

Table S1. *S. meliloti* and *B. abortus rib* mutants

Strain name	Genotype	Requirement of RF for growth
Rm1021	Wild type <i>S. meliloti</i>	No
Rm1021 Δ <i>ribBA</i> -RFA-12	SMc02977-3098741*:: <i>Tn5</i> -mini mutant of Rm1021 Δ <i>ribBA</i>	Yes
Rm1021 Δ <i>ribBA</i> -RFA- Σ	SMc02977-3098830:: <i>Tn5</i> -mini mutant of Rm1021 Δ <i>ribBA</i>	Yes
Td-Rm1021-RFA-12	Transductant of SMc02977-3098741:: <i>Tn5</i> into Rm1021	Yes
Td-Rm1021-RFA- Σ	Transductant of SMc02977-3098830:: <i>Tn5</i> into Rm1021	Yes
Rm1021 Δ SMc02977	SMc02977 deletion mutant of Rm1021	Yes
Rm1021 Δ <i>ribBA</i> Δ SMc02977	SMc02977 deletion mutant of Rm1021 Δ <i>ribBA</i>	Yes
Rm1021 Δ SMc02977(pCPP- <i>Ba-bab2_0247</i> -expr)	Rm1021 Δ SMc02977 overexpressing SMc02977 homolog from <i>B. abortus</i>	No
Rm1021 Δ SMc02977(pCPP- <i>Ls-ckc_00410</i> -expr)	Rm1021 Δ SMc02977 overexpressing SMc02977 homolog from <i>L. solanacearum</i>	No
Rm1021 Δ SMc02977(pCPP- <i>Me-metdi4691</i> -expr)	Rm1021 Δ SMc02977 overexpressing SMc02977 homolog from <i>M. extorquens</i>	Yes
Rm1021 Δ SMc02977(pCPP- <i>Oa_Oant_3869</i> -expr)	Rm1021 Δ SMc02977 overexpressing SMc02977 homolog from <i>O. anthropi</i>	Yes
Rm1021 Δ SMc02976	SMc02976 deletion mutant of Rm1021	No
Rm1021 Δ SMc02978	SMc02978 deletion mutant of Rm1021	No
JB32	<i>bab2_0247</i> deletion mutant of Ba 2308	Yes
JB24	<i>bab1_0455</i> deletion mutant of Ba 2308	No

*The numbers indicate the position of the transition from the *Tn5* shoulder to the *S. meliloti* Rm1021 sequence