Shionogi & Co. Ltd.

2-Keto-L-gulonic acid is prepared from 2,5-diketo-D-gluconic acid through microbial conversion. The 2-Keto-L-gulonic acid-producing microorganism used for this microbial conversion includes strains belonging to genera of *Brevibacterium*, *Arthrobacter*, *Micrococcus*, *Staphylococcus*, *Pseudomonas*, and *Bacillus*. Both the incubation of the microorganism in a medium containing 2,5-diketo-L-gluconic acid and the direct contact of any products obtained from the cells with 2,5-diketo-D-gluconic acid may be used.

Teichmuller, G., Rabe, J., and Henkel, H.

PROCESS FOR THE SEPARATION OF 4-ANDROSTEN-3,17-DIONE  
AND 1,4-ANDROSTADIEN-3,17-DIONE

US 4,474,701, Oct. 2, 1984

Assignee: Veb Jenapharm Jena

The separation of 4-androsten-3,17-dione and 1,4-androstadien-3,17-dione mixtures, which are produced, upon microbiological sterol-side chain decomposition, is described. The separation of the products results in high yields and in sufficient purity for further work up in the synthesis of androstane and pregnane derivatives, as well as estratrienes.

Terahara, A., and Tanaka, M.

ML-236B DERIVATIVES AND THEIR PREPARATION

US 4,346,227, Aug. 24, 1982

and

US 4,410,629, Oct. 18, 1983

Assignee: Sankyo Co. Ltd.

Hydroxyacids and the corresponding ring-closed lactones, salts, and esters may be prepared by subjecting ML-236B or ML-236B carboxylic acid or a salt or ester to enzymatic hydroxylation, effected by microorganisms of the genera *Mucor*, *Rhizopus*, *Zygorynchus*, *Circinella*, *Actinomucor*, *Gongronella*, *Phycomyces*, *Martierella*, *Pycnoporus*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Absidia*, *Cunning-*

*hamella*, *Syncephalastrum*, and *Streptomyces*, or their cell-free, enzyme-containing extracts. The compounds are capable of inhibiting biosynthesis of cholesterol and are thus useful in the treatment of hypercholesteraemia.

Terahara, A., and Tanaka, M.

ML-236B DERIVATIVES

US 4,447,626, May 8, 1984

Assignee: Sankyo Company Ltd.

Assignee: Sankyo Company Ltd.

6-Methoxy-IsoML-236B lactone and its corresponding free hydroxy-carboxylic acid, salts, and esters may be prepared by the enzymatic alkoxylation of ML-236B, using a microorganism of the genus *Syncephalastrum*, *Absidia* (*Absidia coerulea*), or *Cunninghamella*, or a cell-free enzyme-containing extract. If desired, the lactone or carboxylic acid may be converted by conventional salification or esterification techniques to the desired salt or ester. These compounds have the ability to inhibit the biosynthesis of cholesterol and are of value in the treatment of hypercholesteraemia.

Terahara, A., and Tanaka, M.

ML-236B DERIVATIVES

US 4,448,979, May 15, 1984

Assignee: Sankyo Co. Ltd.

Hydroxyacids and the corresponding ring-closed lactones, salts, and esters may be prepared by subjecting ML-236B or ML-236B carboxylic acid or a salt of ester to enzymatic hydroxylation, effected by means of microorganisms of the genera *Mucor*, *Rhizopus*, *Zygorynchus*, *Circinella*, *Actinomucor*, *Gongronella*, *Phycomyces*, *Martierella*, *Pycnopus*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Absidia*, *Cunninghamella*, *Syncephalastrum*, and *Streptomyces*, or cell-free, enzyme-containing extracts. The compounds are capable of inhibiting biosynthesis of cholesterol and are useful in the treatment of hypercholesteremia.

Turner, J. R., Krupinski, V. M., Fukuda, D. S., and Baltz, R. H.

PROCESS FOR PREPARING MACROCIN DERIVATIVES

US 4,559,301, Dec. 17, 1985

Assignee: Eli Lilly and Co.

New ester derivatives are prepared by bioconversion of macrocin or lactenocin with an acylating enzyme system produced by *Streptomyces thermotolerans* strains, have improved activity against *Mycoplasma* species.

Udvardy, N., Cserey, P., Bartho, I., Hantos, G., Trinn, M., Vida, Z.,

Szejtli, J., Stadler, E., Szoke, A., Habon, I., Bal, E., and

Czurda, M. E.

PROCESS FOR THE INTENSIFICATION OF MICROBIOLOGICAL  
CONVERSIONS OF STEROIDS USING CYCLODEXTRIN  
ADDITIVES

US 4,528,271, July 9, 1985

Assignee: Richter Gedeon Vegyeszeti Gyar Rt.; Chinoin Gyogyszer- Es  
Vegyeszeti Termek Gyara Rt.

Microbiological conversions are intensified by adding to the reaction mixture 0.2–3 mol of alpha-, beta-, or gamma-cyclodextrin or an optical mixture per mole of steroid substrate. The cyclodextrin, if desired, can be removed after the reaction. In this way, the reaction velocity can be increased, the reaction time is reduced, the substrate concentration in the solution, i.e., its solubility, is increased, or the product inhibition may be avoided. In certain cases, a desired reaction can be catalyzed and in this manner selectivity is increased.

Weber, A., Kennecke, M., and Muller, R.

PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF 11-BETA,21-DIHYDROXY-2'-  
METHYL-5'BETA H-1,4-PREGNADIENO(16,17-D)-OXAZ OLE-  
3,20-DIONE

US 4,431,732, Feb. 14, 1984

Assignee: Schering Aktiengesellschaft

A process is described for preparing 11-beta,21-dihydroxy-2'-methyl-5'beta H-1,4-pregnenadieno(16,17-D)-oxazole-3,20-dione, by fermenting 11-BETA,21-dihydroxy-2'-methyl-5'beta H-4-pregnenadieno (16,17-d)-oxazole-3,20-dione with a living culture of *Arthrobacter simplex*.

Wovcha, M. G., and Biggs, C. B.

MICROORGANISM MUTANT CONVERSION OF STEROLS TO  
ANDROSTA-4-ENE-3,17-DIONE

US 4,345,030, Aug. 17, 1982

Assignee: The Upjohn Co.

A mutant is used in a microbiological process to selectively degrade steroids having 17-alkyl side chains (2–10 carbon atoms) to yield predominantly androst-4-ene-3,17-dione (AD) and small amounts of androst-1,4-diene-3,17-dione. AD is a valuable intermediate to make useful steroids.

Zeikus, J. G., and Lamed, R. J.

PREPARATION OF A NOVEL NADP-LINKED ALCOHOL-  
ALDEHYDE/KETONE OXIDOREDUCTASE FROM  
THERMOPHILIC ANAEROBIC BACTERIA FOR ANALYTICAL  
AND COMMERCIAL USE

US 4,352,885, Oct. 5, 1982

Assignee: Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

A partially purified NADP-specific thermostable oxidoreductase is prepared, which can react with a wide range of alcohols, ketones, and aldehydes. The enzyme has a unique preference for secondary over primary alcohols. The thermostability, broad range of operating temperatures, and lack of sensitivity to metal ions and complexing agents, in addition to the absolute specificity for the coenzyme, increases the utility of the enzyme in asymmetric organic synthesis and NADPH regeneration.

## Literature

This section surveys the literature in the area of microbial transformations and bioconversions published from January 1984–July 1986. This section lists all major articles and reviews that appeared during this time period.

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