

Production of Fumonisin Analogs by *Fusarium* Species

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The fumonisins, a family of food-borne carcinogenic mycotoxins, were first isolated in 1988 (21) from cultures of *Fusarium verticillioides* (Sacc.) Nirenberg (previously known as *Fusarium moniliforme* Sheldon). During the same year, the structures of the fumonisins were elucidated (6) and fumonisin B₁ was shown to cause equine leukoencephalomalacia (34). There have been numerous publications dealing with this group of novel, carcinogenic mycotoxins, and comprehensive reviews of different aspects of the fumonisins are available (20, 22, 23, 24, 35, 36, 37, 41, 43, 46, 52, 55, 60, 61, 66). Due to the widespread occurrence of the fumonisins in maize, a dietary staple in many countries, the carcinogenic risk of fumonisins to humans was evaluated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer in 1993, and the toxins produced by *F. moniliforme* were evaluated as “Group 2B carcinogens,” i.e., probably carcinogenic to humans (24). This review focuses on the *Fusarium* species that produce fumonisins and the fumonisin analogs produced by each of these species.

FUMONISIN ANALOGS

The 28 fumonisin analogs that have been characterized since 1988 can be separated into four main groups, identified as the fumonisin A, B, C, and P series (Fig. 1 and Table 1). The fumonisin B (FB) analogs, comprising toxicologically important FB₁, FB₂, and FB₃, are the most abundant naturally occurring fumonisins, with FB₁ predominating and usually being found at the highest levels (36). FB₁ typically accounts for 70 to 80% of the total fumonisins produced, while FB₂ usually makes up 15 to 25% and FB₃ usually makes up from 3 to 8% when cultured on corn or rice or in liquid medium (7, 39, 40). Apart from the FB series, some of the other analogs may occur in naturally contaminated maize at relatively low levels (<5% of the total fumonisins present) (48). These lesser-known fumonisin analogs are not detected with most analytical techniques due to the derivatization process, but they can be detected with the use of liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry with electro-spray ionization (49).

FUMONISIN PRODUCERS

Fifteen *Fusarium* species have been reported to produce fumonisins (Table 2). Eight of these are in the Section *Liseola*, i.e., *F. verticillioides*, mating population A (MP-A) in the *Gibberella fujikuroi* species complex (6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 57, 58, 62, 68, 70); *F. sacchari* (Butler) W. Gams MP-B (29); *F. fujikuroi* Niren-

berg MP-C (16); *F. proliferatum* (Matsushima) Nirenberg MP-D (4, 10, 14, 16, 25, 29, 32, 47, 49, 51, 53, 62, 70, 72); *F. subglutinans* (Wollenw. et Reinking) Nelson, Toussoun, et Marasas MP-E (29); *F. subglutinans* sensu lato, isolated from teosinte seed, representing a potentially new biological species within the *G. fujikuroi* species complex (19); *F. thapsinum* Klittich, Leslie, Nelson, et Marasas MP-F (26, 30, 45); *F. anthropophilum* (A. Braun) Wollenw. (12, 51); and *F. globosum* Rheeder, Marasas, et Nelson (69). Another five species fall within the proposed Section *Dlaminia* (27) (closely related to Section *Liseola*), i.e., *F. nygamai* Burgess et Trimboli MP-G (32, 48, 49, 51, 70); *F. dlamini* Marasas, Nelson, et Toussoun (51); and *F. napiforme* Marasas, Nelson, et Rabie (51). Trace amounts of fumonisin were detected in culture material of two newly described species, i.e., *F. andiyazi* Marasas, Rheeder, Lamprecht, Zeller, et Leslie; and *F. pseudonygamai* Nirenberg et O'Donnell (J. F. Leslie, unpublished data). The remaining two fumonisin-producing *Fusarium* species are one species in Section *Elegans*, i.e., *F. oxysporum* Schlecht. emend. Snyder et Hans. (2, 64, 65) and one in Section *Arthrosporiella*, i.e., *F. polyphialidicum* Marasas, Nelson, Toussoun, et Van Wyk (1). Reports that certain strains of *F. oxysporum* var. *redolens* (2) and *F. polyphialidicum* (1) produce fumonisins need to be confirmed by taxonomic verification of the strains in question as well as by verification of the fumonisins produced.

