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Production of valuable rare sugars, D-psicose and D-allose, from glucose and fructose

Sook-Hee Lee, Sang-Hwal Yun, So-Won Ock, Jung-Hun Kim, Cui Li, Ju-Eun Kim, Hye-Min Park, Min-Soo Ko*, Deok-Kun Oh** and Seon-Won Kim

Division of Applied Life Science(BK21), Graduate School of Gyeongsang National University, Jinju 660-701, Korea, *SolGent Co.,

**Dept. of Biotechnology, Sejong University

D-Psicose and D-allose, a rare keto and aldo-hexose, are not abundant in nature and are difficult to prepare by chemical methods. For the production of D-psicose and D-allose, we used allose operon of *Escherichia coli*, and D-tagatose 3-epimerase of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* and L-rhamnose isomerase of *E. coli*. In order to use the allose operon, *E. coli* was transformed with pTalsEBK containing *alsE*, *rpiB*, and *alsK*. When *E. coli* harboring pTalsEBK was cultivated in 2YT medium with 30g/ℓ of glucose or fructose, 1g/ℓ of D-psicose was obtained approximately. It seems that *rpiB* can not convert psicose-6-phosphate to allose-6-phosphate. Therefore, psicose-6-phosphate 3-epimerase and allose-6-phosphate isomerase encoded by *alsE* and *rpiB* were purified and the in vitro reaction catalyzed by these enzymes were investigated. Psicose-6-phosphate 3-epimerase can epimerize fructose-6-phosphate to psicose-6-phosphate and has no substrate specificity on unphosphorylated fructose. Allose-6-phosphate isomerase can isomerize D-allose to D-psicose but, not D-psicose to D-allose. The other scheme for production of the rare sugars was performed with D-tagatose 3-epimerase and L-rhamnose isomerase by which fructose was epimerized to D-psicose and then isomerized to D-allose. When recombinant *E. coli* harboring pTTE-rhaA with *Atu4750* and *rhaA* was cultivated in 2YT medium containing 30g/ℓ of fructose, both rare sugars of D-psicose and D-allose were observed. D-psicose was obtained upto 5g/ℓ. These *in vivo* conversion reaction were confirmed *in vitro* by using purified enzymes of D-tagatose 3-epimerase and L-rhamnose isomerase.