METHOD FOR GENERATING A GENETICALLY MODIFIED MICROBE

[0001] This application claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/183,031, filed June 1, 2009, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The methods and compositions provided herein generally relate to the industrial use of microorganisms such as yeast. Provided herein are genetically modified microorganisms that are modified to significantly reduce the risk of their dissemination in nature, and in particular, dissemination in nature of their recombinant DNA sequences. Also provided are methods for making and using such genetically modified microorganisms.

2. BACKGROUND

[0003] Advances in recombinant DNA technology have allowed for the production of industrially useful substances in large amounts through the utilization of prokaryotes or eukaryotes. Among eukaryotes, yeasts (in particular, yeasts belonging to the genus *Saccharomyces*), have been widely used for the production of fermented products. Generally, yeasts can grow rapidly and can be cultivated at higher density as compared with bacteria, and do not require an aseptic environment in the industrial setting. Furthermore, yeast cells can be easily separated from culture medium as compared with bacteria, greatly simplifying the process for product extraction and purification. Because of these characteristics, yeasts (in particular, genetically modified yeasts harboring recombinant DNA sequences) have been employed as hosts for the production of useful products, and the utility of such yeasts has been established. However, the use of genetically modified yeasts in industry carries a potential environmental risk, because the dispersal of such yeasts, and/or the recombinant DNA sequences contained in such yeasts, may have unpredictable consequences on the ecosystem. Thus, there exists a need for yeasts that are suitable for industrial applications but pose a reduced risk of being disseminated and propagated in nature, and in particular, pose a reduced risk of disseminating their recombinant DNA sequences in nature.

3. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Described herein are methods for generating genetically modified microorganisms, *e.g.,* genetically modified yeast strains, that are sporulation and/or endogenous mating impaired. The methods described herein comprise functionally disrupting one or more sporulation genes and/or one or more pheromone response genes in genetically

modified haploid microbial cells, *e.g.*, yeast cells, and inducing said genetically modified haploid microbial cells to form stable diploids that are effectively sexually sterile and constrained to the diploid state of their life cycle due to their lack of sporulation and/or mating capability. Microorganisms, *e.g.*, yeast strains, genetically modified in accordance with the methods provided herein find use in industrial applications, *e.g.*, industrial fermentation applications, and can provide the advantage of posing a significantly reduced risk of being disseminated and propagated in nature through mating with wild-type microorganisms.

[0004a] In a first aspect, the present invention refers to a genetically modified yeast cell comprising:

(a) a functional disruption in at least one sporulation gene;

(b) a functional disruption in at least one pheromone response gene; and

(c) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest;

wherein said genetically modified diploid yeast cell is sporulation impaired and endogenous mating impaired.

[0004b] In a second aspect, the present invention refers to a genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) haploid yeast cell comprising:

(a) a functional disruption in at least one sporulation gene;

(b) a functional disruption in at least one pheromone response gene; and

(c) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest;

wherein said genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) haploid yeast cell is sporulation impaired and endogenous mating impaired.

[0005] In one example, disclosed herein is a genetically modified yeast cell comprising: a functional disruption in one or more sporulation genes, wherein said yeast cell lacks sporulation capability as a result of said disruption of the one or more sporulation genes; a functional disruption in one or more pheromone response genes, wherein said yeast cell lacks endogenous mating capability as a result of said disruption of the one or more pheromone response genes; and one or more integrated heterologous nucleotide sequences of interest. In some examples, the genetically modified yeast cell is heterothallic (*ho*). In some examples, the genetically modified yeast cell is a diploid cell in which both copies of one or more sporulation genes and/or both copies of one or more pheromone response genes are functionally disrupted. In some examples, the genetically modified diploid cell is homozygous other than for its mating type allele. In some examples, the genetically modified yeast cell is a haploid cell. In some examples, the genetically modified haploid cell further comprises a recombinant plasmid encoding a homothallism (HO) protein. In some examples, the genetically modified haploid cell comprises one or more recombinant plasmids encoding the one or more pheromone response genes that is functionally disrupted in said yeast cell.

[0006] In some examples, the genetically modified yeast cell useful for the practice of the methods provided herein is a *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell. In some examples, the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the Baker's yeast, Mauri, Santa Fe, CBS 7959, CBS 7960, CBS 7961, CBS 7962, CBS 7963, CBS 7964, IZ-1904, TA, BG-1, CR-1, SA-1, M-26, Y-904, PE-2, PE-5, VR-1, BR-1, BR-2, ME-2, VR-2, MA-3, MA-4, CAT-1, CB-1, NR-1, BT-1 or AL-1 strain. In particular examples, the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the PE-2 strain. In other particular examples, the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the CAT-1 strain.

[0007] In some examples, the one or more sporulation genes disrupted in the genetically modified yeast cell is selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80,*

SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2, and *SPO21*. In particular examples, the *IME1* gene is disrupted. In some examples, the one or more pheromone response genes disrupted in the genetically modified yeast cell is selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11*. In particular examples, the *STE5* gene is disrupted. In particular examples, the genetically modified yeast cell comprises a functional disruption of both the *STE5* and *IME1* gene. In some examples, a haploid cell of the genetically modified yeast cell comprises a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene and a recombinant plasmid encoding a *STE5* protein.

[0007a] In a third aspect, the present invention refers to a method of generating a genetically modified diploid yeast cell that is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired, the method comprising:

(a) transforming each of a first and a second genetically modified haploid yeast cell with at least one plasmid encoding a protein capable of complementing an endogenous mating impairment of said first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells,

wherein said first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest, and wherein said second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired, is of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest;

(b) mating the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid yeast cell; and,

(c) eliminating the one or more plasmids from the genetically modified diploid yeast cell,

wherein the resulting genetically modified diploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises two copies of a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest;

wherein the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of at least one pheromone response gene.

[0008] In another example, provided herein is a method for generating a diploid yeast strain having impaired sporulation and mating capabilities. In some examples, the method comprises: (a) obtaining a first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, wherein the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest; (b) obtaining a second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, wherein the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired, of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest; (c) transforming each of the first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells with one or more plasmids encoding a protein capable of complementing the endogenous mating impairment of said first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells; (d) mating the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid yeast cell; and (e) eliminating the one or more plasmids from the genetically modified diploid yeast cell, wherein the resulting genetically modified diploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired.

[0009] In some examples, the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of one or more pheromone response genes. In some such examples, step (c) comprises transforming each of the first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells with one or more plasmids encoding a functional copy of the pheromone response gene that is functionally disrupted in said first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells. In some examples, the one or more pheromone response genes is selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11.* In certain examples,

the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene.

[0010] In some examples, the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of one or more sporulation genes. In some such examples, the one or more sporulation genes is selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21*. In some examples, the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of the *IME1* gene. In particular examples, the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell are mating impaired due to a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene, and are sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of the *IME1* gene.

[0011] In some examples, the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is obtained by inducing a mating type switch in a population of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell. In some such examples, the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is heterothallic (ho), and said population is induced to switch mating type by transforming the genetically modified haploid yeast cell with a recombinant plasmid encoding a homothallism (HO) protein, wherein expression of the HO protein induces a mating type switch of the genetically modified haploid yeast cell.

[0012] In other examples, the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is obtained by changing the mating type locus in the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell using recombinant DNA technology. In some examples, the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is transformed with an integration construct that comprises as an integrating sequence a nucleotide sequence that encodes a mating type other than the mating type of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, flanked by homologous sequences that are homologous to nucleotide sequences that flank the mating type locus in the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell. Upon integration of the integrating sequence via homologous recombination the mating type locus of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is replaced by the mating type locus encoded by the inserting sequence, resulting in the generation of the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell. In some examples, the integration construct is used to switch the mating type of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell from **a** to alpha using an integration construct encoding encoding the alpha mating type (MAT alpha). In some examples, the integration construct comprises SEQ ID NO: 155. In other examples, the integration construct is used to switch the mating type of

the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell from alpha to **a** using an integration construct encoding encoding the **a** mating type (MAT A). In some examples, the integration construct comprises SEQ ID NO: 156.

