



Complete genome sequence of *Bacillus velezensis* ZY-1-1 reveals the genetic basis for its hemicellulosic/cellulosic substrate-inducible xylanase and cellulase activities

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Abstract

Bacillus velezensis ZY-1-1 was isolated from the larval gut of the lignocellulose-rich diet-fed scarab beetle, *Holotrichia parallela*, and confirmed to possess extremely high xylanase (48153.8 ± 412.1 U/L) and relatively moderate cellulase activity (610.1 ± 8.2 U/L). Notably, these xylanase and cellulase activities were enhanced by xylan (1.4 and 5.8-fold, respectively) and cellulose (1.1 and 3.5-fold, respectively), which indicated the hemicellulosic/cellulosic substrate-inducible lignocellulolytic activities of this strain. The complete genome of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 comprises of 3,899,251 bp in a circular chromosome with a G + C content of 46.6%. Among the predicted 3688 protein-coding genes, 24 genes are involved in the degradation of lignocellulose and other polysaccharides, including 8, 7 and 2 critical genes for the degradation of xylan, cellulose and lignin, respectively. This genome-based analysis will facilitate our understanding of the mechanism underlying the biodegradation of lignocellulose and the biotechnological application of this novel lignocellulolytic bacteria or related enzymes.

Keywords *Bacillus velezensis* · Complete genome · Xylanase · Cellulase · Substrate induction

Genome reports

The lignocellulosic biomass of plants is the most abundantly available raw material that is used for producing renewable biofuels and other high-value chemicals. However, these lignocellulosic materials are primarily composed of cellulose and hemicellulose strands, which are stably held together by lignin. Currently, lignocellulose degradation, the first key step of lignocellulosic biomass application, is still a great challenge (Glaser 2015; Mansour et al. 2016). In fact, there are many specific environments and niches (including the gut of insects living on lignocellulose-rich diets) that possess lignocellulolytic abilities, which have been partially

attributed to the microbes and considered valuable treasures for screening lignocellulolytic microbes and related enzymes (Hongoh 2010; Sheng et al. 2012; de Gonzalo et al. 2016). This strategy of enzymatic hydrolysis of lignocellulose based on microbes and microbial sourced genes has received remarkable attention both in the industry and the academic communities worldwide.

In this study, we isolated a new lignocellulose-degrading bacterium, strain ZY-1-1, from the larval gut of the scarab beetle, *Holotrichia parallela* (coleoptera: scarabaeidae), which is fed on lignocellulose-rich diets (Zhang and Jackson 2008). Strain ZY-1-1 showed high extracellular lignocellulolytic activities, including hemicellulosic/cellulosic substrate-inducible, extremely high xylanase and relatively moderate cellulase activities. First, using Congo red staining method (Teather and Wood 1982), we found that strain ZY-1-1 grew well and formed a gradually increasing clear zone along with the strain's growth on a basic agar plate with xylan (for xylanase screening) or carboxymethylcellulose (CMC, for cellulase screening). Strain ZY-1-1, growing on the basic agar plate with xylan, formed larger clear zones and higher diameter ratios of clear zone to bacterial colony (highest ratio value of 9.70 ± 1.35 vs. 6.31 ± 0.47), compared to the growth on the

