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# (12) United States Patent

## Pfleger et al.

## (54) MICROORGANISMS FOR PRODUCING GLYCOGEN AND METHODS OF USING SAME

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- (58) Field of Classification Search None

See application file for complete search history.

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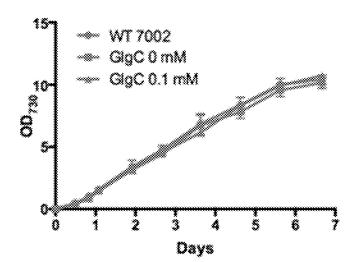
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## (57) ABSTRACT

Recombinant microorganisms configured for increased glycogen production. The recombinant microorganisms comprise a recombinant nucleic acid configured to express or overexpress a glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase. The recombinant microorganisms produce an increased amount of glycogen compared to a corresponding microorganism not comprising the recombinant nucleic acid.

#### 20 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

## Specification includes a Sequence Listing.



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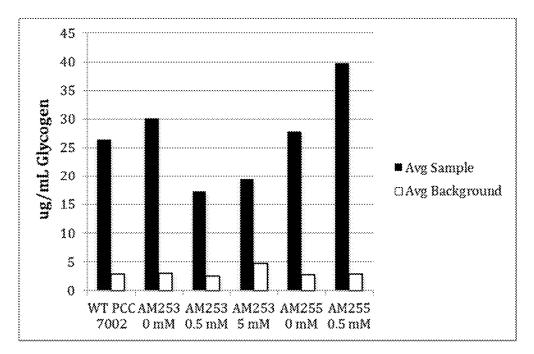


FIG. 1A

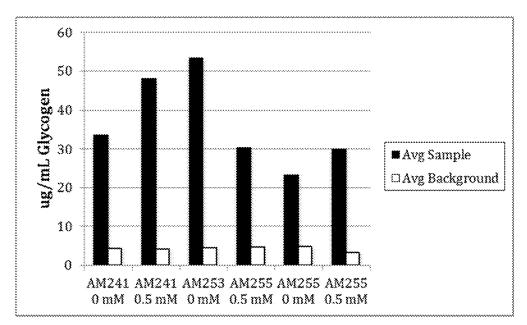


FIG. 1B

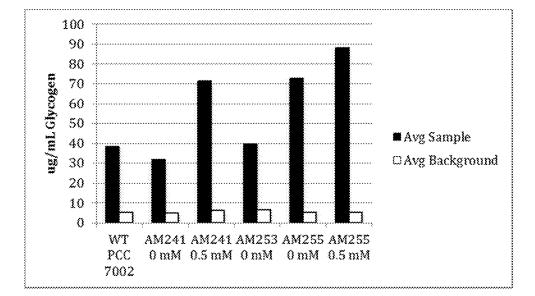
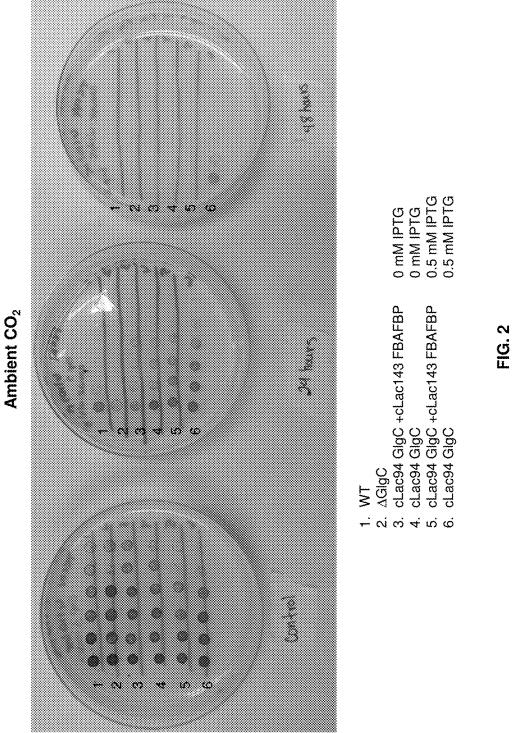
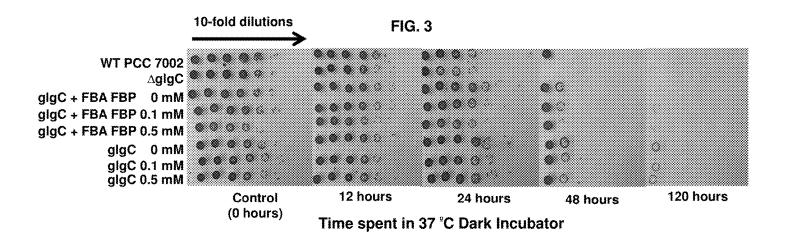


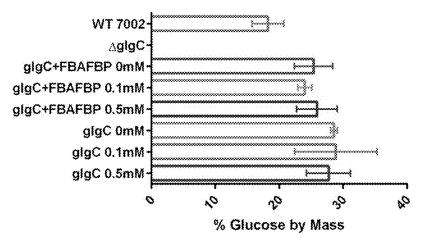
FIG. 1C

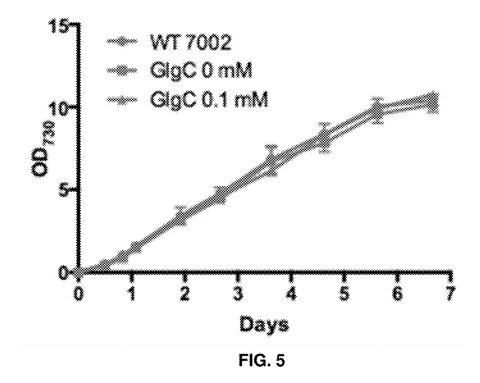


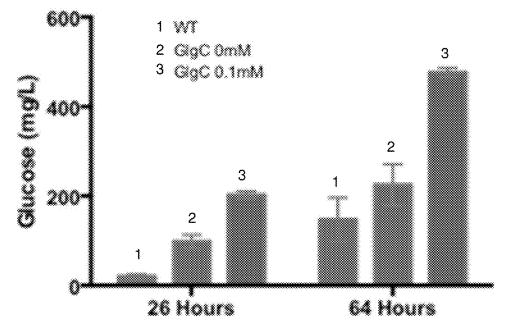




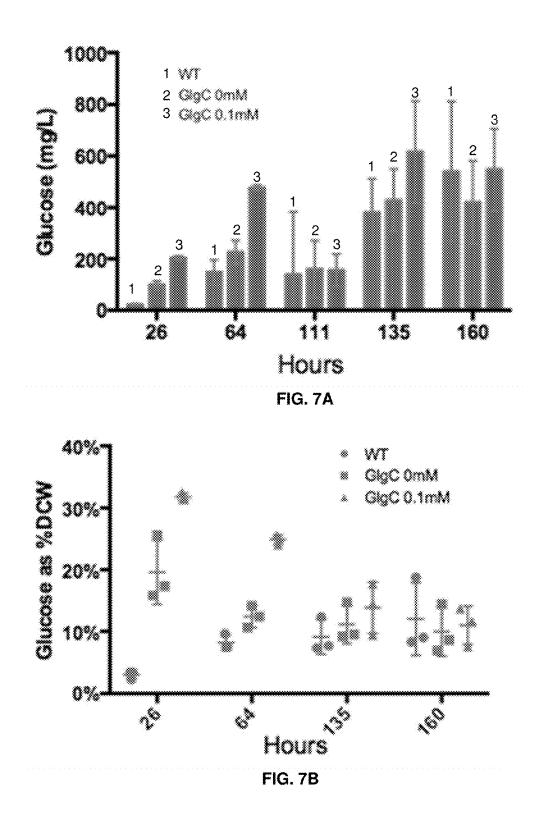












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## MICROORGANISMS FOR PRODUCING GLYCOGEN AND METHODS OF USING SAME

## STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH

This invention was made with government support under GE01215871 and EFRI1240268 awarded by the National Science Foundation. The government has certain rights in <sup>10</sup> the invention.

## FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention is directed to recombinant microorganisms <sup>15</sup> configured for producing high levels of glycogen and methods of using the recombinant microorganisms for the production of glycogen or its byproducts.