[0012a] In a fourth aspect, the present invention refers to a sporulation and endogenous mating impaired diploid yeast cell generated by the method as defined above.

[0012b] In a fifth aspect, the present invention refers to a method for generating a sporulation and endogenous mating impaired genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell, the method comprising:

(a) transforming a population of a first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell with a plasmid encoding a functional homothallism (HO) protein to yield a first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, wherein expression of the HO protein is capable of inducing a mating-type switch of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, whereby a second genetically modified haploid yeast cell of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is obtained,

wherein the first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest and functional disruptions in the *STE5* gene and the *IME1* gene;

(b) transforming each of the first and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cells with a plasmid encoding a *STE5* protein, whereby said transforming results in mating of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid yeast cell; and,

(c) eliminating any plasmids from the genetically modified diploid yeast cell to yield a genetically modified heterothallic diploid yeast cell,

wherein the resulting genetically modified heterothallic diploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises two copies of a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest.

[0012c] In a sixth aspect, the present invention refers to a sporulation and endogenous mating impaired heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell generated by the method as defined above.

[0013] In another example, described herein is a method for generating a sporulation and endogenous mating impaired heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell, the method comprising: (a) obtaining a first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell, wherein the first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell comprises: (i) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest; and (ii) functional disruptions in the *STE5* gene and the *IME1* gene; (b) transforming a population of the first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell with a plasmid comprising a polynucleotide encoding a homothallism (HO) protein, wherein expression of the HO protein induces a mating-type switch of the first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell, whereby a second genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell is obtained, wherein the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, and comprises: (i) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest; and (ii) functional disruptions in the *STE5* gene and the *IME1* gene; (c) transforming each of the first and second genetically modified heterolthallic haploid yeast cells with a plasmid encoding a *STE5* gene; (d) mating the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid yeast cell; and (e) eliminating any plasmids from the genetically modified diploid yeast cell, wherein the resulting genetically modified heterothallic diploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired.

[0014] Also described herein is a genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) yeast cell that lacks sporulation and endogenous mating capability generated by the present methods.

[0015] In a seventh aspect, the present invention refers to a *MATα*/**a** *ste5*/*ste5ime1*/*ime1* yeast cell.

4. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0016] FIG. 1 provides the structure of the Phase I disruption construct and of the target locus after integration of the disrupting sequence by homologous recombination.

[0017] FIG. 2 provides the structure of the Phase II disruption construct and of the target locus after integration of the disrupting sequence by homologous recombination.

[0018] FIG. 3 provides the structure of the Phase III disruption construct and of the target locus after integration of the disrupting sequence by homologous recombination.

[0019] FIG. 4 provides the structure of the Phase I marker recycling construct and of the target locus after integration of the construct by homologous recombination.

[0020] FIG. 5 provides the structure of the Phase II marker recycling construct and of the target locus after integration of the construct by homologous recombination.

[0021] FIG. 6 provides the structure of the Phase III marker recycling construct and of the target locus after integration of the construct by homologous recombination.

[0022] FIG. 7 provides the structure of the STE5 disruption construct and of the target locus after integration of the disrupting sequence by homologous recombination.

[0023] FIG. 8 provides the structure of the IME1 disruption construct and of the target locus after integration of the disrupting sequence by homologous recombination.

[0024] FIG. 9 provides a comparison of mating capability of genetically modified endogenous mating impaired haploid Y1915 cells and genetically modified endogenous mating competent Y1912 cells.

[0025] FIG. 10 provides a comparison of sporulation capability of genetically modified sporulation and endogenous mating impaired diploid Y1979 cells and genetically unmodified sporulation and endogenous mating competent Y1198 cells.

[0026] FIG. 11 provides a comparison of survival in soil of genetically modified sporulation and endogenous mating impaired diploid Y1979 cells and genetically unmodified sporulation and endogenous mating competent Y1198 cells.

5. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

5.1 Terminology

[0027] As used herein, the term "heterologous" refers to what is not normally found in nature. The term "heterologous nucleotide sequence" refers to a nucleotide sequence not normally found in a given cell in nature. As such, a heterologous nucleotide sequence may be: (a) foreign to its host cell (*i.e.*, is "exogenous" to the cell); (b) naturally found in the host cell (*i.e.*, "endogenous") but present at an unnatural quantity in the cell (*i.e.*, greater or lesser quantity than naturally found in the host cell); or (c) be naturally found in the host cell but positioned outside of its natural locus.

[0028] As used herein, to "functionally disrupt" or a "functional disruption" of a target gene, *e.g.*, a pheromone response gene or a sporulation gene, means that the target gene is altered in such a way as to decrease in the host cell the activity of the protein encoded by the target gene. In some embodiments, the activity of the protein encoded by the target gene is eliminated in the host cell. In other embodiments, the activity of the protein encoded by

the target gene is decreased in the host cell. Functional disruption of the target gene may be achieved by deleting all or a part of the gene so that gene expression is eliminated or reduced, or so that the activity of the gene product is eliminated or reduced. Functional disruption of the target gene may also be achieved by mutating a regulatory element of the gene, *e.g.*, the promoter of the gene so that expression is eliminated or reduced, or by mutating the coding sequence of the gene so that the activity of the gene product is eliminated or reduced. In some embodiments, functional disruption of the target gene results in the removal of the complete open reading frame of the target gene.

[0029] As used herein, "endogenous mating" and "endogenous mating capability" refer to the ability of haploid microbial cells of opposite mating types, *i.e.* mating types **a** and α, to form a diploid cell in the absence of heterologous gene expression, *e.g.*, expression of a heterologous copy of a pheromone response gene or of any gene capable of inducing mating among such haploids.

[0030] As used herein, "endogenous mating impaired" refers to a reduction in the endogenous mating capability of a microbial cell sufficient to inhibit mating within a population of haploids of such a microbial cell, relative to a population of wild-type haploid microbial cells. In some embodiments, inhibition comprises a reduction of at least 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 65%, 70%, 75% 80%, 85%, 90%, or 95% in the mating rate of a population of haploid microbial cells relative to the mating rate of a population of wild-type haploid microbial cells.

[0031] As used herein, "sporulation impaired" refers to a reduction in the sporulation activity of a diploid microbial cell sufficient to inhibit sporulation within a population of diploids of such a microbial cell, relative to a population of wild-type diploid microbial cells. In some embodiments, inhibition comprises a reduction of at least 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 65%, 70%, 75% 80%, 85%, 90%, or 95% in the sporulation rate of a population of diploid microbial cells relative to the sporulation rate of a population of wild-type diploid microbial cells.

[0032] As used herein, the term "complementing" in the context of a gene refers to a gene that has the facility to replace the function of a functionally disrupted gene, *e.g.*, a functionally disrupted sporulation or pheromone response gene. In some embodiments, the mechanism of function between the complementing gene and the disrupted gene need not be identical. In some embodiments, a target gene, *e.g.*, a sporulation gene or a pheromone response gene, that has been functionally disrupted can be complemented by a heterologous

gene that either produces a protein homologous to the protein encoded by the disrupted gene or a protein that provides a phenotype that permits, for example, sporulation or mating by an alternative mechanism.

5.2 Genetically Modified Microbes and Methods for Making the Same

[0033] Provided herein are compositions comprising a genetically modified microbe, for example, a genetically modified yeast cell (*e.g.*, a genetically modified *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell), that is functionally impaired in its sporulation and/or endogenous mating capability, and methods and materials for generating such compositions. The methods provided herein interrupt the sexual reproductive cycle of the microbe to minimize the dissemination of the microbe in nature and to minimize the likelihood of an exchange of genetic material between the genetically modified microbe and a wild-type microbe that is not compromised in its ability to disseminate in nature.

