

The Primary Structure of Caprine PP3: Amino Acid Sequence, Phosphorylation, and Glycosylation of Component PP3 from the Proteose-Peptide Fraction of Caprine Milk

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ABSTRACT

Proteose-peptide component 3 is a phosphorylated glycoprotein that was isolated from the proteose-peptide fraction of caprine milk. By mass spectrometric analysis, amino acid sequencing, and polymerase chain reaction analysis, the primary structure has been determined and has been shown to contain 136 amino acids. Phosphorylations were identified at Ser₃₀ and Ser₄₁. A partial glycosylation was present at Thr₁₆, and a N-linked glycosylation was present at Asn₇₈. Galactosamine was the amino sugar detected at Thr₁₆. Glucosamine and galactosamine were the amino sugars found in the carbohydrate group linked to Asn₇₈. The caprine amino acid sequence exhibits 88% identity with the bovine proteose-peptide component 3 sequence. However, when compared with the bovine sequence, the caprine sequence contains an insertion of a serine residue at position 25.

(**Key words:** proteose-peptide component 3, caprine milk, primary structure, amino acid sequence)

Abbreviation key: PCR = polymerase chain reaction, PP3 = component 3 from the proteose-peptide fraction, PTH = phenylthiohydantoin.

INTRODUCTION

Bovine component 3 from the proteose-peptide fraction (**PP3**) is a phosphorylated glycoprotein that is found in the proteose-peptide fraction of milk (22); PP3 has been reviewed by Giradet and Linden (9). The primary structure of PP3 has been determined (23) and comprises a polypeptide backbone of 135 amino acid residues containing 5 phosphorylated serines, 2 threonine-linked O-glycosylations, and 1 N-

glycosylation. Studies of the N-linked carbohydrate moiety have revealed the presence of several biantennary N-acetylglucosamine-type carbohydrates (8). Bovine PP3 has been cloned, and the cDNA sequence has been determined (13). Immunological studies with antibodies against highly purified bovine PP3 have shown that PP3 is part of the milk fat globule membrane and forms multimeric aggregates in bovine milk (24). Several functions have been suggested and investigated for bovine PP3 and PP3-enriched fractions, including emulsification (19), inhibition of lipolysis (2, 10, 20), and mitogenesis (15).

In contrast to the numerous studies that have been carried out on bovine PP3, information on the homologous proteins in milks of other mammals is very limited. A camelid whey protein (4) and a murine glycosylation-dependent adhesion molecule-1 GlyCAM-1 (5, 6), present in the milk of the species concerned, have been found to have 54 and 36% identity, respectively, with bovine PP3. A comparative study of the electrophoretic mobility and carbohydrate content of the proteose-peptide fractions of ovine, caprine, and bovine milks has been performed (18), and a protein, GP3, which is similar in some respects to bovine PP3, has been identified in a study (1) of glycoproteins in the proteose-peptide fraction of ovine milk.

Recently, we have identified and purified PP3 from caprine and ovine milks (24). Here we present the entire primary structure of caprine PP3, comprising a polypeptide backbone of 136 amino acid residues, including 2 phosphoserines, 1 N-linked glycosylation, and 1 O-linked glycosylation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

Sephacryl S-200 and Mono Q HR 5/5 were obtained from Pharmacia (Uppsala, Sweden). Vydac C₄ and Vydac C₁₈ were from The Separations Group

Received November 26, 1997.

Accepted March 27, 1998.

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(Hesperia, CA). The HPLC was carried out using a gradient pump (model LKB-Pharmacia 2249; Pharmacia) and a detector (2510 Uvicord SD; Pharmacia) equipped with a 226-nm filter. Problott membranes and reagents used for sequencing were purchased from PE Applied Biosystems (Foster City, CA). Swine anti-rabbit immunoglobulins conjugated to alkaline phosphatase, alkaline phosphatase-conjugated streptavidin, and rabbit anti-bovine PP3 serum raised against highly purified PP3 were purchased at Dako A/S (Glostrup, Denmark). Biotinylated marker proteins for SDS-PAGE were from Bio-Rad Laboratories (Hercules, CA). SeeBlue Prestained Standard was from Novex (San Diego, CA). Coomassie brilliant blue R-250 and thermolysin (E.C. 3.2.24.4) were obtained from Sigma Chemical Co. (St. Louis, MO). Trypsin (EC 3.4.21.4) and *Staphylococcus aureus* V8 protease (EC 3.4.21.19) were obtained from Worthington Biochemical Corporation (Freehold, NJ). α -Cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic acid was from Aldrich Fine Chemicals (Steinham, Germany). All other standard chemicals were of analytical grade. Primers for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) analyses were obtained from DNA Technology ApS (Aarhus, Denmark). The Wizard Kit was from Promega Corp. (Madison, WI). Fresh caprine milk was the kind gift of John Hermansen (The National Institute of Animal Science, Foulum, Denmark).