### BACKGROUND

Advances in microbe engineering for the production of biofuels, chemicals, and therapeutics have spurred investment in the production of a wide variety of commodities from biological sources (Zhang F, Rodriguez S, Keasling J 25 D. 2011. Curr. Opin. Biotechnol. 22(6):775-83). Heterotrophic microbes comprise the vast majority of microorganisms currently utilized for product generation and require a carbohydrate source for carbon and energy that can account for a significant proportion (~60%) of input costs (Pimentel 30 D, Patzek T W. 2008. Ethanol production: energy and economic issues related to U.S. and Brazilian sugarcane biofuels. Springer, Amsterdam, Netherlands.). Such carbohydrate feedstocks are typically derived from agricultural crops, primarily sugarcane, sugar beet, and corn, although 35 lignocellulosic materials are under extensive investigation as alternative feedstocks (Sims R, Taylor M. 2008. From 1st to 2nd generation biofuel technologies. IEA, Paris, France). While biologically produced fuels and chemicals hold the promise of increased sustainability and reduced CO2 foot- 40 prints, current feedstock sources place biotechnological processes in competition with agricultural croplands and food markets. The development of biological alternatives to standard petroleum-based fuels and chemicals has therefore been criticized for its capacity to increase food cost and 45 instabilities (Timilsina G R, Beghin J C, van der Mensbrugghe D, Mevel S. 2010. The impacts of biofuel targets on land-use change and food supply. The World Bank Development Research Group, Washington, D.C.). Indeed, in recent years, sugar prices have increased and fluctuated 50 greatly in global food, driven in part by increased demands for biofuel production.

Photosynthetic microorganisms (cyanobacteria and algae) have been proposed as alternative sources for the creation of biofuel-like compounds or industrial feedstocks (Radakovits 55 R, Jinkerson R E, Darzins A, Posewitz M C. 2010. *Eukaryot. Cell* 9:486-501), in part because they possess many advantages over traditional terrestrial plants with regard to targeted metabolite production. For example, the photosynthetic efficiency of cyanobacteria is up to an order of 60 magnitude higher than that of plants (Zhu X G, Long S P, Ort D R. 2010. *Annu. Rev. Plant Biol.* 61:235-261) (Zhu X G, Long S P, Ort D R. 2008. *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 19:153-159), and cyanobacteria do not require support tissues that further reduce productive output (e.g., roots/stems). Cyanobacteria are genetically tractable, allowing for rapid engineering and the selection of desirable strains. Finally, cya2

nobacteria are aquatic microbes with minimal nutritional requirements and can therefore be cultivated in locations that do not compete with traditional agricultural crops. While cyanobacteria and algae share many similar features in this context, the use of algal species for biofuel feedstocks has been explored in much greater detail, partly because of their relatively high lipid content (Sheehan J, Dunahay T, Benemann J, Roessler P. 1998. Look back at the U.S. Department of Energy's aquatic species program: biodiesel from algae. Close-out report NREL/TP-580-24190. National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Golden, Colo.), although many cyanobacterial species feature relative simplicity and higher growth rates.

Glycogen that accumulates in microorganisms can serve as a valuable feedstock for the production of chemicals and biofuels. Glycogen can be converted to ethanol or other chemicals, for example, through saccharification and fermentation processes (Aikawa et al. *Energ Environ Sci* 2013, 6:1844-1849) (Choi et al. *Bioresour Technol* 2010, 101: 5330-5336) (Harun et al. *Appl Energy* 2011, 88:3464-3467) (Ho et al. *Bioresour Technol* 2013, 145:142-149) (Miranda et al. *Bioresour Technol* 2012, 104:342-348).

There is a need for microorganisms capable of producing high amounts of glycogen or other carbohydrates, particularly through photosynthetic processes.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed at least in part to microorganisms, such as photosynthetic microorganisms, that are capable of producing high levels of glycogen; methods of producing glycogen; and methods for selecting microorganisms that produce high levels of glycogen or other metabolic products.

The objects and advantages of the invention will appear more fully from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment of the invention made in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1A-1C show glycogen production in control strains and strains of the invention in the presence of 0, 0.5 or 5 mM isopropyl  $\beta$ -D-1-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG).

FIG. 2 shows results of a glycogen production screen of the invention with control strains and strains of the invention induced to produce glycogen in the presence of ambient  $CO_2$  and 0 or 0.5 mM (IPTG).

FIG. 3 shows results of a glycogen production screen of the invention with control strains and strains of the invention induced to produce glycogen in the presence of 10% CO<sub>2</sub> and 0, 0.1, or 0.5 mM (IPTG).

FIG. **4** shows intracellular levels of glycogen as hydrolyzed glucose from the strains analyzed in FIG. **3**.

FIG. **5** shows growth rates of a control strain and a strain of the invention grown in the presence of 0 mM or 0.1 mM IPTG.

FIGS. **6**, **7**A, and **7**B show levels of glucose hydrolyzed from glycogen from a control strain and a strain of the invention grown in the presence of 0 mM or 0.1 mM IPTG for various lengths of time.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The invention is directed at least in part to microorganisms capable of enhanced production of glycogen.

The microorganism of the present invention may include any microorganism capable of making glycogen. The microorganism may be eukaryotic, such as yeast, or prokaryotic, such as bacteria or archaea. Among bacteria, gram-positive, gram-negative, and ungrouped bacteria are suitable. Photo- 5 trophs, chemotrophs, heterotrophs, and autotrophs (e.g., chemoautotrophs, photoautotrophs, chemoheterotrophs, photoheterotrophs) are suitable. The phototroph may be an anoxygenic photosynthetic microorganism or an oxygenic photosynthetic mircoorganism. The oxygenic photosyn- 10 thetic microorganism may be a cyanobacterium or a microalga. Suitable cyanobacteria include those from the genuses Agmenellum, Anabaena, Aphanocapsa, Arthrosprira, Gloeocapsa, Haplosiphon, Mastigocladus, Nostoc, Oscillatoria, Prochlorococcus, Scytonema, Syn- 15 echococcus, and Synechocystis. Preferred cyanobacteria include those selected from the group consisting of Synechococcus spp., spp., Synechocystis spp., and Nostoc spp. Particularly suitable examples of Synechococcus spp. include Synechococcus sp. PCC 7942 and Synechococcus 20 sp. PCC 7002. A particularly suitable example of Synechocystis spp. includes Synechocystis sp. PCC 6803. A benefit of photoautotrophs such as cyanobacteria is that they require only CO<sub>2</sub> as a carbon source and light for energy and are not dependent on food-based commodities or other types of 25 biomass for which there is a growing high demand.

The microorganisms of the invention may be modified to increase expression of one or more enzymes. Modifying the microorganism to increase expression of an enzyme can be performed using any methods currently known in the art or 30 discovered in the future. Examples include genetically modifying the microorganism and culturing the microorganism under conditions or in the presence of factors that increase expression of the enzyme. Suitable methods for genetic modification include but are not limited to placing 35 the coding sequence under the control of a more active promoter (either inducible or constitutive), increasing gene copy number, introducing a translational enhancer (see, e.g., Olins et al. Journal of Biological Chemistry, 1989, 264(29): 16973-16976), and/or increasing expression of transactiva- 40 enzymes classified under EC 2.7.7.27. Glucose-1-phosphate tors. Increasing gene copy number can be performed by introducing additional copies of the gene to the microorganism, i.e., by incorporating one or more exogenous copies of the native gene or a heterologous homolog thereof into the microbial genome, by introducing such copies to the micro- 45 organism on a plasmid or other vector, or by other means. "Exogenous" used in reference to a genetic element means the genetic element is either not present in the native organism or is not present in the native organism in the same configuration. "Heterologous" used in reference to a genetic 50 element means that the genetic element is derived from a different species. A promoter that controls a particular coding sequence is herein described as being "operationally connected" to the coding sequence.

The microorganisms of the invention may include at least 55 one recombinant nucleic acid configured to express or overexpress a particular enzyme. "Recombinant" as used herein with reference to a nucleic acid molecule or polypeptide is one that has a sequence that is not naturally occurring, such as a sequence that made by an artificial 60 combination of two otherwise separated segments of sequence from the same or different organisms, or a sequence made by artificial combination of a naturally occurring sequence with a non-naturally occurring sequence. This artificial combination can be achieved, for 65 example, by chemical synthesis or by the artificial manipulation of isolated segments of nucleic acid molecules or

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polypeptides, such as genetic engineering techniques. "Recombinant" is also used to describe nucleic acid molecules that have been artificially modified but contain the same regulatory sequences and coding regions that are found in the organism from which the nucleic acid was isolated. A recombinant cell or microorganism is one that contains a recombinant nucleic acid molecule or polypeptide. "Overexpress" as used herein means that a particular gene product is produced at a higher level in one cell, such as a recombinant cell, than in a corresponding microorganism. For example, a microorganism that includes a recombinant nucleic acid configured to overexpress an enzyme produces the enzyme at a greater amount than a microorganism that does not include the recombinant nucleic acid.

As used herein, "corresponding microorganism" refers to a microorganism of the same species having the same or substantially same genetic and proteomic composition as a microorganism of the invention, with the exception of genetic and proteomic differences resulting from the modifications described herein for the microorganisms of the invention. In some versions, the corresponding microorganism is the native microorganism. "Native" in this context refers to the natural, unmodified microorganism as it exists in nature.