[0034] Many fungal cells, *e.g.*, yeast cells, can reproduce both sexually and asexually. Asexual reproduction involves only one parent cell and enables rapid population growth. In contrast, sexual reproduction involves the formation and fusion of gametes, and allows more rapid generation of genetic diversity by lateral gene transfer between cells. Sexually reproducing fungal cells assume two cell states throughout their life cycle, one being a diploid cell state and the other being a haploid cell state. Diploid fungal cells are generally very stable, and will generally remain in the diploid phase unless they encounter one or more of a number of particular environmental stimuli (*e.g.*, nutrient deprivation). When one or more of such stimuli is encountered, the diploid cells sporulate to form four haploid spores (called tetrads). When favorable conditions return, these haploid spores germinate to produce four haploid cells (two of mating type **a**, and two of mating type alpha), which then can mate with other haploid cells of the opposite mating type to form a diploid cell again.

[0035] The ability of diploid fungal cells to sporulate and of haploid fungal cells to mate is dependent on the function of specific gene products. Among these in yeast cells are products of sporulation genes, such as of the *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, IIOP2,* and *SPO21* genes, and products of pheromone response genes, such as of the *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7* and *STE11* genes.

[0036] In one aspect, provided herein is a genetically modified haploid fungal cell that is sporulation and/or endogenous mating impaired, and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which at least one

sporulation gene and/or at least one pheromone response gene has been functionally disrupted.

[0037] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which one or more of the following sporulation genes is functionally disrupted: *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21.* In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME1* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME2* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *NDT80* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO11* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO20* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *AMA1* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *HOP2* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO21* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than one sporulation gene selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21* is disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than two sporulation genes selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21* are disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than three sporulation genes selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21* are disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than four sporulation genes selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21* are disrupted.

[0038] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which one or more of the following pheromone response genes is functionally disrupted: *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11.* In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *STE5* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *STE4* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically

modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *STE18* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *STE12* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *STE7* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *STE11* gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than one pheromone response gene selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11* is disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than two pheromone response genes selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11* are disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than three pheromone response genes selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11* are disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which more than four pheromone response genes selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11* are disrupted.

[0039] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which at least one sporulation gene and at least one pheromone response gene have been functionally disrupted.

[0040] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME1* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME2* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *NDT80* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO11* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO20* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *AMA1* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *HOP2* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO21* gene and the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted.

[0041] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME1* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME2* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *NDT80* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO11* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO20* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *AMA1* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *HOP2* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO21* gene and the *STE4* gene are functionally disrupted.

[0042] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME1* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME2* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *NDT80* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO11* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO20* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *AMA1* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *HOP2* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO21* gene and the *STE18* gene are functionally disrupted.

[0043] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME1* gene and the *STE12* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME2* gene and the *STE12* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *NDT80* gene and the *STE12* gene are

functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO11* gene and the *STE12* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO20* gene and the *STE12* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *AMA1* gene and the *STE12* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *HOP2* gene and the *STE12* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO21* gene and the *STE12* gene are functionally disrupted.

[0044] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME1* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME2* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *NDT80* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO11* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO20* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *AMA1* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *HOP2* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO21* gene and the *STE7* gene are functionally disrupted.

[0045] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME1* gene and the *STE11* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *IME2* gene and the *STE11* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *NDT80* gene and the *STE11* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO11* gene and the *STE11* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO20* gene and the *STE11* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *AMA1* gene and the

STE11 gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *HOP2* gene and the *STE11* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell in which the *SPO21* gene and the *STE11* gene are functionally disrupted.

[0046] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell that comprises a functionally disrupted chromosomal copy of one or more pheromone response genes, and one or more recombinant plasmids comprising a functional extrachromosomal copy of a coding sequence of said one or more pheromone response genes. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell that comprises a functionally disrupted *STE5* gene, and a recombinant plasmid comprising a functional extrachromosomal copy of a coding sequence of the *STE5* gene. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell that comprises a functionally disrupted *STE4* gene, and a recombinant plasmid comprising a functional extrachromosomal copy of a coding sequence of the *STE4* gene. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell that comprises a functionally disrupted *STE18* gene, and a recombinant plasmid comprising a functional extrachromosomal copy of a coding sequence of the *STE18* gene. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell that comprises a functionally disrupted *STE12* gene, and a recombinant plasmid comprising a functional extrachromosomal copy of a coding sequence of the *STE12* gene. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell that comprises a functionally disrupted *STE7* gene, and a recombinant plasmid comprising a functional extrachromosomal copy of a coding sequence of the *STE7* gene. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a haploid yeast cell that comprises a functionally disrupted *STE11* gene, and a recombinant plasmid comprising a functional extrachromosomal copy of a coding sequence of the *STE11* gene.

[0047] In another aspect, provded herein is a genetically modified diploid fungal cell that is sporulation and/or endogenous mating impaired and comprises two copies of a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a diploid yeast cell in which both copies of at least one sporulation gene and/or both copies of at least one pheromone response gene have been functionally disrupted.

[0048] In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a diploid yeast cell in which both copies of one or more of the following sporulation genes are functionally

disrupted: *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21.* In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a diploid yeast cell in which both copies of the *IME1* gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a diploid yeast cell in which both copies of one or more of the following pheromone response genes are functionally disrupted: *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7* and *STE11.* In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a diploid yeast cell in which both copies of the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted. In still other embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a diploid yeast cell in which both copies of at least one sporulation gene and both copies of at least one pheromone response gene are functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, the genetically modified fungal cell is a diploid yeast cell in which the both copies of the *IME1* gene and both copies of the *STE5* gene are functionally disrupted.

[0049] In some embodiments, the genetically modified diploid fungal cell is homozygous other than for its mating type allele. For example, if the genetically modified diploid fungal cell should sporulate, the resulting four haploid fungal cells would be genetically identical except for their mating type allele. In such an event, two of the haploid cells would be mating type **a** and the other two haploid cells would be mating type alpha. In some embodiments, the genetically modified diploid fungal cell does not include a heterologous gene that confers resistance to an antibiotic compound.

[0050] The genetically modified diploid fungal cell provided herein possesses several safeguards against unwanted propogation of the heterologous nucleotide sequences contained therein. First, diploid fungal cells are generally very stable and, in their diploid state, cannot mate with other fungal cells. Second, the diploid fungal cell provided herein has an impaired ability to sporulate, and thus, even in the presence of the proper environmental stimuli, has little or no ability to form spores. Third, in the unlikely event that spores are formed, the resulting haploid fungal cells have an impaired ability to mate. Taken together, the sporulation and mating deficient nature of the genetically modified fungal cell provided herein significantly reduces the possibility of the migration of heterologous nucleotide sequences into wild type fungal cells.

[0051] In another aspect, provided herein is a method for generating a genetically modified diploid fungal cell described herein. In some embodiments, the method comprises: (a) obtaining a first genetically modified haploid fungal cell, wherein the first genetically modified haploid fungal cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises a

chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest; (b) obtaining a second genetically modified haploid fungal cell, wherein the second genetically modified haploid fungal cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired, is of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid fungal cell, and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest; (c) transforming each of the first and the second genetically modified haploid fungal cells with one or more plasmids encoding a protein capable of complementing the endogenous mating impairment of said first and second genetically modified haploid fungal cells; (d) mating the first genetically modified haploid fungal cell with the second genetically modified haploid fungal cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid fungal cell; and (e) eliminating the one or more plasmids from the genetically modified diploid fungal cell, wherein the resulting genetically modified diploid fungal cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises two copies of a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest.