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basic agar plate with CMC (Fig. 1a–d). Then, the extracellular lignocellulolytic activities of strain ZY-1-1 were determined by the dinitrosalicylic acid (DNS) spectrophotometric method (Dutta et al. 2014). Strain ZY-1-1 was cultured in liquid Luria broth (LB) for 23 h, and the xylanase and cellulase activities of the supernatant were determined to be 48153.8 ± 412.1 and 610.1 ± 8.2 U/L, respectively (Fig. 1e). To evaluate the carbohydrate substrate-inducing effect on the lignocellulolytic activities, strain ZY-1-1 was cultured in the liquid basic medium with or without carbohydrate substrates (basic medium, basic + xylan medium and basic + CMC medium). The xylanase and cellulase activities were highest just before the early-stationary phase (22–23 h) during the growth, and then fluctuated in the stationary phase (Fig. 1f–h). After 23 h culturing, the xylanase activity of strain ZY-1-1 in the supernatant of the basic + xylan medium (35892.3 ± 234.3 U/L) was 1.3- and 1.4-fold higher than that of the basic + CMC medium (27988.2 ± 524.8 U/L) and the basic medium (26119.5 ± 111.1 U/L), respectively. Meanwhile, after culturing for 23 h, the cellulase activities in the supernatant of the basic + xylan medium, the basic + CMC medium and the basic medium were 2104.9 ± 65.7 , 1274.0 ± 23.2 and $365.8.5 \pm 0.5$ U/L, respectively, which indicated a significant xylan and CMC-induced effect on cellulase activity of strain ZY-1-1 (5.8- and 3.5-fold, respectively) (Fig. 1i). Taken together, the strain ZY-1-1 exhibited a significant hemicellulosic/cellulosic substrate-induced, and novel pattern of lignocellulolytic activities, which indicated much higher xylanase activity than cellulase activity. Our results are quite different from previous reports of other lignocellulolytic *Bacillus* strains, such as *Bacillus* sp. 275, *Bacillus* sp. R2 and *B. velezensis* 157, which indicated much higher cellulase activities than xylanase activities (Khelil et al. 2016; Gong et al. 2017; Chen et al. 2018). This implies that the strain ZY-1-1 possess a varied regulation mechanism for novel genes encoding lignocellulolytic enzymes, that deserves further investigation.

Then, the genome of strain ZY-1-1 was sequenced using two sequencing techniques, including the PacBio RSII system (MenloPark, CA, USA) as the third-generation sequencing technology and Illumina HiSeq (151-bp paired-end) as the second-generation sequencing technology. The reads from the former system were assembled by Canu software (Koren et al. 2017) and the latter by A5-miseq (Tatusova et al. 2016). Then, to form the complete genome sequence, the assembled contigs from both sequencing systems were combined and rectified using pilon software (Walker et al. 2014). The complete genome sequence was then generated by combining the data followed by rectification using pilon software (Walker et al. 2014). The complete genome of strain ZY-1-1 consisted of one 3,899,251 bp chromosome with 3688 protein-coding genes, 87 tRNA genes and

27 rRNA genes, and an average G + C content of 46.57% (Table 1 and Fig. S2).

Afterward, strain ZY-1-1 was classified into *B. velezensis*, which was a re-classified *Bacillus* species including conspecific *B. velezensis*, *B. methylotrophicus* and *B. amyloliquefaciens* subsp. *Plantarum* (Dunlap et al. 2016; Fan et al. 2017), according to its morphological characteristic, 16S rRNA and complete genome sequences. Strain ZY-1-1 held the typical morphological characteristics of the *Bacillus* species with rod-shaped vegetative cells and endospores (Fig. S1). Based on the 16S rRNA gene phylogenetic analysis result, it was then affiliated with the *B. subtilis* group (Fig. 2). To identify the species information, the whole genome sequence of strain ZY-1-1 was analyzed by genome BLAST, and six strains (including *B. velezensis* JJ-D34, *B. velezensis* M75, *B. velezensis* CAU B946, *B. velezensis* NJN-6, *B. amyloliquefaciens* Y14 and *B. amyloliquefaciens* LM2303) were found to be extremely similar with strain ZY-1-1 (all identities = 99%), and all six strains belonged to the *B. velezensis* (Table 2). Correspondingly, high average nucleotide identity (ANI) values (> 97.5%) and a similar G + C content were observed when the genome sequence of strain ZY-1-1 was compared with 19 strains of *B. velezensis*, while all ANI values were below 94.5% when compared with strains of other *Bacillus* species (Table 2). Based on the above results, the strain ZY-1-1 was named *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1.