Some microorganisms of the invention include at least one recombinant nucleic acid configured to express or overexpress a glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase. The recombinant nucleic acid may comprise a recombinant glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase gene. "Gene" refers to a nucleic acid sequence capable of producing a gene product and may include such genetic elements as a coding sequence together with any other genetic elements required for transcription and/or translation of the coding sequence. Such genetic elements may include a promoter, an enhancer, and/or a ribosome binding site (RBS), among others. The recombinant gene preferably comprises at least one sequence difference from the natural gene.

Glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase include adenylyltransferase include enzymes that catalyze the conversion of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and  $\alpha$ -D-glucose 1-phosphate to diphosphate and adenosine diphosphate (ADP)-glucose. In some versions, the microorganism is modified to harbor a nucleic acid encoding a glucose-1phosphate adenylyltransferase from Escherichia coli or a homolog thereof. An exemplary coding sequence for a glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase (glgC) from E. coli is represented by SEQ ID NO: 1. An exemplary amino acid sequence for a glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase from E. coli (GlgC) is represented by SEQ ID NO:2. The native glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase from E. coli has been shown to be activated by fructose-1,6-bisphosphate and inhibited by adenosine monophosphate (AMP) and ADP through allosteric regulation.

Homologs of the E. coli glucose-1-phosphate adenvlyltransferase include orthologs and paralogs of GlgC/glgC having glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase activity. Homologs of the E. coli glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase also include enzymes having an amino acid sequence at least about 80%, 85%, 90%, 95%, 97%, 98%, 99% or more identical to SEQ ID NO:2. Sequences having these percent identities can be obtained by aligning SEQ ID NO:2 to the sequences of E. coli glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase orthologs and/or paralogs having glucose-1phosphate adenylyltransferase activity to determine which positions in the enzyme are amenable to mutation (i.e.,

substitution, deletion, addition, etc.) and the identities of the substituted or added residues at these positions.

In preferred versions of the invention, the glucose-1phosphate adenylyltransferase expressed by the microorganism maintains allosteric regulation by AMP and/or ADP. In 5 particularly preferred versions of the invention, the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase expressed by the microorganism maintains full allosteric regulation by AMP and/or ADP. The maintenance of allosteric regulation with the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase is determined with 10 respect to the wild-type glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase in the type of organism from which the glucose-1phosphate adenylyltransferase is derived, wherein "wildtype" refers to the allele that encodes the phenotype most common in the natural population. Variants or "mutants" of 15 glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase resistant to allosteric regulation by AMP and ADP are known. See, e.g., Leung P, Lee Y M, Greenberg E, Esch K, Boylan S, Preiss J. Cloning and expression of the Escherichia coli glgC gene from a mutant containing an ADPglucose pyrophosphory- 20 lase with altered allosteric properties. J Bacterial. 1986 July; 167(1):82-8. One such variant is the E. coli GlgC variant having a G336D substitution (coding sequence: SEQ ID NO:3; protein sequence: SEQ ID NO:4). The G336D variant has reduced allosteric regulation with respect to the wild- 25 type E. coli glgC represented by SEQ ID NO:2 and is a more active form of the enzyme. Expression of the G336D variant in cyanobacteria, however, adversely affects growth rate. Expression of glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferases that have a glycine at a position corresponding to position 30 336 of SEQ ID NO:2 (E. coli GlgC) are therefore preferred. In some versions, however, expression of glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferases that have an amino acid other than glycine at a position corresponding to position 336 of SEQ ID NO:2 (E. coli GlgC) are acceptable. Exemplary 35 amino acids other than glycine include acidic amino acids, such as glutamic acid and aspartic acid, among others. Identification of the corresponding position in a given sequence can be found by aligning the sequence with SEQ ID NO:2.

The glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase expressed by the microorganism preferably maintains allosteric regulation by AMP and/or ADP to an extent such that 50% inhibition of the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase occurs at an AMP or ADP concentration+/-about 10-fold, 45 9-fold, 8-fold, 7-fold, 6-fold, 5-fold, 4-fold, 3-fold, 2-fold, 1.5-fold, or 1.1-fold of the AMP or ADP concentration that induces 50% inhibition of the wild-type glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase.

In some versions of the invention, the glucose-1-phos- 50 phate adenylyltransferase expressed by the microorganism maintains allosteric regulation by AMP, ADP, and/or fructose-1,6-bisphosphate.

Exogenous, heterologous nucleic acids encoding enzymes to be expressed in the microorganism are preferably codon-55 optimized for the particular microorganism in which they are introduced. Codon optimization can be performed for any nucleic acid by a number of programs, including "GENEGPS"-brand expression optimization algorithm by DNA 2.0 (Menlo Park, Calif.), "GENEOPTIMIZER"-brand 60 gene optimization software by Life Technologies (Grand Island, N.Y.), and "OPTIMUMGENE"-brand gene design system by GenScript (Piscataway, N.J.). Other codon optimization programs or services are well known and commercially available.

In some versions of the invention, the microorganism exhibits a native glycogen synthase expression level.

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"Native glycogen synthase expression level" refers to the level of glycogen synthase expression in the native, unmodified microorganism. In such versions, the microorganism is not modified to overexpress the glycogen synthase, wherein overexpression is defined with respect to expression in the native microorganism. Examples of a glycogen synthase in bacteria such as E. coli and cyanobacteria include products of glgA genes. Examples of products of glgA genes include glgA1 (SEQ ID NO:6) and glgA2 (SEQ ID NO:8) of Synechococcus sp. PCC 7002, encoded by glgA1 (SEQ ID NO:5) and glgA2 (SEQ ID NO:7), respectively. Accordingly, in at least some versions of the invention in which the microorganism exhibits a native glycogen synthase expression level the microorganism contains the native glgA gene(s) and/or does not include a recombinant glgA gene configured to overexpress glgA.

In some versions of the invention, the microorganism exhibits native glycogen synthase activity. "Native glycogen synthase activity" refers to the level of glycogen synthase activity in the native, unmodified microorganism. Glycogen synthase activity in the microorganism may be determined by the method described by Leung et al. (Leung P, Lee Y M, Greenberg E, Esch K, Boylan S, Preiss J. Cloning and expression of the Escherichia coli glgC gene from a mutant containing an ADPglucose pyrophosphorylase with altered allosteric properties. J Bacteriol. 1986 July; 167(1):82-8) and Kawajuchi et al. (Kawaguchi K, Fox J, Holmes E, Boyer C, Preiss J. De novo synthesis of Escherichia coli glycogen is due to primer associated with glycogen synthase and activation by branching enzyme. Arch Biochem Biophys. 1978 October; 190(2):385-97).

In some versions of the invention, the microorganism exhibits a native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme expression level. "Native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme expression level expression level" refers to the level of 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme expression in the native, unmodified microorganism. In such versions, the microorganism is not modified to overexpress the 1,4-alphaglucan-branching enzyme, wherein overexpression is 40 defined with respect to expression in the native (nonmodified) microorganism. Examples of a 1,4-alpha-glucanbranching enzyme in bacteria such as E. coli and cyanobacteria include products of glgB genes. An example of a product of a glgB gene includes glgB (SEQ ID NO:10) of Synechococcus sp. PCC 7002, which is encoded by glgB (SEQ ID NO:9). Accordingly, in at least some versions of the invention in which the microorganism exhibits a native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme expression level the microorganism contains the native glgB gene(s) and/or does not include a recombinant glgB gene configured to overexpress glgB.

In some versions of the invention, the microorganism exhibits native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme activity. "Native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme activity" refers to the level of 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme activity in the native, unmodified microorganism. 1,4-Alpha-glucanbranching enzyme activity in the microorganism may be determined by the method described by Leung et al. (Leung P, Lee Y M, Greenberg E, Esch K, Boylan S, Preiss J. Cloning and expression of the Escherichia coli glgC gene from a mutant containing an ADPglucose pyrophosphorylase with altered allosteric properties. J Bacteriol. 1986 July; 167(1):82-8) and Boyer et al. (Boyer C, Preiss J. Biosynthesis of bacterial glycogen. Purification and properties of the Escherichia coli B alpha-1,4,-glucan: alpha-1,4-glucan 6-glycosyltansferase. Biochemistry. 1977 Aug. 9; 16(16): 3693-9.).

In some versions of the invention, the microorganism exhibits a native fructose-bisphosphate aldolase enzyme expression level. "Native fructose-bisphosphate aldolase enzyme expression level expression level" refers to the level of fructose-bisphosphate aldolase enzyme expression in the 5 native, unmodified microorganism. In such versions, the microorganism is not modified to overexpress the fructosebisphosphate aldolase enzyme, wherein overexpression is defined with respect to expression in the native (nonmodified) microorganism. Examples of a fructose-bisphosphate aldolase enzyme in bacteria such as E. coli and cyanobacteria include products of fba genes. An example of a product of a fba gene includes fba (SEQ ID NO:12) of Synechocystis sp. PCC 6803, which is encoded by fba (SEQ ID NO:11). Accordingly, in at least some versions of the 15 invention in which the microorganism exhibits a native fructose-bisphosphate aldolase enzyme expression level the microorganism contains the native fba gene(s) and/or does not include a recombinant fba gene configured to overexpress fba. In some versions of the invention, the microor- 20 ganism exhibits native fructose-bisphosphate aldolase enzyme activity.

