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(54) Title: FUNCTIONAL INFLUENZA VIRUS-LIKE PARTICLES (VLPS)

(57) Abstract: Recombinant influenza virus proteins, including influenza capsomers, subviral particles, virus-like particles (VLP), VLP complexes, and/or any portions of thereof, are provided as a vaccine for influenza viruses. The invention is based on the combination of two vaccine technologies: (1) intrinsically safe recombinant vaccine technology, and (2) highly immunogenic, self-assembled protein macromolecules embedded in plasma membranes and comprised of multiple copies of influenza virus structural proteins exhibiting neutralizing epitopes in native conformations. More specifically, this invention relates to the design and production of functional homotypic and heterotypic recombinant influenza virus-like particles (VLPs) comprised of recombinant structural proteins of human influenza virus type A/Sydney/5/94 (H3N2) and/or avian influenza virus type A/Hong Kong/1073/99 (H9N2) in baculovirus-infected insect cells and their application as a vaccine in the prevention of influenza infections and as a laboratory reagent for virus structural studies and clinical diagnostics.