The *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 genes were annotated using the NCBI Prokaryotic Genomes Annotation Pipeline (PGAP) (Tatusova et al. 2016). Then, the protein-coding genes were further annotated and were classified into 22, 74, and 43 functional classes based on Cluster of Orthologous Groups (COG), Gene Ontology (GO) and Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG), respectively. In addition, 243, 126, and 232 carbohydrate metabolism-related genes were classified into the classes of “Carbohydrate transport and metabolism”, “Carbohydrate metabolic process” and “Carbohydrate metabolism” through the COG, GO and KEGG analyses, respectively (Table S1). The detailed classification information for the protein-coding genes could be found in Fig. S4–S6. Based on HMMER (version 3.0) software, which is based on the Carbohydrate active enzymes (CAZy) database, 125 genes were predicted into CAZy family, including 40 glycoside hydrolases (GHs) genes, 34 glycosyl transferases (GTs) genes, 2 polysaccharide lyases (PLs) genes, 31 carbohydrate esterases (CEs) genes and 6 auxiliary activities (AAs) genes. Moreover, 33, 22 and 3 genes were predicted for antibiotic resistance, antibiotic target and antibiotic biosynthesis, respectively, through the BLAST analysis against Comprehensive Antibiotic Resistance Database (CARD) (McArthur et al. 2013).

To identify the genes related to the lignocellulosic degradation in *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1, the genes encoding known lignocellulolytic enzymes, which were confirmed