In some versions of the invention, the microorganism exhibits a native fructose 1,6-bisphosphatase enzyme expression level. "Native fructose 1,6-bisphosphatase 25 enzyme expression level expression level" refers to the level of fructose 1,6-bisphosphatase enzyme expression in the native, unmodified microorganism. In such versions, the microorganism is not modified to overexpress the fructose 1,6-bisphosphatase enzyme, wherein overexpression is 30 defined with respect to expression in the native (nonmodified) microorganism. Examples of a fructose 1,6-bisphosphatase enzyme in bacteria such as E. coli and cyanobacteria include products of fbp genes. An example of a product of a fbp gene includes fbp (SEQ ID NO:14) of 35 Synechocystis sp. PCC 6803, which is encoded by fbp (SEQ ID NO:11). Accordingly, in at least some versions of the invention in which the microorganism exhibits a native fructose 1,6-bisphosphatase enzyme expression level the microorganism contains the native fbp gene(s) and/or does 40 not include a recombinant fba gene configured to overexpress fbp. In some versions of the invention, the microorganism exhibits native fructose 1,6-bisphosphatase enzyme activity.

The microorganism of the invention may comprise modi- 45 fications that reduce or ablate the activity of gene products of one or more genes. Such a modification that that reduces or ablates the activity of gene products of one or more genes is referred to herein as a "functional deletion" of the gene product. "Gene product" refers to a protein or polypeptide 50 encoded and produced by a particular gene.

One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that there are many well-known ways to functionally delete a gene product. For example, functional deletion can be accomplished by introducing one or more genetic modifications. 55 deleted gene product may result from a genetic modification As used herein, "genetic modifications" refer to any differences in the nucleic acid composition of a cell, whether in the cell's native chromosome or in endogenous or exogenous non-chromosomal plasmids harbored within the cell. Examples of genetic modifications that may result in a 60 functionally deleted gene product include but are not limited to mutations such as substitutions, partial or complete deletions, insertions, or other variations to a coding sequence or a sequence controlling the transcription or translation of a coding sequence; placing a coding sequence under the 65 control of a less active promoter; blocking transcription of the gene with a trans-acting DNA binding protein such as a

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TAL effector or CRISPR guided Cas9; expressing ribozvmes or antisense sequences that target the mRNA of the gene of interest; and tagging proteins for rapid proteolytic decay (Cameron D E, Collins J J. Tunable protein degradation in bacteria. Nat Biotechnol. 2014 December; 32(12):1276-81.), etc. In some versions, a gene or coding sequence can be replaced with a selection marker or screenable marker. Various methods for introducing the genetic modifications described above are well known in the art and include homologous recombination, among other mechanisms. See, e.g., Green et al., Molecular Cloning: A laboratory manual,  $4^{t\bar{h}}$  ed., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press (2012) and Sambrook et al., Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press (2001). Various other genetic modifications that functionally delete a gene product are described in the examples below. Functional deletion can also be accomplished by inhibiting the activity of the gene product, for example, by chemically inhibiting a gene product with a small molecule inhibitor, by expressing a protein that interferes with the activity of the gene product, or by other means.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally deleted gene product may have less than about 95%, less than about 90%, less than about 85%, less than about 80%, less than about 75%, less than about 70%, less than about 65%, less than about 60%, less than about 55%, less than about 50%, less than about 45%, less than about 40%, less than about 35%, less than about 30%, less than about 25%, less than about 20%, less than about 15%, less than about 10%, less than about 5%, less than about 1%, or about 0% of the activity of the non-functionally deleted gene product.

In certain versions of the invention, a cell with a functionally deleted gene product may have less than about 95%, less than about 90%, less than about 85%, less than about 80%, less than about 75%, less than about 70%, less than about 65%, less than about 60%, less than about 55%, less than about 50%, less than about 45%, less than about 40%, less than about 35%, less than about 30%, less than about 25%, less than about 20%, less than about 15%, less than about 10%, less than about 5%, less than about 1%, or about 0% of the activity of the gene product compared to a cell with the non-functionally deleted gene product.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally deleted gene product may be expressed at an amount less than about 95%, less than about 90%, less than about 85%, less than about 80%, less than about 75%, less than about 70%, less than about 65%, less than about 60%, less than about 55%, less than about 50%, less than about 45%, less than about 40%, less than about 35%, less than about 30%, less than about 25%, less than about 20%, less than about 15%, less than about 10%, less than about 5%, less than about 1%, or about 0% of the amount of the non-functionally deleted gene product.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally in which at least 1, at least 2, at least 3, at least 4, at least 5, at least 10, at least 20, at least 30, at least 40, at least 50, or more nonsynonymous substitutions are present in the gene or coding sequence of the gene product.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally deleted gene product may result from a genetic modification in which at least 1, at least 2, at least 3, at least 4, at least 5, at least 10, at least 20, at least 30, at least 40, at least 50, or more bases are inserted in the gene or coding sequence of the gene product.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally deleted gene product may result from a genetic modification 10

in which at least about 1%, at least about 5%, at least about 10%, at least about 15%, at least about 20%, at least about 25%, at least about 30%, at least about 35%, at least about 40%, at least about 50%, at least about 55%, at least about 60%, at least about 65%, at least about 70%, at least about 5 75%, at least about 80%, at least about 85%, at least about 90%, at least about 95%, or about 100% of the gene product's gene or coding sequence is deleted or mutated.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally deleted gene product may result from a genetic modification in which at least about 1%, at least about 5%, at least about 10%, at least about 15%, at least about 20%, at least about 25%, at least about 30%, at least about 35%, at least about 40%, at least about 50%, at least about 55%, at least about 60%, at least about 65%, at least about 70%, at least about 15 75%, at least about 80%, at least about 85%, at least about 90%, at least about 95%, or about 100% of a promoter driving expression of the gene product is deleted or mutated.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally deleted gene product may result from a genetic modification 20 in which at least about 1%, at least about 5%, at least about 10%, at least about 15%, at least about 20%, at least about 25%, at least about 30%, at least about 35%, at least about 40%, at least about 50%, at least about 55%, at least about 60%, at least about 65%, at least about 70%, at least about 25 75%, at least about 80%, at least about 85%, at least about 90%, at least about 95%, or about 100% of an enhancer controlling transcription of the gene product's gene is deleted or mutated.

In certain versions of the invention, the functionally 30 deleted gene product may result from a genetic modification in which at least about 1%, at least about 5%, at least about 10%, at least about 15%, at least about 20%, at least about 25%, at least about 30%, at least about 35%, at least about 40%, at least about 50%, at least about 55%, at least about 35 60%, at least about 65%, at least about 70%, at least about 75%, at least about 80%, at least about 85%, at least about 90%, at least about 95%, or about 100% of a sequence controlling translation of gene product's mRNA is deleted or mutated.

In certain versions of the invention, the decreased activity or expression of the functionally deleted gene product is determined with respect to the activity or expression of the gene product in its unaltered state as found in nature. In certain versions of the invention, the decreased activity or 45 expression of the functionally deleted gene product is determined with respect to the activity or expression of the gene product in its form in a corresponding microorganism. In certain versions, the genetic modifications giving rise to a functionally deleted gene product are determined with 50 respect to the gene or coding sequence in its unaltered state as found in nature. In certain versions, the genetic modifications giving rise to a functionally deleted gene product are determined with respect to the gene or coding sequence in its form in a corresponding microorganism.

Homologs include genes or gene products (including enzymes) that are derived, naturally or artificially, from a common ancestral gene or gene product. Homology is generally inferred from sequence similarity between two or more genes or gene products. Homology between genes may 60 be inferred from sequence similarity between the products of the genes. The precise percentage of similarity between sequences that is useful in establishing homology varies with the gene or gene product at issue, but as little as 25% sequence similarity (e.g., identity) over 50, 100, 150 or more 65 residues (nucleotides or amino acids) is routinely used to establish homology (e.g., over the full length of the two

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sequences to be compared). Higher levels of sequence similarity (e.g., identity), e.g., 30%, 35% 40%, 45% 50%, 55%, 60%, 65%, 70%, 75%, 80%, 85%, 90%, 95%, or 99% or more, can also be used to establish homology. Accordingly, homologs of the coding sequences, genes, or gene products described herein include coding sequences, genes, or gene products, respectively, having at least about 30%, 35%, 40%, 45%, 50%, 55%, 60%, 65%, 70%, 75%, 80%, 85%, 90%, 95%, or 99% identity to the coding sequences, genes, or gene products, respectively, described herein. In some versions, homologs of the genes described herein include genes that have gene products at least about 30%, 35%, 40%, 45%, 50%, 55%, 60%, 65%, 70%, 75%, 80%, 85%, 90%, 95%, or 99% identical to the gene products of the genes described herein. Methods for determining sequence similarity percentages (e.g., BLASTP and BLASTN using default parameters) are described herein and are generally available. The homologous gene products should demonstrate comparable activities and, if an enzyme, participate in the same or analogous pathways. "Orthologs" are genes or coding sequences thereof in different species that evolved from a common ancestral gene by speciation. Normally, orthologs retain the same or similar function in the course of evolution. As used herein "orthologs" are included in the term "homologs." Homologs also include paralogs.