[0052] In some embodiments, the first genetically modified haploid fungal cell and the second genetically modified haploid fungal cell are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of one or more pheromone response genes. In some embodiments, step (c) of the method of the invention comprises transforming each of the first and the second genetically modified haploid fungal cells with one or more plasmids encoding a functional copy of the one or more pheromone response genes that are functionally disrupted in said first and second genetically modified haploid fungal cells. In some embodiments, the first and second genetically modified haploid fungal cells are haploid yeast cells and the one or more pheromone response genes is selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11.* In certain embodiments, the first and second genetically modified haploid fungal cells are haploid yeast cells that are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene.

[0053] In some embodiments, the first genetically modified haploid fungal cell and the second genetically modified haploid fungal cell are sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of one or more sporulation genes. In some embodiments, the first and second genetically modified haploid fungal cells are haploid yeast cells, and the one or more sporulation genes is selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21.* In some embodiments, the first and second genetically modified haploid fungal cells are haploid yeast cells that are sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of the *IME1* gene. In particular embodiments, the first and second

genetically modified haploid fungal cells are haploid yeast cells that are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene, and are sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of the *IME1* gene.

[0054] In some embodiments, the second genetically modified haploid fungal cell is obtained by inducing a mating type switch in a population of the first genetically modified haploid fungal cell. In some embodiments, the first genetically modified haploid fungal cell is a heterothallic (ho) haploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell, and said population of heterothallic (ho) haploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is induced to switch mating type by transforming said heterothallic (ho) haploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell with a plasmid encoding a homothallism (HO) protein, wherein expression of the HO protein induces a mating type switch in the haploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell to yield the second genetically modified haploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell. Heterothallic (ho) haploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cells are characterized by the virtual non-occurrence of spontaneous mating type switching (frequency of only 10^{-6}). By transiently expressing the HO protein, the frequency of spontaneous mating type switching in a haploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell can be increased to as much as once every cell division, providing a population of haploid cells of opposite mating types that can mate with each other to yield diploid *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cells.

[0055] In another aspect, provided herein is a method for generating a genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell that lacks sporulation and endogenous mating capability, the method comprising: (a) obtaining a first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell, wherein the first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell comprises: (i) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest; and (ii) functional disruptions in one or more sporulation genes and one or more pheromone response genes; (b) transforming a population of the first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell with a plasmid encoding a homothallism (HO) protein to yield a first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, wherein expression of the HO protein induces a mating-type switch in the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, whereby a second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is obtained, wherein the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and comprises: (i) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest; and (ii) functional disruptions in one or more sporulation genes and one or more pheromone response genes; (c) transforming each of the first and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cells with a plasmid encoding the

one or more pheromone response proteins that are functionally disrupted in said first and second haploid yeast cell; (d) mating the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid yeast cell that is homozygous other than for its mating type allele; and (e) eliminating any plasmids from the genetically modified diploid yeast cell to yield a genetically modified heterothallic diploid yeast cell, wherein the resulting genetically modified heterothallic diploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises two copies of a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest.

[0056] Although the steps of the methods provided herein and described in greater detail below are presented in sequential order, one of skill in the art will recognize that the order of several steps can be interchanged, combined, or repeated without exceeding the scope of the invention. Thus, in some embodiments, a genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell that lacks sporulation and endogenous mating capability is generated by first transforming a genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell with a plasmid encoding one or more pheromone response proteins that are functionally disrupted in said genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell, and then transforming the cell with a plasmid encoding a homothallism (HO) protein. In other embodiments, the genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell that lacks sporulation and endogenous mating capability is generated by simultaneously transforming a genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell with a plasmid encoding one or more pheromone response proteins that are functionally disrupted in said genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell, and a plasmid encoding a homothallism (HO) protein.

5.2.1 Microbe Selection

[0057] Microbes useful in the practice of the methods provided herein include eukaryotic unicellular organisms, particularly fungi, and more particularly yeasts.

[0058] In some embodiments, yeasts useful in the present methods include yeasts that have been deposited with microorganism depositories (*e.g.* IFO, ATCC, *etc.*) and belong to the genera *Aciculoconidium, Ambrosiozyma, Arthroascus, Arxiozyma, Ashbya, Babjevia, Bensingtonia, Botryoascus, Botryozyma, Brettanomyces, Bullera, Bulleromyces, Candida, Citeromyces, Clavispora, Cryptococcus, Cystofilobasidium, Debaryomyces, Dekkara, Dipodascopsis, Dipodascus, Eeniella, Endomycopsella, Eremascus, Eremothecium, Erythrobasidium, Fellomyces, Filobasidium, Galactomyces, Geotrichum, Guilliermondella, Hanseniaspora, Hansenula, Hasegawaea, Holtermannia, Hormoascus, Hyphopichia,*

Issatchenkia, Kloeckera, Kloeckeraspora, Kluyveromyces, Kondoa, Kuraishia, Kurtzmanomyces, Leucosporidium, Lipomyces, Lodderomyces, Malassezia, Metschnikowia, Mrakia, Myxozyma, Nadsonia, Nakazawaea, Nematospora, Ogataea, Oosporidium, Pachysolen, Phachytichospora, Phaffia, Pichia, Rhodosporidium, Rhodotorula, Saccharomyces, Saccharomycodes, Saccharomycopsis, Saitoella, Sakaguchia, Saturnospora, Schizoblastosporion, Schizosaccharomyces, Schwanniomyces, Sporidiobolus, Sporobolomyces, Sporopachydermia, Stephanoascus, Sterigmatomyces, Sterigmatosporidium, Symbiotaphrina, Sympodiomyces, Sympodiomycopsis, Torulaspora, Trichosporiella, Trichosporon, Trigonopsis, Tsuchiyaea, Udeniomyces, Waltomyces, Wickerhamia, Wickerhamiella, Williopsis, Yamadazyma, Yarrowia, Zygoascus, Zygosaccharomyces, Zygowilliopsis, and *Zygozyma*, among others.

[0059] In some embodiments, the microbe is *Saccharomyces cerevisiae, Pichia pastoris, Schizosaccharomyces pombe, Dekkera bruxellensis, Kluyveromyces lactis* (previously called *Saccharomyces lactis*), *Kluveromyces marxianus, Arxula adeninivorans*, or *Hansenula polymorpha (*now known as *Pichia angusta)*. In some embodiments, the microbe is a strain of the genus *Candida*, such as *Candida lipolytica, Candida guilliermondii, Candida krusei, Candida pseudotropicalis*, or *Candida utilis*.

[0060] In a particular embodiment, the microbe is *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. In some embodiments, the microbe is a strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* selected from the group consisting of Baker's yeast, CBS 7959, CBS 7960, CBS 7961, CBS 7962, CBS 7963, CBS 7964, IZ-1904, TA, BG-1, CR-1, SA-1, M-26, Y-904, PE-2, PE-5, VR-1, BR-1, BR-2, ME-2, VR-2, MA-3, MA-4, CAT-1, CB-1, NR-1, BT-1, and AL-1. In some embodiments, the microbe is a strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* selected from the group consisting of PE-2, CAT-1, VR-1, BG-1, CR-1, and SA-1. In a particular embodiment, the strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is PE-2. In another particular embodiment, the strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is CAT-1. In another particular embodiment, the strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is BG-1.

[0061] In some embodiments, the microbe is a microbe that is suitable for industrial fermentation, *e.g.*, bioethanol fermentation. In particular embodiments, the microbe is conditioned to subsist under high solvent concentration, high temperature, expanded substrate utilization, nutrient limitation, osmotic stress due to sugar and salts, acidity, sulfite and bacterial contamination, or combinations thereof, which are recognized stress conditions of the industrial fermentation environment.