The only fungus that does not belong to the genus *Fusarium* that has been reported to produce fumonisins (FB₁, FB₂, and FB₃) in culture is *Alternaria alternata* (Fr.) Keissler f. sp. *lycopersici* (3, 13, 44).

The relative production of FB₁, FB₂, and FB₃ by different *Fusarium* species is briefly summarized in Table 2. The most important producers of fumonisins are *F. verticillioides* and *F. proliferatum* because of their overall high levels of production, wide geographical distribution, frequent occurrence on maize, and association with known animal mycotoxicoses (62, 63). With the exception of *F. verticillioides* and *F. proliferatum*, less than 50% of isolates of other fumonisin-producing *Fusarium* species may produce fumonisins at various levels (51).

NON-FUMONISIN PRODUCERS

Several *Fusarium* species have been reported as non-fumonisin producers, but in most cases only a few isolates per species have been analyzed. These *Fusarium* species are *F. acuminatum* Ell. et Ev. (25, 70); *F. annulatum* Bugnicourt (51); *F. avenaceum* (Fr.) Sacc. (70); *F. beomiforme* Nelson, Toussoun, et Burgess (51); *F. camptoceras* (Wollenw. et Reinking) emend. Marasas et Logrieco (25, 70); *F. circinatum* Nirenberg et O'Donnell (= *F. subglutinans* f. sp. *pini*) MP-H (19); *F. compactum* (Wollenw.) Gordon (70); *F. concolor* Reinking (56); *F. crookwellense* Burgess, Nelson, et Toussoun (= *F.*

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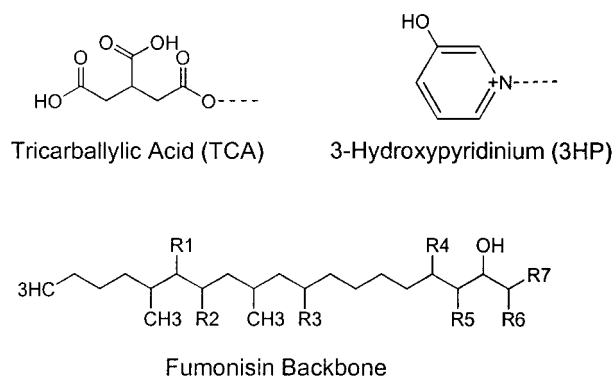


FIG. 1. Basic structure of fumonisin (see Table 1 for a list of known fumonisin analogs and the positions of R side chains).

cerealis [Cooke] Sacc.) (56); *F. culmorum* (W. G. Smith) Sacc. (56); *F. decemcellulare* Brick (70); *F. dimerum* Penzig (25); *F. equiseti* (Corda) Sacc. (25, 70); *F. graminearum* Schwabe (tel-eomorph: *G. zeae* [Schwabe] Petch) (56, 70); *F. lateritium* Nees (70); *F. longipes* Wollenw. et Reinking (70); *F. poae* (Peck) Wollenw. (70); *F. pseudograminearum* O'Donnell et Aoki (= *F. graminearum* Group 1) (56, 70); *F. reticulatum* Mont. (70); *F. sambucinum* Fuckel (56, 70); *F. scirpi* Lambotte et Fautr. (70); *F. semitectum* Berk. et Rav. (= *F. pallidoroseum* [Cooke] Sacc.) (25, 56, 70); *F. solani* (Mart.) Appel et Wollenw. emend. Snyder et Hansen (25, 70); *F. sporotrichioides* Sherb. (70); *F. suc-*

cisae (Schröter) Sacc. (51); and *F. tricinctum* (Corda) Sacc. (70).

FUMONISIN PRODUCTION BY *F. VERTICILLIOIDES*

Most isolates of *F. verticillioides* have the ability to produce fumonisins. Some of the highest FB₁ levels produced by this species have been reported with isolates from South Africa (17,900 mg kg⁻¹) (5), China (10,200 mg kg⁻¹) (72), and Argentina (8,160 mg kg⁻¹) (67). Although a few *F. verticillioides* isolates from Nepal (50) do not produce any fumonisin, other isolates from the same region have been reported to produce FB₁ at levels of up to 6,400 mg kg⁻¹ (16, 50). Several isolates of this species from Southeast Asia (42) produce fumonisins at low levels, with a maximum of 147 mg kg⁻¹, whereas some isolates from Australia (50) produced only trace quantities of FB₁.