For sequence comparison and homology determination, one sequence typically acts as a reference sequence to which test sequences are compared. When using a sequence comparison algorithm, test and reference sequences are input into a computer, subsequence coordinates are designated, if necessary, and sequence algorithm program parameters are designated. The sequence comparison algorithm then calculates the percent sequence identity for the test sequence(s) relative to the reference sequence based on the designated program parameters. A typical reference sequence of the invention is a nucleic acid or amino acid sequence corresponding to coding sequences, genes, or gene products described herein.

Optimal alignment of sequences for comparison can be 40 conducted, e.g., by the local homology algorithm of Smith & Waterman, Adv. Appl. Math. 2:482 (1981), by the homology alignment algorithm of Needleman & Wunsch, J. Mol. Biol. 48:443 (1970), by the search for similarity method of Pearson & Lipman, Proc. Nat'l. Acad. Sci. USA 85:2444 (1988), by computerized implementations of these algorithms (GAP, BESTFIT, FASTA, and TFASTA in the Wisconsin Genetics Software Package, Genetics Computer Group, 575 Science Dr., Madison, Wis.), or by visual inspection (see Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, F. M. Ausubel et al., eds., Current Protocols, a joint venture between Greene Publishing Associates, Inc. and John Wiley & Sons, Inc., (supplemented through 2008)).

One example of an algorithm that is suitable for determining percent sequence identity and sequence similarity for purposes of defining homologs is the BLAST algorithm, which is described in Altschul et al., J. Mol. Biol. 215:403-410 (1990). Software for performing BLAST analyses is publicly available through the National Center for Biotechnology Information. This algorithm involves first identifying high scoring sequence pairs (HSPs) by identifying short words of length W in the query sequence, which either match or satisfy some positive-valued threshold score T when aligned with a word of the same length in a database sequence. T is referred to as the neighborhood word score threshold (Altschul et al., supra). These initial neighborhood word hits act as seeds for initiating searches to find longer HSPs containing them. The word hits are then extended in

both directions along each sequence for as far as the cumulative alignment score can be increased. Cumulative scores are calculated using, for nucleotide sequences, the parameters M (reward score for a pair of matching residues; always>0) and N (penalty score for mismatching residues; always<0). For amino acid sequences, a scoring matrix is used to calculate the cumulative score. Extension of the word hits in each direction are halted when: the cumulative alignment score falls off by the quantity X from its maximum achieved value; the cumulative score goes to zero or below, due to the accumulation of one or more negativescoring residue alignments; or the end of either sequence is reached. The BLAST algorithm parameters W, T, and X determine the sensitivity and speed of the alignment. The 15 BLASTN program (for nucleotide sequences) uses as defaults a wordlength (W) of 11, an expectation (E) of 10, a cutoff of 100, M=5, N=-4, and a comparison of both strands. For amino acid sequences, the BLASTP program uses as defaults a wordlength (W) of 3, an expectation (E) 20 of 10, and the BLOSUM62 scoring matrix (see Henikoff & Henikoff (1989) Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 89:10915).

In addition to calculating percent sequence identity, the BLAST algorithm also performs a statistical analysis of the similarity between two sequences (see, e.g., Karlin & Alts- 25 chul, Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 90:5873-5787 (1993)). One measure of similarity provided by the BLAST algorithm is the smallest sum probability (P(N)), which provides an indication of the probability by which a match between two nucleotide or amino acid sequences would occur by chance. 30 For example, a nucleic acid is considered similar to a reference sequence if the smallest sum probability in a comparison of the test nucleic acid to the reference nucleic acid is less than about 0.1, more preferably less than about 0.001. The above- 35 described techniques are useful in identifying homologous sequences for use in the methods described herein.

The terms "identical" or "percent identity", in the context of two or more nucleic acid or polypeptide sequences, refers to two or more sequences or subsequences that are the same 40 or have a specified percentage of amino acid residues or nucleotides that are the same, when compared and aligned for maximum correspondence, as measured using one of the sequence comparison algorithms described above (or other algorithms available to persons of skill) or by visual inspec- 45 tion.

The phrase "substantially identical", in the context of two nucleic acids or polypeptides refers to two or more sequences or subsequences that have at least about 60%, about 65%, about 70%, about 75%, about 80%, about 85%, 50 about 90, about 95%, about 98%, or about 99% or more nucleotide or amino acid residue identity, when compared and aligned for maximum correspondence, as measured using a sequence comparison algorithm or by visual inspection. Such "substantially identical" sequences are typically 55 considered to be "homologous" without reference to actual ancestry. Preferably, the "substantial identity" exists over a region of the sequences that is at least about 50 residues in length, more preferably over a region of at least about 100 residues, and most preferably, the sequences are substan- 60 tially identical over at least about 150 residues, at least about 250 residues, or over the full length of the two sequences to be compared.

Accordingly, homologs of the genes described herein include genes with gene products at least about 80%, 85%, 65 90%, 95%, 97%, 98%, 99%, or more identical to the gene products of the genes described herein.

In some versions, the microorganisms of the invention produce an increased amount of glycogen compared to a corresponding microorganism not comprising the modifications described herein. For example, the microorganisms of the invention may be capable of producing at least about 1.1-fold, about 1.25-fold, about 1.5-fold, about 1.75-fold, about 2-fold, about 2.25-fold, about 2.5-fold, about 2.75fold, about 3-fold or more glycogen than a corresponding microorganism, and/or up to about 2.5-fold, about 3-fold, about 4-fold, about 5-fold, about 10-fold, or more glycogen than a corresponding microorganism.

In some versions, the microorganisms of the invention produce glycogen at an increased rate compared to a corresponding microorganism not comprising the modifications described herein. For example, the microorganisms of the invention may be capable of producing glycogen at a rate at least about 2-fold, about 3-fold, about 4-fold, about 5-fold, about 6-fold, about 7-fold, about 8-fold, about 5-fold or more than a corresponding microorganism, and/or up to about 5-fold, about 10-fold, about 12-fold, about 15-fold or more than a corresponding microorganism.

In some versions, the microorganisms of the invention produce glycogen at a rate of at least about 50 mg/L/day, about 100 mg/L/day, about 125 mg/L/day, about 150 mg/L/ day, about 175 mg/L/day, about 200 mg/L/day, or more, and/or up to about 190 mg/L/day, about 200 mg/L/day, about 205 mg/L/day, about 250 mg/L/day, about 275 mg/L/day, about 300 mg/L/day or more.

In some versions, the microorganisms of the invention are capable of producing glycogen as a mass percent of dry cell weight (DCW) in an amount of at least about 10% DCW, at least about 25% DCW, at least about 26% DCW, at least about 25% DCW, at least about 26% DCW, at least about 27% DCW, at least about 28% DCW, at least about 29% DCW, at least about 30% DCW, at least about 31% DCW, at least about 32% DCW, at least about 31% DCW, at least about 34% DCW, or at about least 35% DCW and/or up to about or at least about 31% DCW, about or at least about 32% DCW, about or at least about 33% DCW, about or at least about 34% DCW, about or at least about 35% DCW, about or at least about 36% DCW, about or at least about 37% DCW, about or at least about 38% DCW, about or at least about 39% DCW, or at least about 38% DCW, about or at least about 39% DCW, or at least about 38% DCW.

In some versions, the microorganisms of the invention have a growth rate substantially the same as a corresponding microorganism when cultured under identical conditions, such that the modifications described herein do not substantially affect the growth rate. For example, the microorganisms of the invention may have a growth rate within about 40%, about 35%, about 30%, about 25%, about 20%, about 15%, about 10%, about 5%, about 3%, about 2%, or about 1% the growth rate of a corresponding microorganism when cultured under identical conditions. In some versions, the microorganisms of the invention have a growth rate of at least the growth rate of a corresponding microorganism when cultured under identical conditions.