5.2.2 Genetic Modification of Microbes

[0062] Methods for genetically modifying microbes using recombinant plasmid or chromosomal integration vectors are well known in the art. See, for example, Sherman, F., *et al.*, *Methods Yeast Genetics*, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, N.Y. (1978); Guthrie, C., *et al.* (Eds.) *Guide To Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology* Vol. 194, Academic Press, San Diego (1991); Sambrook *et al.*, 2001, *Molecular Cloning -- A Laboratory Manual*, 3rd edition, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY; and Ausubel *et al.*, *eds.*, Current Edition, *Current Protocols in Molecular Biology*, Greene Publishing Associates and Wiley Interscience, NY; the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

[0063] In some embodiments, the microbe is genetically modified to comprise one or more heterologous nucleotide sequences encoding enzymes of a new metabolic pathway, *i.e.*, a metabolic pathway that produces a metabolite that is not endogenously produced by the microbe. In other embodiments, the microbe is genetically modified to comprise one or more heterologous nucleotide sequences encoding enzymes of a metabolic pathway that is endogenous to the microbe, *i.e.*, a metabolic pathway that produces a metabolite that is endogenously produced by the microbe.

[0064] In some embodiments, the methods of the present invention require the use of recombinant plasmids to transiently express in the microbe a particular protein such as that encoded by one of the pheromone response genes or *HO*. Illustrative examples of recombinant plasmids sutibale for use in yeast cells include CEN/ARS and 2μ plasmids.

[0065] In some embodiments, the microbes of the present invention do not comprise a heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance markers are commonly used in the construction of genetically modified cells. In such embodiments of the present invention in which the antibiotic resistance markers are used to mark genetic modifications introduced into the microbe, these markers are subsequently deleted after all of the desired genetic modifications are made to the microbe. Alternatively, other selection tools can be used in the construction of genetically modified microbes, such as auxotrophic complementation (*e.g.*, *HIS3*, *LEU2*, *LYS1*, *MET15*, *TRP1*, *ADE2*, *URA3*, and *LYS2*).

5.2.3 Disruption of Sporulation and/or Pheromone Response Genes

[0066] The methods provided herein comprise a step of functionally disrupting one or more sporulation genes and/or one or more pheromone response genes in a genetically modified microbial cell. In some embodiments, disruption of the one or more sporulation genes results in a genetically modified microbial cell that lacks sporulation capability. In

particular, genetically modified diploid microbial cells lack sporulation capability. In some embodiments, disruption of the one or more pheromone response genes results in a microbial cell that is endogenous mating impaired. In some embodiments, disruption of the one or more sporulation genes and of the one or more pheromone response genes results in a microbial cell that is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired.

[0067] In some embodiments, disruption of a sporulation or pheromone response gene is achieved by using a "disruption construct" that is capable of specifically disrupting a sporulation or pheromone response target gene upon introduction of the construct into the microbial cell, thereby rendering the disrupted gene non-functional. In some embodiments, disruption of the target gene prevents the expression of a functional protein. In some embodiments, disruption of the target gene results in expression of a non-functional protein from the disrupted gene. In some embodiments, disruption of a sporulation or pheromone response target gene is achieved by integration of a "disrupting sequence" within the target gene locus by homologous recombination. In such embodiments, the disruption construct comprises a disrupting sequence flanked by a pair of nucleotide sequences that are homologous to a pair of nucleotide sequences of the target gene locus (homologous sequences). Upon replacement of the targeted portion of the target gene by the disruption construct, the disrupting sequence prevents the expression of a functional protein, or causes expression of a non-functional protein, from the target gene.

[0068] Disruption constructs capable of disrupting one or more sporulation or pheromone response genes may be constructed using standard molecular biology techniques well known in the art. *See, e.g.,* Sambrook *et al.*, 2001, *Molecular Cloning -- A Laboratory Manual*, 3rd edition, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY, and Ausubel *et al., eds.*, Current Edition, *Current Protocols in Molecular Biology*, Greene Publishing Associates and Wiley Interscience, NY. Parameters of disruption constructs that may be varied in the practice of the present methods include, but are not limited to, the lengths of the homologous sequences; the nucleotide sequence of the homologous sequences; the length of the disrupting sequence; the nucleotide sequence of the disrupting sequence; and the nucleotide sequence of the target gene. In some embodiments, an effective range for the length of each homologous sequence is 50 to 5,000 base pairs. In particular embodiments, the length of each homologous sequence is about 500 base pairs. For a discussion of the length of homology required for gene targeting, *see* Hasty *et al., Mol Cell Biol* 11:5586-91 (1991). In some embodiments, the homologous sequences comprise coding sequences of the target gene. In other embodiments, the homologous sequences comprise upstream or

downstream sequences of the target gene. Is some embodiments, one homologous sequence comprises a nucleotide sequence that is homologous to a nucleotide sequence located 5' of the coding sequence of the target gene, and the other homologous sequence comprises a nucleotide sequence that is homologous to a nucleotide sequence located 3' of the coding sequence of the target gene. In some embodiments, the disrupting sequence comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding a selectable marker that enables selection of microbial cells comprising the disrupting sequence. Thus, in such embodiments, the disruption construct has a dual function, *i.e.,* to functionally disrupt the target gene and to provide a selectable marker for the identification of cells in which the target gene is functionally disrupted. In some embodiments, a termination codon is positioned in-frame with and downstream of the nucleotide sequence encoding the selectable marker to prevent translational read-through that might yield a fusion protein having some degree of activity of the wild type protein encoded by the target gene. In some embodiments, the length of the disrupting sequence is one base pair. Insertion of a single base pair can suffice to disrupt a target gene because insertion of the single base pair in a coding sequence could constitute a frame shift mutation that could prevent expression of a functional protein. In some embodiments, the sequence of the disruption sequence differs from the nucleotide sequence of the target gene located between the homologous sequences by a single base pair. Upon replacement of the nucleotide sequence within the target gene with the disrupting sequence, the single base pair substitution that is introduced could result in a single amino acid substitution at a critical site in the protein and the expression of a non-functional protein. It should be recognized, however, that disruptions effected using very short disrupting sequences are susceptible to reversion to the wild type sequence through spontaneous mutation, thus leading to restoration of mating and sporulation capability to the host strain. Accordingly, in particular embodiments, the disrupting sequences are longer than one to a few base pairs. At the other extreme, a disrupting sequence of excessive length is unlikely to confer any advantage over a disrupting sequence of moderate length, and might diminish efficiency of transfection or targeting. Excessive length in this context is many times longer than the distance between the chosen homologous sequences in the target gene. Thus, in certain embodiments, the length for the disrupting sequence can be from 2 to 2,000 base pairs. In other embodiments, the length for the disrupting sequence is a length approximately equivalent to the distance between the regions of the target gene locus that match the homologous sequences in the disruption construct.

[0069] In some embodiments, the disruption construct is a linear DNA molecule. In other embodiments, the disruption construct is a circular DNA molecule. In some embodiments, the circular disruption construct comprises a pair of homologous sequences separated by a disrupting sequence, as described above. In some embodiments, the circular disruption construct comprises a single homologous sequence. Such circular disruption constructs, upon integration at the target gene locus, would become linearized, with a portion of the homologous sequence positioned at each end and the remaining segments of the disruption construct inserting into and disrupting the target gene without replacing any of the target gene nucleotide sequence. In particular embodiments, the single homologous sequence of a circular disruption construct is homologous to a sequence located within the coding sequence of the target gene.