Purification of Caprine PP3

Caprine proteose-peptone was prepared from fresh caprine milk following the procedure described for bovine milk (3). Caprine PP3 was purified from the proteose-peptone by FPLC[®]-operated Sephacryl S-200 gel filtration and Mono-Q anion exchange, and, as a final step of purification, the protein was applied to a Vydac C₄ reverse-phase column (results not shown). All stages of the purification were monitored by SDS-PAGE and Western blotting with PP3 antibodies. The purity of the isolated protein was verified by amino acid sequencing and SDS-PAGE.

Generation and Isolation of Peptides

Peptides for characterization of the primary structure were generated by enzymatic cleavage with trypsin, *Staphylococcus aureus* V8 protease, and thermolysin. Digestion of trypsin and *Staphylococcus aureus* V8 protease was performed in 0.1 M NH₄HCO₃ at pH 8.1. Trypsin was incubated with protein in a 1:50 (wt/wt) ration of enzyme to substrate at 37°C for 3 h. *Staphylococcus aureus* V8

protease was used in a 1:100 (wt/wt) ratio of enzyme to substrate at 37°C for 2 h. Thermolysin subdigests were performed at 55°C in 0.1 M pyridine-acetate buffer, pH 6.5, containing 2 mM CaCl₂; the ratio of enzyme to substrate was 1:50 (wt/wt), and the digestion time was 3 h. Peptides from the different digests were separated by reverse-phase HPLC on a Vydac C₁₈ column (4 × 250 mm). The column was operated at 40°C at a flow rate of 0.850 ml/min. The digests were separated in 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid and eluted with a gradient of acetonitrile.

Protein Characterization

Mass spectra were acquired using a BIFLEX matrix-assisted laser desorption and ionization-time of flight (MALDI-TOF) mass spectrometer equipped with a reflector (Bruker-Franzen, Bremen, Germany). Peptide samples (1.5 μ l) dissolved in 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid were mixed with 1.5 μ l of α -cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic acid (15 g/L), and 1.5 μ l were applied to the target. Thirty to 100 calibrated mass spectra were averaged. Theoretical peptide masses were calculated using the GPMW program (Lighthouse Data, Odense, Denmark). Amino acid sequencing was carried out on a sequencer (model 477A; PE Applied Biosystems) with on-line identification of the phenylthiodantoin (PTH) derivatives. For analyses of carbohydrates, phosphates, and amino acids, peptides were hydrolyzed under vacuum at 110°C for 3 and 16 h, respectively, in the presence of 6 M HCl and 0.05% phenol. The 3-h hydrolyzation was done to determine the contents of amino sugars and phosphorylated amino acids, and the 16-h hydrolyzation was done to determine the amino acid composition of the peptides concerned (21). Peptides containing phosphoserine were treated with ethanethiol to convert phosphoserine into S-ethyl cysteine as described (17).

PCR

Cells were isolated by centrifugation of caprine skimmed milk. Cells were disrupted with a solution of 4 M guanidinium thiocyanate, 25 mM sodium citrate at pH 7, and 0.5% N-laurylsarcosine. Genomic DNA was isolated by phenolation and ethanol precipitation. Primers were designed according to the genomic sequence of bovine PP3 (12). The PCR was then carried out with the following primer pair: forward 5'-CTGGAGGCTCAGCCCACTGA-3' (sense sequence for residues 11 to 16, LEAQP) and reverse 5'-AGAGGGAGCTTGGGATTCTG-3' (anti-sense sequence for residues 62 to 68, QNPKLP). The PCR

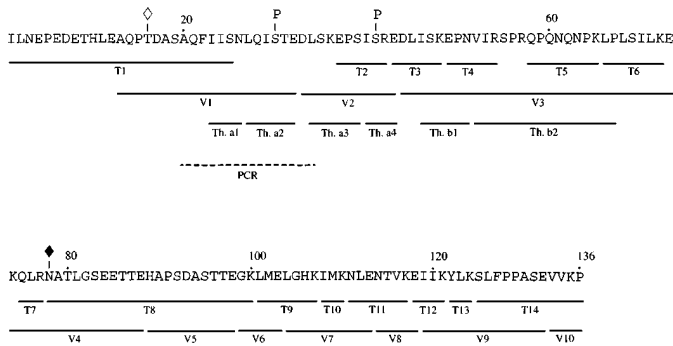


Figure 1. Primary structure of component 3 of the proteose-peptone fraction (PP3). Peptides obtained by enzymatic proteolysis are designated as follows: T = trypsin, V = *Staphylococcus aureus* V8 protease, Th.a = thermolysin subdigest of peptide T1, Th.b = thermolysin subdigest of peptide V3, PCR = sequence obtained by polymerase chain reaction analysis, and P = phosphorylations. Full glycosylation (♦); partial glycosylation (◊).