In addition to the microorganism itself, the invention also provides methods of producing glycogen with the microorganisms of the present invention. The methods involve culturing the microorganism in conditions suitable for growth of the microorganism. Such conditions include providing suitable carbon and energy sources for the particular microorganism. Suitable carbon and energy sources for particular types of microorganisms are described elsewhere herein for exemplary microorganisms and are otherwise known in the art.

The invention also provides methods of screening for production of glycogen or other metabolic products. The screening methods generally involve culturing microorganisms under conditions that promote production of the metabolic product, then stressing the microorganisms under 5 stringent conditions that promote consumption of the metabolic product at a high metabolic rate, and then comparing the recovery rates of the microorganisms when reintroduced to more suitable growth conditions.

An exemplary screening method includes culturing 10 microorganisms in the presence of a carbon source and a first amount of an energy source under conditions suitable for producing the metabolic product, then culturing the microorganisms in the presence of a second amount of the energy source under conditions suitable for consuming the meta- 15 bolic product, then culturing the microorganisms in the presence of the carbon source and a third amount of the energy source and determining the relative growth of the microorganisms in the presence of the carbon source and the third amount of the energy source. The second amount of the 20 energy source is preferably less than the first amount of the energy source, and the third amount of the energy source is preferably greater than the second amount of the energy source.

The metabolic product preferably comprises a product 25 comprising reduced carbon that serves as a form of stored energy for the microorganism and is consumable by the microorganism for survival when a sufficient external energy source is lacking. Such products may include carbohydrates, lipids, and/or proteins. Exemplary carbohydrates 30 may include simple carbohydrates such as monosaccharides or disaccharides or complex carbohydrates such as trisaccharides, tetrasaccharides, starch, or glycogen, among others. Exemplary lipids may include fatty acids, glycerol, or glycerides, among others. 35

The energy source may comprise a fermentable or oxidizable form of reduced molecules, if the microorganism is a chemotroph, or light, if the microorganism is an autotroph. The reduced molecules may be organic or inorganic. Examples of reduced organic molecules include reduced 40 Strains carbon, such as carbohydrates, lipids, proteins, methane, and other reduced organic molecules. Reduced organic molecules can be used for chemoorganotrophs. Examples of reduced inorganic molecules include iron(II), Mn<sup>2+</sup>, H<sub>2</sub>, sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), inorganic sulfur (S<sub>0</sub>), thiosulfate (S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup>), 45 ammonia, and nitrite, among others. Reduced inorganic molecules can be used for chemolithotrophs.

The carbon source may comprise organic carbon, if the microorganism is a hetrotroph, or carbon dioxide, if the microorganism is an autotroph. Examples of organic carbon 50 include carbohydrates, lipids, and proteins.

The microorganisms used in the selection method may comprise any microorganism described herein.

The conditions suitable for consuming the metabolic product preferably comprise a temperature sufficient to 55 support metabolic activity of the microorganisms in the presence of the second amount of the energy source. Such a temperature may be at least about 27° C., at least about 30° C., at least about 35° C., at least about 37° C., at least about 40° C. or more and/or up to about 37° C., up to about 40° 60 C., up to about 45° C. or more.

In exemplary versions of the invention, the microorganisms comprise photosynthetic microorganisms, the carbon source comprises CO<sub>2</sub>, the energy source comprises light, and the metabolic product comprises glycogen. Culturing 65 the microorganisms in the first amount of the energy source may comprise exposing the microorganisms to a direct

source of light. Culturing the microorganisms in the second amount of the energy source may comprise substantially blocking the microorganisms from any direct source of light. Culturing the microorganisms in the third amount of the energy source may comprise exposing the microorganisms to a direct source of light. The photosynthetic microorganisms may comprise cyanobacteria and/or microalgae.

The elements and method steps described herein can be used in any combination whether explicitly described or not.

All combinations of method steps as used herein can be performed in any order, unless otherwise specified or clearly implied to the contrary by the context in which the referenced combination is made.

As used herein, the singular forms "a," "an," and "the" include plural referents unless the content clearly dictates otherwise.

Numerical ranges as used herein are intended to include every number and subset of numbers contained within that range, whether specifically disclosed or not. Further, these numerical ranges should be construed as providing support for a claim directed to any number or subset of numbers in that range. For example, a disclosure of from 1 to 10 should be construed as supporting a range of from 2 to 8, from 3 to 7, from 5 to 6, from 1 to 9, from 3.6 to 4.6, from 3.5 to 9.9, and so forth.

All patents, patent publications, and peer-reviewed publications (i.e., "references") cited herein are expressly incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual reference were specifically and individually indicated as being incorporated by reference. In case of conflict between the present disclosure and the incorporated references, the present disclosure controls.

It is understood that the invention is not confined to the particular construction and arrangement of parts herein illustrated and described, but embraces such modified forms thereof as come within the scope of the claims.

### Examples

fba (coding sequence: SEQ ID NO:11; protein sequence: SEQ ID NO:12) and fbp (coding sequence: SEQ ID NO:13; protein sequence: SEQ ID NO:14) from Synechocystis PCC 6803 was inserted as an operon into the cLac143 IPTG inducible cassette described in Markley et al. 2015 (Markley AL, Begemann MB, Clarke RE, Gordon GC, Pfleger BF. ACS Synth Biol. 2015 May 15; 4(5):595-603) with 500 base pair flanking regions targeting the acsA locus in PCC 7002, forming construct pALM173 (SEQ ID NO:15). Wild Type glgC from K12 MG1655 E. coli genomic DNA (coding sequence: SEQ ID NO:1; protein sequence: SEQ ID NO:2) was inserted into the cLac94 IPTG inducible cassette described in Markley et al. 2015 with 500 base-pair flanking regions targeting the glpK locus in PCC 7002, forming construct pALM210 (SEQ ID NO:16). glgC with a G336D mutation (coding sequence: SEQ ID NO:3; protein sequence: SEQ ID NO:4) was amplified from a BioBrick part BBa K118016 and inserted into an identical vector backbone as pALM210 to form pALM211 (SEQ ID NO:17). These genetic elements were inserted into the PCC 7002

chromosome by adding 1-1.5  $\mu g$  of purified plasmid DNA to 1 mL of an overnight culture of cells grown to an OD<sub>730</sub> of 1. The cultures were then placed at 37° C. under illumination for 16 hours. The cells were plated on 50 µM acrylic acid (acsA locus) or 100 µg/ml gentamycin (glpK locus) to select for recombinants. This yielded strains were AM184 (WT 7002 AcsA::cLac143 FbaFbp), AM241 (WT 7002 glpK::

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cLac94 GlgC K12 GmR) and AM253 (WT 7002 glpK:: cLac94 GlgC K12 G336D GmR). Double fba-fbp/glgC strains were constructed by repeating the pALM210/ pALM211 glgC transformations in the AM184 fba-fbp strain to produce AM254 (AM184 7002 glpK::cLac94 GlgC K12 GmR) and AM255 (AM184 7002 glpK::cLac94 GlgC K12 G336D GmR).

The generated strains are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Strain ID	Description	Parent Strain	Construct Name(s)
AM184	WT 7002 AcsA::cLac143 FbaFbp Fix	PCC 7002	pALM173
AM241	WT 7002 glpK::cLac94 GlgC K12 GmR	PCC 7002	pALM210
AM253	WT 7002 glpK::cLac94 GlgC K12 G336D GmR	PCC 7002	pALM211
AM254	AM184 7002 glpK::cLac94 GlgC K12 GmR	PCC 7002	pALM173 + pALM210
AM255	AM184 7002 glpK::cLac94 GlgC K12 G336D GmR	PCC 7002	pALM173 + pALM211

Initial Glycogen Production Testing

Initial experiments on the produced strains were performed in Corning Costar non-treated 6-well tissue culture plates with 6 mL of MediaA+ (0.308 M NaCl, 0.02 M MgSO<sub>4</sub>.7H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.08 mM Na<sub>2</sub>EDTA.2H<sub>2</sub>O, 8.05 mM KCl, 2.52 mM CaCl<sub>2</sub>.2H<sub>2</sub>O, 11.8 mM NaNO<sub>3</sub>, 0.37 mM 30  $KH_2PO_4$ , 8.26 mM TRIZMA® base (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, Mo.) pH 8.2, 55.5 mM H<sub>3</sub>BO<sub>3</sub>, 0.23 mM ZnCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.021 mM MoO<sub>3</sub>(85%), 0.3  $\mu$ M vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin), 0.14 mM FeCl<sub>3</sub>.6H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.22 mM MnCl<sub>2</sub>.4H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.00012 mM CuSO<sub>4</sub>.5H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.0005 mM CoCl<sub>2</sub>.6H<sub>2</sub>O) 35 according to the UTEX Culture Collection of Algae at The University of Texas at Austin. IPTG was added at 0.5 mM and 5 mM. The cultures were grown on a shaker at 37° C. under illumination for 2 days. The induced strains with glgC G336D (AM253 and AM255) had a severe growth defect. 40 the same strains grown in 10% CO<sub>2</sub>. For this experiment,  $1.5 \text{ OD}_{730}$ \*mL were collected and pelleted. The pellets were washed 3× with PBS and analyzed for glycogen content using the Glycogen Assay Kit (Item No. 700480) from Cayman Chemical Company (Ann Arbor, Mich.).