[0070] Disruption constructs can be introduced into a microbial cell by any method known to one of skill in the art without limitation. Such methods include, but are not limited to, direct uptake of the molecule by a cell from solution, or facilitated uptake through lipofection using, *e.g.*, liposomes or immunoliposomes; particle-mediated transfection; *etc.* See, *e.g.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,272,065; Goeddel et al., eds, 1990, Methods in Enzymology, vol. 185, Academic Press, Inc., CA; Krieger, 1990, Gene Transfer and Expression -- A Laboratory Manual, Stockton Press, NY; Sambrook et al., 1989, Molecular Cloning -- A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, NY; and Ausubel et al., eds., Current Edition, Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, Greene Publishing Associates and Wiley Interscience, NY. Particular methods for transforming yeast cells are well known in the art. *See* Hinnen *et al.*, Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 75:1292-3 (1978); Cregg *et al.*, Mol. Cell. Biol. 5:3376-3385 (1985). Exemplary techniques include but are not limited to, spheroplasting, electroporation, PEG 1000 mediated transformation, and lithium acetate or lithium chloride mediated transformation.

5.2.3.1 Pheromone Response Genes

[0071] In some embodiments, the pheromone response gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *STE5*. The *STE5* gene encodes a scaffold protein required for direct signaling through the yeast mating pathway to the mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK). *See, e.g.*, Good *et al.*, *Cell* Mar 20;136(6):1085-97 (2009). Representative *STE5* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number L23856, and SEQ ID NOS: 17, 45, 73, 101, and 129 as provided herein. Representative Ste5 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank

accession number AAA35115, and SEQ ID NOS: 18, 46, 74, 102, and 130 as provided herein.

[0072] In some embodiments, the pheromone response gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *STE4*. The *STE4* gene encodes a G protein beta subunit that forms a dimer with Ste18p to activate the mating signaling pathway. The sequence of the *STE4* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. Dujon *et al., Nature* 387 (6632 Suppl):98-102 (1997). Representative *STE4* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001147.5, and SEQ ID NOS: 19, 47, 75, 103, and 131 as provided herein. Representative Ste4 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_014855, and SEQ ID NOS: 20, 48, 76, 104, and 132 as provided herein.

[0073] In some embodiments, the pheromone response gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *STE18*. The *STE18* gene encodes a G protein gamma subunit that forms a dimer with Ste4p to activate the mating signaling pathway. The sequence of the *STE18* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Goffeau *et al., Science* 274 (5287):546-547 (1996). Representative *STE18* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001147.5, and SEQ ID NOS: 21, 49, 77, 105, and 133 as provided herein. Representative Ste18 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_012619, and SEQ ID NOS: 22, 50, 78, 106, and 134 as provided herein.

[0074] In some embodiments, the pheromone response gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *STE12*. The *STE12* gene encodes a transcription factor that is activated by a MAP kinase signaling cascade, and that activates genes involved in mating or pseudohyphal/invasive growth pathways. The sequence of the *STE12* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Goffeau *et al., Science* 274 (5287):546-547 (1996). Representative *STE12* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001140.5, and SEQ ID NOS: 23, 51, 79, 107, and 135 as provided herein. Representative Ste12 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_011952, and SEQ ID NOS: 24, 52, 80, 108 and 136 as provided herein.

[0075] In some embodiments, the pheromone response gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *STE7*. The *STE7* gene encodes a signal transducing MAP kinase kinase involved in pheromone response where it phosphorylates

Fus3p. The sequence of the *STE7* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,Teague et al., Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 83(19):7371-5 (1986). Representative *STE7* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number Z74207, and SEQ ID NOS: 25, 53, 81, 109, and 137 as provided herein. Representative Ste7 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number CAA98732, and SEQ ID NOS: 26, 54, 82, 110, and 138 as provided herein.

[0076] In some embodiments, the pheromone response gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *STE11*. The *STE11* gene encodes a signal transducing MEK kinase involved in pheromone response and pseudohyphal/invasive growth pathways where it phosphorylates Ste7p. The sequence of the *STE11* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Johnston *et al., Nature* 387 (6632 Suppl), 87-90 (1997). Representative *STE11* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001144.4, and SEQ ID NOS: 27, 55, 83, 111, and 139 as provided herein. Representative Ste11 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_013466, and SEQ ID NOS: 28, 56, 84, 112, and 140 as provided herein.

5.2.3.2 Sporulation Genes

[0077] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *IME1*. The *IME1* gene encodes a transcription factor that activates early meiotic gene transcription, which is required for initiation of meiosis. The sequence of the *IME1* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Smith,H.E., *et al., Mol. Cell. Biol.* 10 (12):6103-6113 (1990). Representative *IME1* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number M37188, and SEQ ID NOS: 1, 29, 57, 85, and 113 as provided herein. Representative Ime1 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number AAA86790, and SEQ ID NOS: 2, 30, 58, 86, and 114 as provided herein.

[0078] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *IME2*. The *IME2* gene encodes a serine/threonine protein kinase involved in activation of meiosis. The sequence of the *IME2* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g., EMBO J.* 15 (9), 2031-2049 (1996). Representative *IME2* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001142, and SEQ ID NOS: 3, 31, 59, 87, and 115 as provided herein. Representative Ime2 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*

include Genbank accession number NP_012429, and SEQ ID NOS: 4, 32, 60, 88, and 116 as provided herein.

[0079] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *NDT80*. The *NDT80* gene encodes a meiosis-specific transcription factor required for exit from pachytene and for full meiotic recombination. The Ndt80 protein also activates middle sporulation genes. The sequence of the *NDT80* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Goffeau *et al., Science* 274 (5287):546-547 (1996). Representative *NDT80* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001140, and SEQ ID NOS: 5, 33, 61, 89, and 117 as provided herein. Representative Ndt80 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_011992, and SEQ ID NOS: 6, 34, 62, 90, and 118 as provided herein.

[0080] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *SPO11*. The *SPO11* gene is required for meiotic recombination. The sequence of the *SPO11* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Atcheson *et al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 84 (22), 8035-8039 (1987).* Representative *SPO11* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number J02987, and SEQ ID NOS: 7, 35, 63, 91, and 119 as provided herein. Representative Spo11 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number AAA65532, and SEQ ID NOS: 8, 36, 64, 92, and 120 as provided herein.

[0081] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *SPO20*. The *SPO20* gene encodes a meiosis-specific subunit of the t-SNARE complex, required for prospore membrane formation during sporulation. The sequence of the *SPO20* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Bowman *et al.,* Nature 387 (6632 Suppl), 90-93 (1997). Representative *SPO20* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number AF078740, and SEQ ID NOS: 9, 37, 65, 93, and 121 as provided herein. Representative Spo20 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_013730, and SEQ ID NOS: 10, 38, 66, 94, and 122 as provided herein.

[0082] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *AMA1*. The *AMA1* gene encodes an activator of the meiotic anaphase promoting complex. The sequence of the *AMA1* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.,* Tettelin *et al., Nature*

387 (6632 Suppl):81-84 (1997). Representative *AMA1* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001139.8, and SEQ ID NOS: 11, 39, 67, 95, and 123 as provided herein. Representative Ama1 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_011741, and SEQ ID NOS: 12, 40, 68, 96, and 124 as provided herein.

[0083] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *HOP2*. The *HOP2* gene encodes a meiosis-specific protein which the ensures synapsis between homologous chromosomes. The sequence of the *HOP2* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.*, Leu *et al.*, *Cell* 94 (3):375-386 (1998). Representative *HOP2* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number AF_078740.1, and SEQ ID NOS: 13, 41, 69, 97, and 125 as provided herein. Representative Hop2 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number AAC31823, and SEQ ID NOS: 14, 42, 70, 98, and 126 as provided herein.

[0084] In some embodiments, the sporulation gene disrupted in a yeast cell in accordance with the methods provided herein is *SPO21*. The *SPO21* gene encodes a component of the meiotic outer plaque of the spindle pole body, involved in modifying the meiotic outer plaque that is required prior to prospore membrane formation. The sequence of the *SPO21* gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.*, Dujon *et al.*, *Nature* 387 (6632 Suppl):98-102 (1997). Representative *SPO21* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001147.5, and SEQ ID NOS: 15, 43, 71, 99, and 127 as provided herein. Representative Spo21 protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_014550, and SEQ ID NOS: 16, 44, 72, 100, and 128 as provided herein.

