

Assessment of Durum Wheat Straw Genotypes with Improved Saccharification Efficiency

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Abstract

The increasing worldwide demand for energy combined with the depletion of fossil fuel reserves and concerns about climate change, have increased the interest in the production of fuels from renewable energy sources. Lignocellulosic biomass has considerable potential as feedstock for the production of biofuels and biochemicals, contributing to decreasing carbon dioxide emissions, one of the drivers of climate change.

The global production of cereals straw, a by-product left after grain harvest, represents an abundant source of biomass for lignocellulosic-based biorefineries. The conversion of the lignocellulosic biomass to final biobased products such as alcohols mainly requires a three-steps process: 1) pretreatment; 2) acid or enzymatic hydrolysis; 3) fermentation. An efficient digestibility of the lignocellulosic materials is fundamental for the overall feasibility of any final bioproduct.

In the present work a set of durum wheat genotypes, selected from a germplasm collection, was used to analyze some phenotypic traits and biochemical aspects of the cell wall. These characteristics were correlated with the their enzymatic digestability. The main objective was to identify the most profitable genotype(s) to be used as feedstock for bioethanol production.

A significant variability was observed within genotypes in the release of sugars after enzymatic hydrolysis. The results evidenced that the lignin content was the major component of the cell wall determining recalcitrance to the enzymatic process. As for association to phenotypic traits, positive correlations were found with plant height and uronic acids content. The possible role of other cell wall components is also discussed.

Donatella Danzi has obtained PhD in Plant Genetics and Biotechnology, University of Bari (Italy). During the PhD course she worked on identification and characterization of plant genes involved in the production of functional molecules. After that period, she continued her activity with post-doc within the frame of a project on plant phenotyping using high throughput phenotyping platform to evaluate the response to water and nutrient stress in plants. She is involved in a research regarding the assessment of digestible fibers and sugars in wheat straw, comparing different wheat genotypes in order to identify the most profitable genotype as feedstock for biofuel production.



Speaker Publications:

1. Gatto A., Danzi D., Complete chloroplast genome of the multifunctional crop globe artichoke and comparison with other asteraceae 2015, 10(3):e0120589. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0120589
2. Gatto A., Danzi D., Curci P., Khaldi S., Morgese A., Sonnante G., De Paola D., Blanco E., Sonnante G. Wild cardoon variation and the domestication of artichoke proceedings of the joint meeting agi-sibv-siga assisi, italy - 19/22 september, 2011 isbn 978-88-904570-2-9
3. Danzi D., Iovene M., Morgese A., Pignone D., Sonnante G. Characterization and utilization of a bac library from artichoke Proceedings of the 57th Italian Society of Agricultural Genetics Annual Congress Foggia, Italy - 16/19 September, 2013 ISBN 978-88-904570-3-6
4. Janni M., De Paola D., Curci P., Danzi D., Morgese A., Sonnante G. Analysis of durum wheat response to nitrogen starvation. proceedings of the 57th italian society of agricultural genetics annual congress foggia, italy - 16/19 September, 2013 ISBN 978-88-904570-3-6

[15th Global Summit and Expo on Biomass and Bioenergy;](#)
Rome, Italy- September 21-22, 2020

Abstract Citation:

Danzi D, Assessment of durum wheat straw genotypes with



Biography:



improved saccharification efficiency, Biomass 2020, 15th Global Summit and Expo on Biomass and Bioenergy; Rome, Italy- September 21-22, 2020

(<https://biomass.expertconferences.org/abstract/2020/assessment-of-durum-wheat-straw-genotypes-with-improved-saccharification-efficiency>)