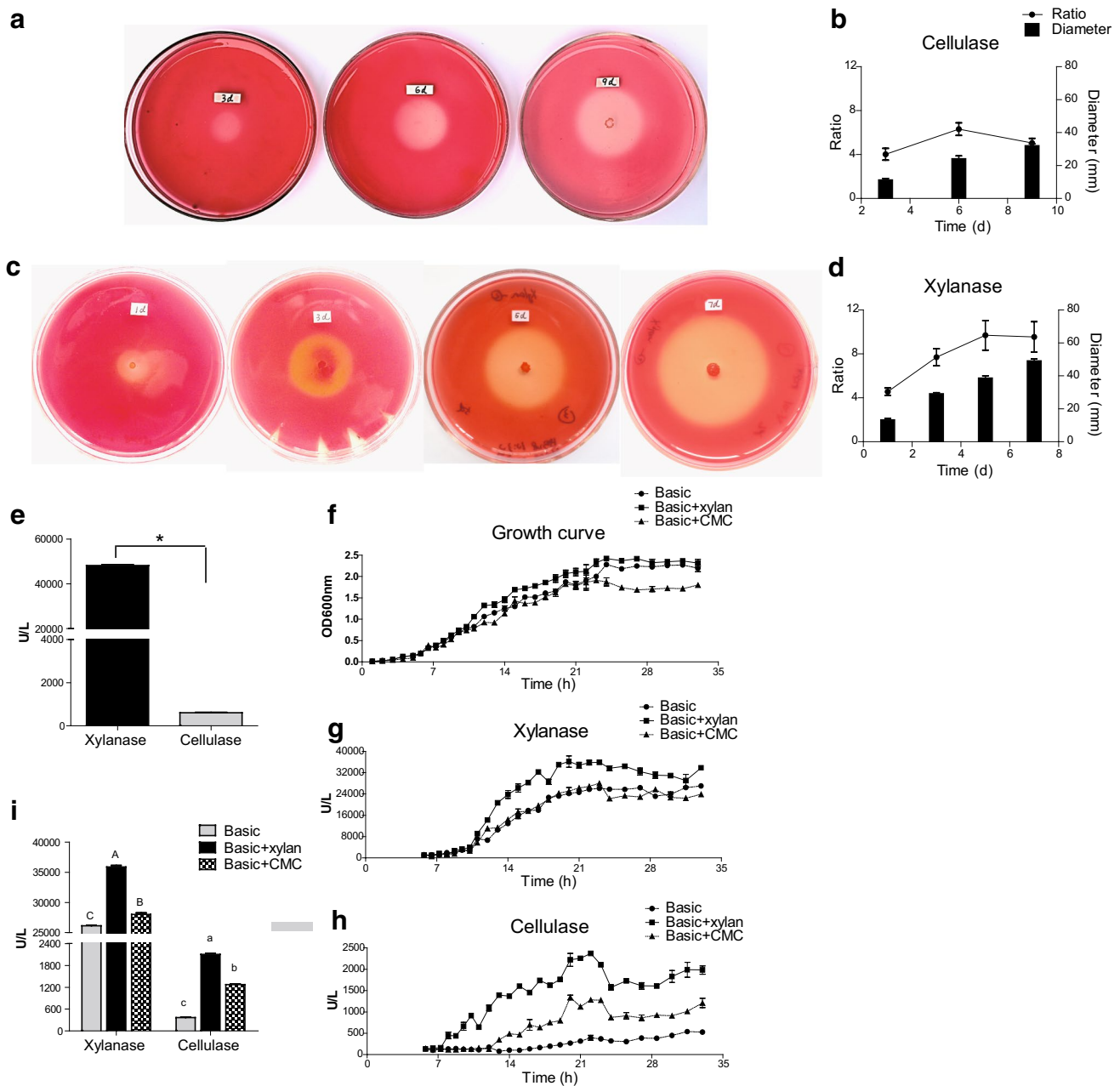


Fig. 1 Lignocellulolytic activities of *Bacillus velezensis* ZY-1-1. **a, b** Degradation of carboxymethylcellulose (CMC) during the cultivation of *Bacillus* ZY-1-1 for 3 days, 6 days and 9 days on the basic agar plate with CMC was determined by the Congo red staining (Teather and Wood 1982) (**a**); meanwhile, the clear zone diameter and the diameter ratio of clear zone to bacterial colony (**b**) were calculated. **c, d** The degradation of xylan during cultivation of *Bacillus* ZY-1-1 for 1 day, 3 days, 5 days and 7 days on the basic agar plate with xylan was determined by the Congo red staining (**c**); meanwhile, the clear zone diameter and the diameter ratio of clear zone to bacterial colony (**d**) were calculated. **e** The xylanase and cellulase activities after cultivation in liquid Luria broth (LB) for 23 h; “Asterisk” indicates a significant difference between xylanase and cellulase activities ($P < 0.05$, t test). **f–h** The growth curve (**f**) and the dynamics of xylanase (**g**)

and cellulase (**h**) activities of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 during the cultivation in the liquid basic, basic+xylan and basic+CMC medium were determined by the method described in the Supplementary Methods. The optimal temperature and pH for the enzymatic reaction were confirmed as 50 °C and pH 5.0 for xylanase, and 50 °C and pH 4.0 for cellulase (Fig. S1). (**i**) The xylanase or cellulase activities of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 were compared between the culture supernatants of the liquid basic, basic+xylan and basic+CMC medium after 23 h cultivation. The different letters indicate significant differences in the activity ($P < 0.05$, Tukey’s test following ANOVA analysis). The values are means \pm SE. The repetition numbers (n) were 3 for (**b**) and (**d**), and 4 for (**e–i**). All medium formulas and statistical analyses mentioned above were described in the Supplementary Methods

Table 1 Genome features of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1

Features	Chromosome
Genome size (bp)	3,899,251
G + C content (%)	46.6
Total genes	3919
Protein-coding genes (CDS)	3688
5 s rRNA	9
16 s rRNA	9
23 s rRNA	9
tRNA	87

in other bacterial species, were selected as the query sequences, and a BLASTp search of the *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 genome was carried out (Table 3, S2). For xylan degradation, the genes encoding endo-1,4- β -xylanase (AVX15758.1), glucuronoxylanase (AVX17235.1) and 1,4- β -xylosidase (AVX17306.1) to hydrolyze the main chain of xylan were annotated, which cooperated with arabinosidase (AVX16491.1, AVX16510.1), arabinoxylan arabinofuranohydrolase (AVX17234.1), β -mannanase (AVX15568.1), and acetylxylan esterase (AVX18602.1) to hydrolyze the branched chain of xylan or other hemicelluloses (Sheng et al. 2014). For cellulose degradation, we observed the endo-1,4- β -glucanase (AVX17239.1) and endo- β -1,3-1,4 glucanase (AVX15545.1) for endoform hydrolysis of (1-4)-beta-D-glucosidic linkages, and