5.2.4 Preparation of Diploids

[0085] The methods provided herein comprise a step of inducing mating among haploid cells that comprise a functional disruption in one or more sporulation genes and/or a functional disruption in one or more pheromone response genes. The diploid cells formed as a result of said mating are stable diploid cells constrained to the diploid phase due to the functional disruption of the one or more sporulation genes of the cell.

[0086] To form a diploid cell from haploid cells that lack mating capability, the mating-impaired haploid cells are transformed with a "mating complement plasmid," *i.e.*, a recombinant plasmid comprising a heterologous gene that can complement the mating

deficiency caused by the functional disruption in the one or more pheromone response genes. Transient expression of the heterologous pheromone response gene within the haploid cells temporarily restores mating function to the cells and enables haploid cells of opposite mating type to form a stable diploid cell. In particular, the stable diploid cells formed thereby are homozygous other than for their mating type allele, being generated from haploids of the same genetically modified population.

[0087] Thus, in some embodiments in which the haploid cell comprises a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene, the haploid cell is transformed with a mating complement plasmid comprising a *STE5* coding sequence. In some embodiments in which the haploid cell comprises a functional disruption of the *STE4* gene, the haploid cell is transformed with a mating complement plasmid comprising a *STE4* coding sequence. In some embodiments in which the haploid cell comprises a functional disruption of the *STE18* gene, the haploid cell is transformed with a mating complement plasmid comprising a *STE18* coding sequence. In embodiments in which the haploid cell comprises a functional disruption of the *STE12* gene, the haploid cell is transformed with a mating complement plasmid comprising a *STE12* coding sequence. In embodiments in which the a haploid cell comprises a functional disruption of the *STE7* gene, the haploid cell is transformed with a mating complement plasmid encoding a *STE7* coding sequence. In some embodiments in which the haploid cell comprises a functional disruption of the *STE11* gene, the haploid cell is transformed with a mating complement plasmid comprising a *STE11* coding sequence.

[0088] Techniques for the construction of expression vectors and expression of genes in cells comprising the expression vectors are well known in the art. *See, e.g.,* Sambrook *et al.*, 2001, *Molecular Cloning -- A Laboratory Manual*, 3rd edition, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY, and Ausubel *et al., eds.*, Current Edition, *Current Protocols in Molecular Biology*, Greene Publishing Associates and Wiley Interscience, NY. Plasmids encoding mating complement genes can be introduced into the host cell by any method known to one of skill in the art.

[0089] Plasmid-based systems generally require selective pressure on the plasmids to maintain the foreign DNA in the cell. Most plasmids in yeast are relatively unstable, as a yeast cell typically loses 10% of plasmids contained in the cell after each mitotic division. Thus, in some embodiments, selection of diploid cells that were formed by the mating of haploid cells comprising a plasmid encoding a mating complement gene but that do not themselves comprise the plasmid is achieved by allowing the diploid cells to undergo sufficient mitotic divisions such that the plasmid is effectively diluted from the population.

Alternatively, diploid cells can be selected by selecting for the absence of the plasmid, *e.g.*, by selecting against a counter-selectable marker (such as, for example, URA3) or by plating identical colonies on both selective media and non-selective media and then selecting a colony that does not grow on the selective media but does grow on the non-selective media.

[0090] In some embodiments, the methods provided herein comprise a step of transforming a haploid heterothallic (*ho*) yeast cell with a recombinant plasmid encoding a homothallism (HO) protein, wherein expression of the HO protein induces a mating-type switch of the haploid cell. The sequence of the HO gene of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been previously described. *See, e.g.*, Russell *et al., Mol. Cell. Biol.* 6 (12):4281-4294 (1986). Representative *HO* nucleotide sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NC_001136, and SEQ ID NO: 151 as provided herein. Representative HO protein sequences of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* include Genbank accession number NP_010054, and SEQ ID NO: 152 as provided herein.

6. EXAMPLES

6.1 Example 1: Generation of Genetically Modified Haploid Cells

[0091] This example describes an exemplary method for generating genetically modified haploid *S. cerevisiae* cells.

[0092] The Phase I disruption construct (Figure 1; SEQ ID NO: 141) comprises as a disrupting sequence nucleotide sequences that encode a selectable marker (hygA, which confers resistance to hygromycin B); two enzymes of the *S. cerevisiae* MEV pathway (the truncated HMG1 coding sequence, which encodes a truncated HMG-CoA reductase, and the ERG13 coding sequence, which encodes HMG-CoA synthase), and another enzyme of *S. cerevisiae* (the ERG10 coding sequence, which encodes acetoacetyl-CoA thiolase), under control of galactose-inducible promoters (promoters of the *S. cerevisiae* genes GAL1 and GAL10); flanked by homologous sequences consisting of upstream and downstream nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* GAL80 locus. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the Phase I disruption construct can integrate by homologous recombination into the GAL80 locus of the *S. cerevisiae* host cell genome, and functionally disrupt the GAL80 locus by replacing the GAL80 coding sequence with its disrupting sequence. The Phase I disruption construct was cloned into the TOPO Zero Blunt II cloning vector (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA), yielding plasmid TOPO-Phase I disruption construct. The construct was propagated in TOP10 cells grown on LB agar containing 50 μg/ml kanamycin.

[0093] The Phase II disruption construct (Figure 2; SEQ ID NO: 142) comprises as a disrupting sequence nucleotide sequences encoding a selectable marker (natA, which confers resistance to nourseothricin) and several enzymes of the *S. cerevisiae* MEV pathway (the ERG12 coding sequence, which encodes mevalonate kinase, and the ERG8 coding sequence, which encodes phosphomevalonate kinase), under the control of galactose-inducible promoters (promoters of the *S. cerevisiae* genes GAL1 and GAL10); as well as the coding sequence of the *S. cerevisiae* GAL4 gene under the control of the GAL4oc promoter (GAL4 promoter comprising a mutation that removes the MIG1 binding site, thus making the promoter less sensitive to the repression by glucose); flanked by homologous sequences consisting of upstream and downstream nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* LEU2 locus. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the Phase II disruption construct can integrate by homologous recombination into the LEU2 locus of the *S. cerevisiae* host cell genome, and functionally disrupt the LEU2 locus by replacing the LEU2 coding sequence with its disrupting sequence. The Phase II disruption construct was cloned into the TOPO Zero Blunt II cloning vector, yielding plasmid TOPO-Phase II disruption construct. The construct was propagated in TOP10 cells (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA) grown on LB agar containing 50 μg/ml kanamycin.

[0094] The Phase III disruption construct (Figure 3; SEQ ID NO: 143) comprises as a disrupting sequence nucleotide sequences encoding a selectable marker (kanA, which confers resistance to G418); an enzyme of the *S. cerevisiae* MEV pathway (the ERG19 coding sequence, which encodes diphosphomevalonate decarboxylase), and two enzymes of *S. cerevisiae* involved in converting the product of the MEV pathway, IPP, into FPP (the ERG20 coding sequence encodes farnesyl pyrophosphate synthase, and the IDI1 coding sequence encodes isopentenyl pyrophosphate decarboxylase), under control of galactose-inducible promoters (promoters of the *S. cerevisiae* genes GAL1, GAL10, and GAL7); as well as the promoter of the *S. cerevisiae* CTR3 gene; flanked by upstream and coding nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* ERG9 locus. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the Phase II disruption construct can integrate by homologous recombination upstream of the ERG9 locus of the *S. cerevisiae* host cell genome, replacing the native ERG9 promoter with the CTR3 promoter in such a way that the expression of ERG9 (squalene synthase) can be modulated by copper. The Phase III disruption construct was cloned into the TOPO Zero Blunt II cloning vector, yielding plasmid TOPO-Phase III disruption construct. The construct was propagated in TOP10 cells grown on LB agar containing 50 μg/ml kanamycin.