To prepare samples for the glycogen assay with the 45 Glycogen Assay Kit, 1× Glycogen Assay Buffer was prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions. 1.5 OD ml (approximately 400 mg DCW based on my standard curve) was taken from each culture in regular Media A at low  $CO_2$  and washed  $3 \times$  in PBS to remove Tris interference. 50 Cell pellets were resuspended in 2 ml Diluted Assay Buffer+  $1 \times PMSF$ . Samples were frozen at  $-80^{\circ}$  C. until further use. To finish the sample preparation for the glycogen assay, the remaining reagents were prepared according to the manufacturer's instructions. The frozen samples were sonicated 55 on ice at 20% amplitude in 2-second bursts for 1 min total. The sample preparation was finished according to the manufacturer's instructions while also testing different dilution factors. The assay was then performed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

AM253 (glgC G336D) and AM255 (glgC G336D+fbafbp) yielded inconsistent glycogen yields with these experiments, likely due to their poor growth rates. Additionally, while strains containing the glgC G336D had a high glycogen:dry cell weight ratio, the low growth rate resulted in a 65 lower overall productivity when compared with WT glgC strains. See FIGS. 1A-1C.

Since these experiments showed that AM241 and AM254 had 2-3 fold more glycogen than WT PCC 7002 without a severe growth defect, these strains were chosen for further testing.

Glycogen Production Screen

In order to aid in the testing of the glycogen-producing strains, a screen was developed that couples glycogen content to cellular fitness. The overall scheme of this screen is to grow strains in liquid media using any desired growth 10 condition. The cells are then normalized to the same  $OD_{730}$ and serially diluted in sterile MediaA<sup>+</sup>. 7.5 µl of these dilutions are then spotted on several replicate MediaA+ agar plates. One plate is immediately placed under illumination at 37° C. while the remaining plates are placed in a dark 37° 15 C. incubator. The plates are then periodically removed from the dark incubator and placed in the light. Cells that have a high glycogen content show higher recovery rates compared to cells with low or no glycogen content.

An alternative strategy whereby liquid cultures of high 20 and low glycogen content strains were incubated in the dark at 37° C. for several days and periodically spotted on MediaA<sup>+</sup> agar plates before outgrowing in the illuminated growth chamber showed no difference in cellular fitness between strains. Similarly, simply leaving the solid agar plates at room temperature instead of 37° C. also did not work as well due to the very slow loss in fitness.

Testing of Strains Using the Glycogen Production Screen The glycogen production screen described above was performed on WT PCC 7002, a native glgC knockout (through kanamycin resistance gene inactivation), AM241, and AM254. Each strain was inoculated at 0.05 OD<sub>730</sub> in 20 mL of MediaA<sup>+</sup> and grown for 16 hours at 37° C. in the presence of ambient  $\mathrm{CO}_2$  and 0 or 0.5 mM IPTG. After 16 hours, the strains were normalized to the same  $OD_{730}$ , serially diluted, spotted on MediaA<sup>+</sup> agar plates, placed in a dark 37° C. incubator for various amounts of time, and placed in the light to determine relative recovery. Results are shown in FIG. 2.

The glycogen production screen was also performed on WT PCC 7002, the native glgC knockout, AM241, and AM254 were inoculated at 0.05 OD730 in 20 mL of MediaA+ and grown for 16 hours at 37° C. with 10% CO<sub>2</sub> by volume bubbled into the tubes in the presence of 0, 0.1, or 0.5 mM IPTG. After 16 hours, the strains were normalized to the same OD<sub>730</sub>, serially diluted, spotted on MediaA<sup>+</sup> agar plates, placed in a dark 37° C. incubator for various amounts of time, and placed in the light to determine relative recovery. Results are shown in FIG. 3. Additionally, after the 16-hours of growth, 10 OD730\*mL of each sample were spun down and lyophilized then resuspended with 1 mL of 4% H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and placed at 121° C. for one hour to hydrolyze the glycogen to glucose. After an hour, the samples were neutralized up to a pH of >2 and then run on an HPLC with a Bio-rad Aminex HPX-87H Sugar Byproducts Column using a 5 mM H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> isocratic running buffer. The glucose peaks were compared with a standard curve to determine intracellular sugar content. Results are shown in FIG. 4. The sugar content of the cells was highly correlative to the 60 relative survival rate in the dark. Compare FIGS. 4 and 3, respectively.

The AM241 (glpK::cLac94 glgC K12 WT) strain was chosen for larger scale bioreactor studies.

**Bioreactor Runs** 

Approximately 250 mL of WT PCC 7002 and AM241 bacteria were grown under ambient CO<sub>2</sub> conditions in the light, and then these cultures were used to inoculate 900 mL

MediaA<sup>+</sup> bioreactors in triplicate at an OD<sub>730</sub> of 0.01. Six total bioreactors of AM241 were inoculated, and IPTG was added to three of them to a final concentration of 0.1 mM IPTG. The bioreactors were then grown at 37° C. with 10% CO<sub>2</sub>, and 60 OD<sub>730</sub>\*mL were collected periodically and 5 analyzed for sugar content by HPLC as described above. There was no significant difference in growth rates between the WT and AM241 cultures (FIG. 5), but AM241 induced at 0.1 mM IPTG showed a 3.2 fold increase in glycogen content over WT 7002 and a titer of 476 mg/L glycogen after

18

64 hours (FIG. 6). Critically, this is done without having to lower the growth rate of the cyanobacteria or modify the nutrient ratios, as has been the only strategy for glycogen production in cyanobacteria.

Total glycogen content did start to decrease after 64 hours. See FIGS. 7A and 7B. This decrease was likely due to IPTG degradation. It is predicted that use of a constitutive expression system will prevent such a decrease.

Additional parameters from the bioreactor experiments are shown in Table 2.