fragment was purified free of the PCR primers using a Wizard kit and yielded a band on agarose gel electrophoresis of 1.0 kb. The PCR fragment was partially sequenced with the following reverse primer: 5'-CTGGAGATGGAAGGCTCCTT-3', corresponding to residues 37 to 42, KEPSIS (Figure 1), using a dye terminator kit (PE Applied Biosystems). Sequence analysis was performed on a genetic analyzer (ABIPRISM™ 310; PE Applied Biosystems).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sequencing Results

Aliquots of highly purified caprine PP3 were subjected to enzymatic digestion using trypsin and *Staphylococcus aureus* V8 protease, and the resulting peptides were separated on a Vydac C₁₈ reverse-phase HPLC column. Fractions were sequenced and subjected to mass spectrometric analysis. The majority of the sequence was covered by these two digests (Figure 1). However, peptide V3 showed a mass of 3452.8 Da and could not be sequenced to the end. Accordingly, the peptide was subdigested with thermolysin, and the resulting peptides were used in the construction of the peptide map. Similarly, peptide T1, which represents a large N-terminal fragment of PP3, could not be sequenced to the end. The peptide, which is generated by an incomplete trypsin digestion, was subdigested with thermolysin in order to identify phosphorylation sites in the protein. The results are summarized in Table 1, and a peptide map has been constructed in Figure 1.

Examination of Table 1 shows close similarity between the obtained mass spectrometric data and the

calculated mass of the individual peptides, thereby confirming the amino acid sequence presented in Figure 1. Caprine PP3 contains 136 residues as opposed to the 135 of bovine PP3 because of the insertion of a serine residue at position 25. The insertion of Ser₂₅ was observed by sequencing of peptides V1 and Th.a1. In order to confirm this insertion, a PCR analysis of the relevant part of the sequence was performed. Sequencing of the obtained PCR fragment gave the sequence: 5'-CTGCTCAGTTCATCATCAGCAACCTCCAGATCTCCACTGAGGACCTT-3', which was translated into the amino acid sequence AQFIISNLQISTEDL. This analysis verified the insertion of a serine residue at position 25 in the caprine sequence.

TABLE 1. Sequence and mass spectrometric data of peptides used to construct the peptide map (Figure 1).

Residue no. ¹	Peptide ²	Measured mass	Calculated mass
Tryptic digest			
1-25	T1	ND ³	
37-42	T2	688.0	687.8
43-48	T3	703.8	703.8
49-54	T4	727.4	726.8
58-65	T5	953.7	953.0
66-72	T6	783.5	783.0
75-77	T7	416.5	415.5
78-100	T8	ND	
101-107	T9	827.5	827.0
108-110	T10	ND	
111-117	T11	817.4	816.9
118-121	T12	502.1	501.6
122-124	T13	423.2	422.5
125-136	T14	1271.1	1270.5
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> V8 protease digest			
13-32	V1	ND	
33-43	V2	1260.8	1260.4
44-73	V3	3452.8	3453.0
74-88	V4	ND	
89-98	V5	1015.2	1015.0
99-103	V6	577.3	576.7
104-113	V7	ND	
114-118	V8	ND	
119-132	V9	1606.2	1605.9
133-136	V10	442.0	441.6
Thermolysin digest of peptide T1			
23-26	Th.a1		
27-32	Th.a2		
34-39	Th.a3		
40-43	Th.a4		
Thermolysin digest of peptide V3			
46-51	Th.b1	687.7	686.8
52-67	Th.b2	1873.4	1872.2

¹Residue number in the caprine sequence.

²Peptide number corresponding to Figure 1.

³No ions were detected in the mass spectra.

tion 87, corresponding to the bovine Thr₈₆. Therefore, we concluded that caprine PP3 is not glycosylated at Thr₈₇.

Comparison of Caprine PP3 with Homologous Proteins

An alignment of caprine PP3 with the homologous proteins—bovine PP3 (23), murine GlyCAM-1 (5), rat GlyCAM-1 (7), and camelid whey protein (4)—is shown in Figure 2. The alignment shows that caprine and bovine PP3 have identical amino acids at 88% of the positions. Caprine PP3 contains 136 residues, instead of the 135 of bovine PP3, because of the insertion of a serine residue at position 25. Interestingly, this serine insert seems to be unique for caprine PP3.

Comparison of caprine and bovine PP3 shows six substitutions in the potential C-terminal amphipathic α -helix, which has been reported in bovine PP3 (11, 13). In the homologous GlyCAM-1, the helix has been suggested as being used in adhesion of the protein to the cell membrane (14), and a similar role has been suggested for the attachment of PP3 to the milk fat globule membrane (24). In the bovine system, the amphipathic α -helix has also been suggested as a means of PP3 polymer formation (24). The substitution from a bovine threonine to a caprine isoleucine at position 119 would increase the hydrophobicity. Three proline substitutions occur at positions 128, 129, and 136. The former two prolines might affect the helical structure by introducing bends.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank Roy E. Guldborg for excellent technical assistance. This work is part of the FØTEK programme supported by the Danish Dairy Research Foundation and the Danish Government.

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