Selection of Bacillus species for targeted in situ release of prebiotic galacto-rhamnogalacturonan from potato pulp in piglets

We have previously shown that galacto-rhamnogalacturonan fibers can be enzymatically extracted from potato pulp and that these fibers have potential for exerting a prebiotic effect in piglets. The spore-forming Bacillus species are widely used as probiotics in feed supplements for pigs. In this study, we evaluated the option for further functionalizing Bacillus feed supplements by selecting strains possessing the enzymes required for extraction of the potentially prebiotic fibers. We established that it would require production and secretion of pectin lyase and/or polygalacturonase but no or limited secretion of galactanase and β-galactosidase. By screening a library of 158 Bacillus species isolated from feces and soil, we demonstrated that especially strains of Bacillus amyloliquefaciens, Bacillus subtilis, and Bacillus mojavensis have the necessary enzyme profile and thus the capability to degrade polygalacturonan. Using an in vitro porcine gastrointestinal model system, we revealed that specifically strains of B. mojavensis were able to efficiently release galacto-rhamnogalacturonan from potato pulp under simulated gastrointestinal conditions. The work thus demonstrated the feasibility of producing prebiotic fibers via a feed containing Bacillus spores and potato pulp and identified candidates for future in vivo evaluation in piglets.