TABL	Æ	2	
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Sample parameters of bioreactor runs.												
Days of Growth (Days)	Strain	Dry Cell Weight (DCW) (mg)	Sample Volume (mL)	DCW/ Sample Volume (mg/L)	HPLC Glucose Content (mg/ml)	Glucose/ Sample (mg)	Percent Glucose of DCW	Total Glucose (mg/L)	Glucose Production Rate (mg/L/day)			
1.1	WT 7002	27.3	41.78	653.40	0.29	0.62	2.3%	14.83	14			
		24.8	34.40	720.90	0.39	0.83	3.4%	24.24	22			
	11/0/11	24.2	38.36	630.80	0.39	0.83	3.4%	21.67	20			
	AM241	23.8	42.02	566.40	1.75	3.76	15.8%	89.41	83			
	0 mM	16.8	37.41	449.10	2.00	4.30 3.92	25.6%	115.02	106			
	AM241	22.6 24.2	43.35 39.37	521.30 614.70	1.82 3.66	3.92 7.87	17.4% 32.5%	90.49 199.86	84 184			
	0.1 mM	24.2 26.1	39.37	673.40	3.82	8.22	32.5% 31.5%	212.01	196			
	0.1 111.11	23.5	37.69	623.50	3.44	7.39	31.4%	196.03	181			
2.7	WT 7002	17.2	12.76	1358.80	0.60	1.30	7.5%	102.38	38			
2.,	W1 7002	24.4	11.67	2090.30	1.08	2.33	9.6%	199.77	75			
		25.0	13.57	1841.70	0.87	1.88	7.5%	138.32	52			
	AM241	24.5	13.89	1764.00	1.21	2.61	10.6%	187.58	70			
	0 mM	24.9	12.77	1950.50	1.64	3.52	14.1%	275.91	103			
		24.1	14.08	1711.10	1.39	2.99	12.4%	212.50	80			
	AM241	25.3	13.10	1931.20	2.84	6.11	24.1%	466.33	175			
	0.1 mM	24.3	12.82	1895.40	2.83	6.09	25.1%	474.95	178			
		25.8	13.57	1900.60	3.08	6.62	25.6%	487.45	183			
3.6	WT 7002	25.7	9.12	2818.40	1.36	2.92	11.4%	320.66	88			
		32.9	7.71	4266.00	2.60	5.60	17.0%	726.09	200			
		28.8	9.71	2966.40								
	AM241	23.6	8.04	2934.30	1.37	2.94	12.4%	365.24	137			
	0 mM	26.0	8.72	2981.30	2.23	4.79	18.4%	549.06	206			
	434241	27.3	10.34	2639.00 3405.80	2.69	6 77	17.00/	596.12	220			
	AM241 0.1 mM	33.5 32.0	9.84 9.74	3285.30	2.68 2.72	5.77 5.84	17.2% 18.3%	586.13 599.88	220 225			
	0.1 11101	52.0 64.7	9.68	6685.70	2.72	5.83	9.0%	602.30	225			
4.6	WT 7002	27.2	7.71	3526.90	2.82	6.06	22.3%	785.14	170			
		25.6	6.67	3840.00	3.86	8.30	32.4%	1244.80	269			
		25.1	7.21	3480.50	2.79	6.00	23.9%	832.15	180			
	AM241	26.8	7.61	3519.70	3.09	6.65	24.8%	873.35	189			
	0 mM	26.0	7.19	3614.00	3.62	7.79	30.0%	1082.64	234			
		26.5	8.26	3206.50	3.06	6.57	24.8%	795.44	172			
	AM241	27.9	7.13	3915.30	3.25	6.98	25.0%	979.12	212			
	0.1 mM	25.4	7.03	3615.30	3.41	7.34	28.9%	1044.75	226			
		29.0	7.46	3886.00	3.00	6.44	22.2%	863.37	187			
5.6	WT 7002	25.5	6.06	4207.50	3.57	7.68	30.1%	1267.58	225			
		24.6	5.69 6.25	4316.70	3.97	8.54 7.68	34.8%	1502.08	267			
	AM241	24.1 24.8	6.23	3856.00 3988.70	3.57 3.76	7.08 8.09	31.9% 32.6%	1229.12 1301.43	219 231			
	0  mM	24.8	5.97	3852.50	4.07	8.09	38.1%	1466.38	261			
	0 11101	24.3	6.67	3645.00	3.66	7.86	32.4%	1179.50	210			
	AM241	28.6	6.19	4623.70	4.62	9.93	34.7%	1604.57	285			
	0.1 mM	25.1	5.94	4225.20	4.25	9.15	36.4%	1539.74	274			
		27.0	6.03	4477.50	3.84	8.25	30.6%	1368.33	243			
6.7	WT 7002	25.6	5.60	4573.90	3.73	8.02	31.3%	1432.83	215			
		25.9	5.70	4541.10	4.75	10.20	39.4%	1788.97	268			
		25.6	6.00	4266.70	3.45	7.41	28.9%	1234.81	185			
	AM241	24.7	5.62	4396.60	3.23	6.95	28.1%	1236.35	185			
	0 mM	25.4	6.07	4182.50	4.24	9.11	35.9%	1499.46	225			
		25.2	6.05	4166.40	3.61	7.76	30.8%	1283.22	192			
	AM241	28.5	5.58	5111.00	4.38	9.42	33.0%	1689.06	253			
	0.1 mM	26.1	5.47 5.70	4767.60	3.92	8.42 7.82	32.3% 27.1%	1538.89	231			
		28.8	5.70	5049.60	3.64	7.82	27.170	1370.34	206			

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Met Val Ser Leu Glu Lys Asn Asp His Leu Met Leu Ala Arg Gln Leu $15$ Pro Leu Lys Ser Val Ala Leu IIe Leu Ala Gly Gly Arg Gly Thr Arg $20$ Leu Lys Asp Leu Thr Asn Lys Arg Ala Lys Pro Ala Val His Phe Gly $40$ Gly Lys Phe Arg IIe IIe Asp Phe Ala Leu Ser Asn Cys IIe Asn Ser $60$ Gly IIe Arg Arg Met Gly Val IIe Thr Gln Tyr Gln Ser His Thr Leu $80$ Val Gln His IIe Gln Arg Gly Trp Ser Phe Phe Asn Glu Glu Met Asn $95$ Glu Phe Val Asp Leu Leu Pro Ala Gln Gln Arg Met Lys Gly Glu Asn $110$ Trp Tyr Arg Gly Thr Ala Asp Ala Val Thr Gln Asn Leu Asp His IIe $110$ Arg Arg Tyr Lys Ala Glu Tyr Ser Arg Met Leu IIe Asp His Val Glu Lys Gly	

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Tyr Trp Arg 275		Thr Leu Glu Ala T 280	'yr Trp Lys Ala As 285	an Leu
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		Glu Ser Leu Pro P		al Gln 320
	Gly Ser His	Gly Met Thr Leu A	sn Ser Leu Val Se	er Asp
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27

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Leu Gly H 3	lis Asp 5	Ala A	Arg Ile	e Phe 40	Leu	Pro	Tyr	Tyr	Gly 45	Phe	Leu	Asn				
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Phe Asn T 65	hr Phe		/al Ty: 70	r Glu	Thr	Val	Leu 75	Pro	Asn	Thr	Asp	Val 80				
Pro Leu T	Yr Leu	Phe G 85	3ly Hi∶	s Pro	Ala	Phe 90	Asp	Gly	Arg	His	Ile 95	Tyr				
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Phe Leu Met Ala Met Val Thr Arg Leu Val Glu Gln Lys 275 280 289	
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Leu Ile Ile Leu Gly Thr Gly Asp Arg His Tyr Glu Thr 305 310 315	r Gln Leu Trp 320
Gln Thr Ala Tyr Arg Phe Lys Gly Arg Met Ser Val Glr 325 330	n Leu Leu Tyr 335
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Met Pro Ser Arg Phe Glu Pro Cys Gly Ile Ser Gln Met 355 360 369	
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Gly Met Ser His Asp Phe Ser Trp Tyr Lys Ser Ala Gly 435 440 445	
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31

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Met Tyr Tyr	Ala Le 32		rg Gly	Ala	Gln 330	Phe	Val	Leu	Leu	Gly 335	Ser		
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Pro His Ser His Tyr Arg Ile Gly Ile Pro Glu Glu Gly Tyr Tyr Gln 690 695 700	
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41

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See Arg Thr Ser Val Ala Val 355 Ser Arg Thr Ser Val Ala Val 355 $2(10) \leq SEQ$ ID NO 13 $2(10) \leq SEQ$ ID NO 13 $2(10) \leq SEQ$ ID NO choose the task of the ta	Gln Gln Phe T		-	3 Ile Lys Gln		
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What is claimed is:

1. A recombinant microorganism modified with respect to a native microorganism, the recombinant microorganism comprising a recombinant nucleic acid configured to express 45 a glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase, wherein the recombinant microorganism:

is a cyanobacterium;

exhibits enhanced glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase activity compared to the native microorganism; 50 exhibits a native glycogen synthase expression level;

- exhibits native glycogen synthase activity; and produces an increased amount of glycogen compared to the native microorganism while having a growth rate of at heat a growth rate of the native microorganism up on
- at least a growth rate of the native microorganism when grown photoautotrophically in the presence of light and 10% CO<sub>2</sub>.

2. The recombinant microorganism of claim 1, wherein the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase is allosterically regulated by a compound selected from the group consisting of adenosine diphosphate and adenosine monophosphate.

**3**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **1**, wherein the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase comprises a sequence at least 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:2.

**4**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **1**, wherein the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase comprises a 65 glycine at a position corresponding to position 336 of SEQ ID NO:2.

5. The recombinant microorganism of claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid comprises a glucose-1-phosphate adenylyl-transferase coding sequence operably connected to a promoter not operably connected to the coding sequence in nature.

6. The recombinant microorganism of claim 5, wherein the promoter is an inducible promoter.

7. The recombinant microorganism of claim 5, wherein the promoter is a constitutive promoter.

**8**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **1**, wherein the recombinant microorganism exhibits a native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme expression level.

**9**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **1**, wherein the recombinant microorganism exhibits native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme activity.

**10**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **1**, wherein the recombinant microorganism is capable of producing glycogen as a mass percent of dry cell weight (DCW) in an amount of at least about 25% DCW.

**11**. A method of producing glycogen comprising culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim **1**.

**12**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **1**, wherein the recombinant microorganism exhibits a native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme expression level and native 1,4-alpha-glucan-branching enzyme activity.

**13**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **12**, wherein the recombinant microorganism is capable of producing glycogen as a mass percent of dry cell weight (DCW) in an amount of at least about 25% DCW.

**14**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **13**, wherein 5 the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase is allosterically regulated by a compound selected from the group consisting of adenosine diphosphate and adenosine monophosphate.

**15**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **13**, wherein the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase comprises a 10 sequence at least 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:2.

**16**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **13**, wherein the glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase comprises a glycine at a position corresponding to position 336 of SEQ ID NO:2.

17. The recombinant microorganism of claim 13, wherein the nucleic acid comprises a glucose-1-phosphate adenylyltransferase coding sequence operably connected to a promoter not operably connected to the coding sequence in nature. 20

**18**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **17**, wherein the promoter is an inducible promoter.

**19**. The recombinant microorganism of claim **17**, wherein the promoter is a constitutive promoter.

**20**. A method of producing glycogen comprising culturing 25 the recombinant microorganism of claim **13**.

\* \* \* \* \*