F. verticillioides strain MRC 826 (= FRC M-1325, accession number at the Fusarium Research Center, Pennsylvania State University, Pa.), which was isolated in 1975 from maize in an area of high incidence of human esophageal cancer in the Transkei region of the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa (33), and from which the fumonisins were first isolated and characterized (21), has been used to produce fumonisins in numerous studies all over the world. "It has been the most thoroughly studied strain of *F. moniliforme* and consequently much of our knowledge of *F. moniliforme* toxicity is attributable to experiments using MRC 826 as a model" (71).

TABLE 1. Fumonisin analogs

Analog	Side chains to fumonisin backbone ^a							Reference ^b
	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	R ₄	R ₅	R ₆	R ₇	
FA ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	OH	H	NHCOCH ₃	CH ₃	6
FA ₂	TCA	TCA	H	OH	H	NHCOCH ₃	CH ₃	6
FA ₃	TCA	TCA	OH	H	H	NHCOCH ₃	CH ₃	49
PHFA _{3a}	TCA	OH	OH	H	H	NHCOCH ₃	CH ₃	59
PHFA _{3b}	OH	TCA	OH	H	H	NHCOCH ₃	CH ₃	59
HFA ₃	OH	OH	OH	H	H	NHCOCH ₃	CH ₃	59
FAK ₁	=O	TCA	OH	OH	H	NHCOCH ₃	CH ₃	47
FBK ₁	=O	TCA	OH	OH	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	49
FB ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	OH	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	21
Iso-FB ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	H	OH	NH ₂	CH ₃	31
PHFB _{1a}	TCA	OH	OH	OH	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	68
PHFB _{1b}	OH	TCA	OH	OH	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	68
HFB ₁	OH	OH	OH	OH	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	59
FB ₂	TCA	TCA	H	OH	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	21
FB ₃	TCA	TCA	OH	H	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	11
FB ₄	TCA	TCA	H	H	H	NH ₂	CH ₃	11
FB ₅ ^c								49
FC ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	OH	H	NH ₂	H	8
N-acetyl-FC ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	OH	H	NHCOCH ₃	H	65
Iso-FC ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	H	OH	NH ₂	H	65
N-acetyl-iso-FC ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	H	OH	NHCOCH ₃	H	65
OH-FC ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	OH	OH	NH ₂	H	64
N-acetyl-OH-FC ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	OH	OH	NHCOCH ₃	H	65
FC ₃	TCA	TCA	OH	H	H	NH ₂	H	64
FC ₄	TCA	TCA	H	H	H	NH ₂	H	58
FP ₁	TCA	TCA	OH	OH	H	3HP	CH ₃	48
FP ₂	TCA	TCA	H	OH	H	3HP	CH ₃	48
FP ₃	TCA	TCA	OH	H	H	3HP	CH ₃	48

^a See Fig. 1 for the structure of the fumonisin backbone and the positions of the R side chains. TCA, tricarballic acid.

^b Cited references are the first publications dealing with the analogs in question.

^c Hexahydroxyalkyl backbone; exact structure unknown at present.

TABLE 2. Fumonisin-producing *Fusarium* species, analogs produced, and the maximum yields of FB₁, FB₂, and FB₃ reported for each species