β -glucosidase (AVX18716.1, AVX15571.1, AVX15585.1, AVX16352.1, AVX17112.1) for hydrolysis of cellobiose or celooligosaccharides (Wilson 2011). Meanwhile, for lignin degradation, the genes encoding laccase (AVX18327.1) and deferrochelatae (AVX15607.1) were also found. Furthermore, we observed some other glycosidases, including endo-1,5- α -L-arabinanase (AVX16483.1), galactanase (AVX17829.1), 6-phospho- β -galactosidase (AVX17823.1), oligo-1,6-glucosidase (AVX16273.1, AVX18210.1, AVX18633.1) and 6-phospho- α -D-glucosidase (AVX18175.1). These findings imply that this lignocellulolytic strain may have the potential ability to utilize other polysaccharides, such as arabinan, starch and galactoside.

In conclusion, *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 displayed tremendous xylanolytic activity and relatively moderate cellulolytic activity. Both activities were significantly induced by hemicellulosic/cellulosic substrates. Based on the complete genome information, the lignocellulose degradation-related genes were annotated using a BLAST analysis by comparing them to reference genes with confirmed lignocellulolytic activities. This genome-based analysis facilitated the identification of novel functional genes and provided an insight into the regulation mechanism underlying the degradation of lignocellulose in bacteria, especially the genus *Bacillus*. These results shed light into the bacteria-sourced mechanism of lignocellulolytic degradation and enhanced the application potential of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 for the biomass energy industry.

Fig. 2 Phylogenetic tree based on the partial 16S rRNA sequence of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 and other homologous *Bacillus* strains. The tree was constructed using the neighbor-joining method by MEGA7 (Kumar et al. 2016). The GenBank accession numbers of all the sequences are indicated in parentheses. The bar represents 0.02 substitutions per site. *Dermbacter hominis* (*D. hominis*) strain NCFB 2769 was used as the outgroup

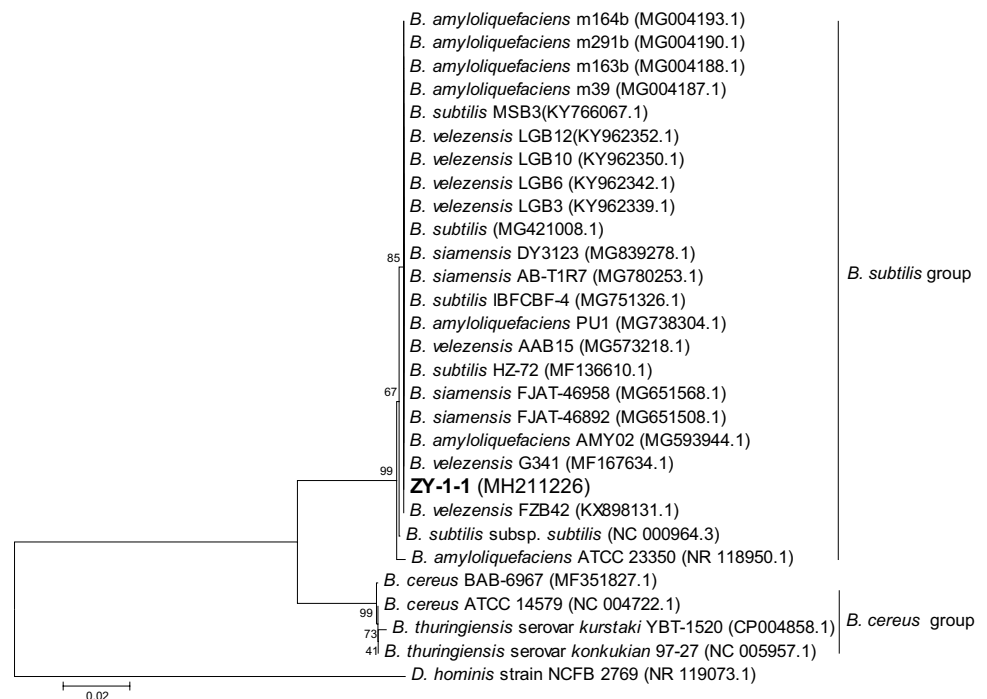


Table 2 Average nucleotide identity (ANI) analysis of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1

