Biotechnologies towards Sustainable Development in Malaysia

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Bioethics and biotechnology: A holistic approach in Islamic perspectives 1
Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury, Zaima Azira Zainal Abidin, Zarina Zainuddin and Suzannah Abdul Rahman

Chapter 2 Malaysia’s Sea Cucumber (Echinodermata: Holothuroidea) Database 16
Kamarul Rahim Kamarudin

Chapter 3 Diversity and Exploitation of Sea Cucumbers in Malaysia and Its Neighbouring Countries 25
Kamarul Rahim Kamarudin

Chapter 4 Holothuria (Mertensiathuria) leucospilota (Brandt, 1835) in the Marine Environment of Malaysia 36
Kamarul Rahim Kamarudin

Chapter 5 Genetic manipulation for better bioremediation processes 50
Noor Faizul Hadry Nordin

Chapter 6 Microbial bioremediation and sustainable development 64
Noor Faizul Hadry Nordin

Chapter 7 Heavy metal uptakes by plants 74
Phang Ing Chia

Chapter 8 Mechanisms of heavy metal tolerance in plants (I) – Avoidance mechanisms 84
Phang Ing Chia

Chapter 9 Mechanisms of heavy metal tolerance in plants (I) – Tolerance mechanisms 89
Phang Ing Chia

Chapter 10 Identifying catalytic residues for peptidases: in silico perspective 97
Noraslinda Muhamad Bunnori

Chapter 11 Important considerations in qRT-PCR 103
Phang Ing Chia
Chapter 12 Molecular approach of macroinvertebrates in tropical wetland, Lake Bera, Malaysia: Towards the assessment of ecosystem health
Nurhidayati Abdul Aziz, Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury, Kamarul Rahim Kamarudin, Mohd Azmi Ambak and Najiah Musa

Chapter 13 Probiotic for sustainability protein source in Malaysia
Tengku Haziyamin Tengku Abdul Hamid

Chapter 14 Bacteriocin as safe antimicrobial agent
Tengku Haziyamin Tengku Abdul Hamid

Chapter 15 Review on marine actinomycetes
Zaima Azira Zainal Abidin

Chapter 16 Biotechnology potential tropical mangrove plant with special emphasis on Avicennia alba in Tanjung Lumpur, Pahang Malaysia
Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury., Deny Susanti, and Nur Sazwi Binti Nordin

Chapter 17 Studies on agronomy, breeding and genetics of Stevia rebaudiana (Bertoni) in Malaysia
Raji Akintunde Abdullah and Mohamad bin Osman

Chapter 18 Identification and characterization of Burkholderia pseudomallei serine and metallopeptidases
Noraslinda Muhamad Bunnori

Chapter 19 Analysis of xylene degradation by bacteria isolated from petroleum contaminated sites
Noor Faizul Hadri Nordin and Marni Farhani Mansor

Chapter 20 Bioadsorption of heavy metals from synthetic waste water by tropical rambutan seed
Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury, Abul Bashar Mohammed Helal Uddin, Mohd Sufian Mohamad Shukri, Kamaruzzaman Yunus

Chapter 21 Chitin and chitosan from fresh water fish tilapia (Oreochromis niloticus) scale
Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury, Nor Hafizah Zakaria, Tengku Haziyamin Tengku Abdul Hamid and Deny Susanti

Chapter 22 Chitin and chitosan from potential shrimps and crabs of Malaysia
Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury, Suffix Nurul Husna, Deny Susanti, Akbar John and Kamaruzzaman Yunus
Chapter 23 Extraction of chitin and chitosan from Malaysian cephalopods “Sotong mengaban” (Sepioteuthis lessoniana) and “Sotong jarum” (Loligo vulgaris)
Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury, Mohd Hazman Mohd Salleh, Deny Susanti, Akbar John and Jamaluddin Daud

Chapter 24 In Planta Agrobacterium tumefaciens transformation of MR 219 rice
Zaima Azira Zainal Abidin and Rabiah Abdul Wahab

Chapter 25 Optimisation of transformation system for chilli embryo (Capsicum annuum variety Kulai) using particle bombardment
Zarina Zainuddin and Rozilawati Mohamad Achil

Chapter 26 Screening of mangrove plants for gram negative antibacterial activity
Zarina Zainuddin and ‘Izzati Akmal Hasan

Chapter 27 Antibacterial activities of green and ripens banana peel (Musa, AA cv. Sucrier) in Malaysia
Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury, Dina Fuad, Md. Tariqur Rahman and Akbar John

Chapter 28 Agglutinin and antibacterial activities in oyster, Chama pacifica plasma
Najiah Musa, Arief Izzaary Zamani, Ahmed Jalal Khan Chowdhury and Muhamad Hazwan Mat Tar, Nadirah Musa

Chapter 29 The effect of cooking methods on meat samples using PCR-RFLP analysis
Zaima Azira Zainal Abidin and Haryati Ithnin
Chapter 11

Important considerations in qRT-PCR

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Introduction

Reliability of qRT-PCR data is essential, where linearity, precision, specificity, limitation of detection and quantification must be taken into account (Vaerman et al., 2004). To achieve biologically meaningful results, it is important to implement several procedures and precautions to minimize experimental error. These procedures can be incorporated into a protocol at many stages, including sampling, total RNA isolation, and design of the internal reference. The following strategies must be considered carefully when optimising the specificity, sensitivity, and reproducibility of the reactions.

Sample size and collection

Ensuring replicate samples are of a similar size, by sampling similar tissue volumes or weights, is the first stage of reducing experimental error. However, this can be difficult due to the nature of biological samples (Huggett et al., 2005). Materials should be harvested from ≥ 3 biological replicates for statistical analysis, frozen immediately in liquid nitrogen, and stored at -80°C to minimize RNA degradation (Udvardi et al., 2008).