<i>Fusarium</i> sp.	Fumonisin analog(s)	Reference(s) ^a	Maximum fumonisin level (mg kg ⁻¹) for:			Reference(s) ^b
			FB ₁	FB ₂	FB ₃	
Section <i>Liseola</i>						
<i>F. verticillioides</i> MP-A	FA ₁₋₃ , FB ₁₋₅ , iso-FB ₁ , FAK ₁ , FBK ₁ , FC _{1,4} , FP ₁₋₃ , PH _{1a-b}	5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 21, 25, 30, 31, 32, 45, 48, 49, 57, 58, 68, 70	17,900	3,000	2,300	5, 30, 70
<i>F. sacchari</i> MP-B	FB ₁	29	21	NT ^c	NT	29
<i>F. fujikuroi</i> MP-C	FB ₁	16	7	NT	NT	16
<i>F. proliferatum</i> MP-D	FA ₁₋₃ , FB ₁₋₅ , FAK ₁ , FBK ₁ , FC ₁ , FP ₁₋₃ , PH _{1a-b}	10, 14, 16, 25, 32, 47, 49, 51, 53, 62, 70	31,000	17,000	5,700	10, 53
<i>F. subglutinans</i> MP-E	FB ₁	29	150	NT	NT	29
<i>F. subglutinans</i> MP- [?] ^d	FB ₁	19	230	NT	NT	19
<i>F. thapsinum</i> MP-F	FB ₁₋₃	26, 30, 45	30	5	5	30
<i>F. anthophilum</i>	FB ₁₋₂	12, 51	610	35	NT	12, 51
<i>F. globosum</i>	FB ₁₋₃	69	330	4	24	69
Section <i>Dlamini</i>						
<i>F. nygamai</i> MP-G	FA ₁₋₃ , FB ₁₋₅ , FAK ₁ , FBK ₁ , FC ₁ , FP ₁ , PH _{1a-b}	32, 48, 49, 51, 70	7,200	530	140	51, 70
<i>F. dlamini</i>	FB ₁	51	82	NT	NT	51
<i>F. napiforme</i>	FB ₁	51	480	NT	NT	51
<i>F. pseudonygamai</i>	FB ₁₋₂	31	Tr ^e	Tr	NT	31
<i>F. andiyazi</i>	FB ₁	31	Tr	ND ^f	NT	31
Section <i>Elegans</i>						
<i>F. oxysporum</i>	FC _{1,3-4} , <i>N</i> -acetyl-FC ₁ , iso-FC ₁ , <i>N</i> - acetyl-iso-FC ₁ , OH-FC ₁ , <i>N</i> -acetyl- OH-FC ₁	64, 65	NT	NT	NT	
<i>F. oxysporum</i> var. <i>redolens</i>	FB ₁₋₃	2	300	6	0.9	2
Section <i>Arthrosporiella</i>						
<i>F. polyphialidicum</i>	FB ₁	1	500	NT	NT	1

^a References to the analogs produced by each *Fusarium* species.

^b References to the maximum FB₁, FB₂, and FB₃ yields in culture. Where more than one reference is cited, the maximum levels for FB₁, FB₂, and FB₃ are summarized from multiple reports.

^c NT, not tested.

^d *F. subglutinans* sensu lato. These strains were nonfertile with tester strains of mating populations B, E, and H within the *G. fujikuroi* species complex (19).

^e Tr, trace amounts (1 to 4 ng g⁻¹) were detected.

^f ND, not detected (<1 ng g⁻¹).

The highest yield of FB₁ (17,900 mg kg⁻¹) by *F. verticillioides* was obtained from whole maize kernels as culture material, with *F. verticillioides* MRC 826 as inoculum, incubated at 20°C in the dark for 13 weeks (5). The highest yield of FB₁ that has been reported for a *Fusarium* species was obtained with a maize isolate of *F. proliferatum* (no accession number given) from Spain cultured on whole maize (31,000 mg kg⁻¹) (10). This isolate also produced the highest published yield of FB₂ (17,000 mg kg⁻¹). *F. proliferatum* M-6284, cultured on whole yellow maize, produced the highest reported yield of FB₃ (5,700 mg kg⁻¹) (53).

CONCLUSION

Numerous studies have provided valuable data on the toxicology of purified fumonisins of the FB series, yet the search continues for other toxic fumonisin analogs which may also pose a health risk to humans and animals. Maize and maize-based products have been the main focus of fumonisin research due to the widespread contamination of this food source by relatively high levels of FB₁, FB₂, and FB₃. As additional and new *Fusarium* species with various fumonisin-producing capabilities are described from other agriculturally

important crops, such as sorghum (38) and millet (54), it becomes necessary to determine whether fumonisins also occur in these crops and, if so, to determine which analogs occur and at what levels.

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