Strain name	Accession number	Assembly level	G + C%	OrthoA-ANI value (%) ^a
Operational group <i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i>^b				
<i>B. velezensis</i> (<i>B. velezensis</i> / <i>B. methylotrophicus</i> / <i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> ssp. <i>Plantarum</i>) ^c				
<i>B. velezensis</i> KCTC 13012 ^T	GCA_001267695.1	Scaffold	46.3	97.8
<i>B. velezensis</i> JJ-D34 ^d	CP011346.1	Complete	46.4	99.5
<i>B. velezensis</i> M75 ^d	CP016395.1	Complete	46.4	99.4
<i>B. velezensis</i> AS43.3	NC_019842.1	Complete	46.6	97.7
<i>B. velezensis</i> CAU B946 ^d	NC_016784.1	Complete	46.5	99.4
<i>B. velezensis</i> NAU-B3	NC_022530.1	Complete	46.0	97.7
<i>B. velezensis</i> NJN-6 ^d	NZ_CP007165.1	Complete	46.6	99.5
<i>B. velezensis</i> SQR9	NZ_CP006890.1	Complete	46.1	97.7
<i>B. velezensis</i> TrigoCor1448	NZ_CP007244.1	Complete	46.5	97.7
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> ssp. <i>plantarum</i> FZB42 ^T	NC_009725.1	Complete	46.5	97.7
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> ssp. <i>plantarum</i> CAU B946	HE617159.1	Complete	46.4	99.4
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> CC178	NC_022653.1	Complete	46.5	97.7
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> IT-45	NC_020272.1	Complete	46.6	99.5
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> KHG19	NZ_CP007242.1	Complete	46.6	97.7
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> Y14 ^d	CP017953.1	Complete	46.4	99.5
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> LM2303 ^d	CP018152.1	Complete	46.4	99.5
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> LFB112	NC_023073.1	Complete	46.7	99.4
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> UMAF6639	NZ_CP006058.1	Complete	46.3	97.6
<i>B. methylotrophicus</i> KACC 13105 ^T	GCA_000960265.2	Contig	46.4	97.8
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i>				
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> DSM 7 ^T	NC_014551.1	Complete	46.1	94.0
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> TA208	NC_017188.1	Complete	45.8	93.9
<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i> XH7	NC_017191.1	Complete	45.8	94.0
<i>B. siamensis</i>				
<i>B. siamensis</i> KCTC 13613 ^T	AJVF00000000	Contig	46.3	94.3
<i>B. siamensis</i> XY18	LAGT01000000	Contig	46.3	94.3
<i>B. siamensis</i> 7551	NPCI01000000	Contig	46.4	94.3
Other <i>Bacillus</i> species				
<i>B. vallismortis</i>				
<i>B. vallismortis</i> DV1-F-3 ^T	AFSH01000000	Scaffold	43.8	76.8
<i>B. vallismortis</i> TD3	NXEM01000000	Scaffold	43.9	77.1
<i>B. vallismortis</i> B4144_201601	LQYR01000000	Scaffold	43.0	77.1
<i>B. subtilis</i>				
<i>B. subtilis</i> subsp. <i>subtilis</i> 168	NC_000964.3	Complete	43.5	77.2
<i>B. cereus</i>				
<i>B. cereus</i> ATCC 14579 ^T	NC_004722.1	Complete	35.3	68.1
<i>B. thuringiensis</i>				
<i>B. thuringiensis</i> serovar konkukian 97–27	NC_005957.1	Complete	34.9	68.3

^aThe ANI values were calculated using OrthoANIu, an improved algorithm and software for calculating ANI (Yoon et al. 2017), through online tools of EZBioCloud (<https://www.ezbiocloud.net/tools/ani>)

^bOperational group *B. amyloliquefaciens* is composed of *B. velezensis*, *B. amyloliquefaciens* and *B. siamensis* (Dunlap et al. 2016; Fan et al. 2017)

^c*B. velezensis* is a re-classified *Bacillus* species including conspecific *B. velezensis*, *B. methylotrophicus* and *B. amyloliquefaciens* subsp. *Plantarum* (Dunlap et al. 2016)

^dThis strain was extremely similar (identity = 99%) to *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 based on genome BLAST analysis

Table 3 Annotated genes encoding lignocellulose-degrading enzymes in *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1

Gene of <i>B. velezensis</i> ZY-1-1		Reference gene		BLASTp identity (%)	BLASTp coverage (%)	
Annotation	Accession no. (NCBI)	Accession no. (UniProtKB)	Species		Annotated Gene	Reference Gene
<i>Hemicellulose-related</i>						
Endo-1,4- β -xylanase	AVX15758.1	P18429	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	95.00	100.00	100.00
Glucuronoxylanase	AVX17235.1	Q45070	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	90.00	100.00	100.00
1,4- β -Xylosidase	AVX17306.1	P94489	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	94.90	100.00	88.37
Arabinosidase	AVX16491.1	P94531	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	87.10	99.40	99.20
Arabinosidase	AVX16510.1	P94552	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	80.73	99.40	99.60
Arabinoxylan arabinofuranohydrolase	AVX17234.1	Q45071	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	91.56	100.00	87.72
β -Mannanase	AVX15568.1	O05512	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	74.31	100.00	100.00
Acetylxylan esterase	AVX18602.1	P94388	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	83.96	100.00	100.00
Endo-1,5- α -L-arabinanase	AVX16483.1	Q93HT9	<i>Geobacillus thermodenitrificans</i>	51.00	89.41	94.25
Galactanase	AVX17829.1	Q65CX5	<i>B. licheniformis</i> ATCC 14580	30.48	79.19	70.52
6-Phospho- β -galactosidase	AVX17823.1	C7N8L9	<i>Leptotrichia buccalis</i> ATCC 14201	61.00	99.36	99.36
<i>Cellulose-related</i>						
Endo-1,4- β -glucanase	AVX17239.1	P07983	<i>B. subtilis</i> DLG	96.79	100.00	100.00
β -Glucanase/ Endo- β -1,3-1,4 glucanase	AVX15545.1	P07980	<i>B. amyloliquefaciens</i>	92.47	98.35	100.00
β -Glucosidase	AVX18716.1	Q7WUL3	<i>Cellulomonas fimi</i>	29.12	65.78	68.44
6-Phospho- β -glucosidase	AVX15571.1	O05508	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	81.96	98.71	98.92
6-Phospho- β -glucosidase	AVX15585.1	P46320	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	94.57	100.00	100.00
6-Phospho- β -glucosidase	AVX16352.1	P46320	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	29.50	99.31	97.51
Aryl-phospho- β -D-glucosidase	AVX17112.1	P42973	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	88.66	99.17	99.37
Oligo-1,6-glucosidase	AVX16273.1	P29093	<i>Bacillus</i> sp. F5	47.56	90.40	99.61
Oligo-1,6-glucosidase	AVX18210.1	O06994	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	50.27	98.04	99.11
Oligo-1,6-glucosidase	AVX18633.1	O06994	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	49.19	98.57	98.75
6-Phospho- α -D-glucosidase	AVX18175.1	P54716	<i>B. subtilis</i> 168	92.43	100.00	100.00
<i>Lignin-related</i>						
Laccase	AVX18327.1	D4GPK6	<i>Haloferax volcanii</i> ATCC 29605	38.92	98.83	85.32
Deferrochelataase	AVX15607.1	Q8XAS4	<i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7	39.04	84.93	86.76

The references which confirmed the specific enzymatic activities of the reference genes are listed in Table S2

Accession numbers

The genome sequence of *B. velezensis* ZY-1-1 was deposited into the GenBank under the accession number CP027061. The strain is available from the China Center for Type Culture Collection (CCTCC) with the deposition number M2018180.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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