[0095] The Phase I marker recycling construct (Figure 4; SEQ ID NO: 144) comprises nucleotide sequences encoding a selectable marker (URA3, which confers the ability to grow on media lacking uracil); and an enzyme of *A. annua* (the FS coding sequence, which encodes farnesene synthase), under regulatory control of the promoter of the *S. cerevisiae* GAL7 gene; flanked by upstream nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* GAL80 locus and coding sequences of the S. cerevisiae HMG1 gene. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the Phase I marker recycling construct can integrate by homologous recombination into the already integrated Phase I disrupting sequence such that the selective marker hphA is replaced with URA3.

[0096] The Phase II marker recycling construct (Figure 5; SEQ ID NO: 145) comprises nucleotide sequences encoding a selectable marker (URA3, which confers the ability to grow on media lacking uracil) and an enzyme of *A annua* (the FS coding sequence, which encodes farnesene synthase), under regulatory control of the promoter of the *S. cerevisiae* GAL7 gene; flanked by upstream nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* LEU2 locus and coding sequences of the S. cerevisiae ERG12 gene. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the Phase II marker recycling construct can integrate by homologous recombination into the already integrated Phase II disrupting sequence such that the selective marker natA is replaced with URA3.

[0097] The Phase III marker recycling construct (Figure 6; SEQ ID NO: 146) comprises nucleotide sequences encoding a selectable marker (URA3, which confers the ability to grow on media lacking uracil) and an enzyme of *A annua* (the FS coding sequence, which encodes farnesene synthase), under regulatory control of the promoter of the *S. cerevisiae* GAL7 gene; flanked by upstream nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* ERG9 locus and coding sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* ERG19 gene. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the Phase II marker recycling construct can integrate by homologous recombination into the already integrated Phase III disrupting sequence such that the selective marker kanA is replaced with URA3.

[0098] Expression plasmid pAM404 (SEQ ID NO: 153) encodes a β-farnesene synthase. The nucleotide sequence insert was generated synthetically, using as a template the coding sequence of the β-farnesene synthase gene of *Artemisia annua* (GenBank accession number AY835398) codon-optimized for expression in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae.*

[0099] Starter host strain Y1198 was generated by resuspending active dry PE-2 yeast (isolated in 1994; gift from Santelisa Vale, Sertãozinho, Brazil) in 5 mL of YPD medium containing 100 ug/mL carbamicillin and 50 ug/mL kanamycin. The culture was incubated

overnight at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200 rpm. An aliquot of 10 uL of the culture was then plated on a YPD plate and allowed to dry. The cells were serially streaked for single colonies, and incubated for 2 days at 30°C. Twelve single colonies were picked, patched out on a new YPD plate, and allowed to grow overnight at 30°C. The strain identities of the colonies were verified by analyzing their chromosomal sizes on a Bio-Rad CHEF DR II system (Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA) using the Bio-Rad CHEF Genomic DNA Plug Kit (Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA) according to the manufacturer's specifications. One colony was picked and stocked as strain Y1198.

[00100] Strains Y1661, Y1662, Y1663, and Y1664 were generated from strain Y1198 by rendering the strain haploid to permit genetic engineering. Strain Y1198 was grown overnight in 5 mL of YPD medium at 30°C in a glass tube in a roller drum. The OD600 was measured, and the cells were diluted to an OD600 of 0.2 in 5 mL of YP medium containing 2% potassium acetate. The culture was grown overnight at 30°C in a glass tube in a roller drum. The OD600 was measured again, and 4 OD600*mL of cells was collected by centrifugation at 5,000 x g for 2 minutes. The cell pellet was washed once with sterile water, and then resuspended in 3 mL of 2% potassium acetate containing 0.02% raffinose. The cells were grown for 3 days at 30°C in a glass tube in a roller drum. Sporulation was confirmed by microscopy. An aliquot of 33 µL of the culture was transferred to a 1.5 mL microfuge tube and was centrifuged at 14,000rpm for 2 minutes. The cell pellet was resuspended in 50 µL of sterile water containing 2 µL of 10 mg/mL Zymolyase 100T (MP Biomedicals, Solon, OH), and the cells were incubated for 10 minutes in a 30°C waterbath. The tube was transferred to ice, and 150 µL of ice cold water was added. An aliquot of 10 µL of this mixture was added to a 12 mL YPD plate, and tetrads were dissected on a Singer MSM 300 dissection microscope (Singer, Somerset, UK). The YPD plate was incubated at 30°C for 3 days, after which spores were patched out onto a fresh YPD plate and grown overnight at 30°C. The mating types of each spore from 8 four-spore tetrads were analyzed by colony PCR. A single 4 spore tetrad with 2 *MATa* and 2 *MATα* spores was picked and stocked as strains Y1661 (MAT**a**), Y1662 (MAT**a**), Y1663 (MAT**α**), and Y1664 (MAT**α**).

[00101] For yeast cell transformations, 25 ml of Yeast Extract Peptone Dextrose (YPD) medium was inoculated with a single colony of a starting host strain. The culture was grown overnight at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200rpm. The OD600 of the culture was measured, and the culture was then used to inoculate 50 ml of YPD medium to an OD600 of 0.15. The newly inoculated culture was grown at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200rpm up to an

OD600 of 0.7 to 0.9, at which point the cells were transformed with 1 μg of DNA. The cells were allowed to recover in YPD medium for 4 hours before they were plated on agar containing a selective agent to identify the host cell transformants.

[00102] Host strain Y1515 was generated by transforming strain Y1664 with plasmid TOPO-Phase I disruption construct digested to completion using *PmeI* restriction endonuclease. Host cell transformants were selected on YPD medium containing 300 ug/mL hygromycin B, and positive transformants comprising the Phase I disrupting sequence integrated at the GAL80 locus were verified by the PCR amplification.

[00103] Host strain Y1762 was generated by transforming strain Y1515 with plasmid TOPO-Phase II disruption construct digested to completion using *PmeI* restriction endonuclease. Host cell transformants were selected on YPD medium containing 100 ug/mL nourseothricin, and positive transformants comprising the Phase II disrupting sequence integrated at the LEU2 locus were verified by the PCR amplification.

[00104] Host strain Y1770 was generated by transforming strain Y1762 in two steps with expression plasmid pAM404 and plasmid TOPO-Phase III disruption construct digested to completion using *PmeI* restriction endonuclease. Host cell transformants with pAM404 were selected on Complete Synthetic Medium (CSM) lacking methionine and leucine. Host cell transformants with pAM404 and Phase III disruption construct were selected on CSM lacking methionine and leucine and containing 200 ug/mL G418 (Geneticin®), and positive transformants comprising the Phase III disrupting sequence integrated at the ERG9 locus were verified by the PCR amplification.

[00105] Host strain Y1793 was generated by transforming strain Y1770 with a URA3 knockout construct (SEQ ID NO: 154). The URA3 knockout construct comprises upstream and downstream sequences of the URA3 locus (generated from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* strain CEN.PK2 genomic DNA). Host cell transformants were selected on YPD medium containing 5-FOA.

[00106] Host strain YAAA was generated by transforming strain Y1793 with the Phase I marker recycling construct. Host cell transformants were selected on CSM lacking methionine and uracil. The URA3 marker was excised by growing the cells overnight in YPD medium at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200rpm, and then plating the cells onto agar containing 5-FOA. Marker excision was confirmed by colony PCR.

[00107] Host strain YBBB was generated by transforming strain YAAA with the Phase II marker recycling construct. Host cell transformants were selected on CSM lacking methionine and uracil. The URA3 marker was excised by growing the cells overnight in

YPD medium at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200rpm, and then plating the cells onto agar containing 5-FOA. Marker excision was confirmed by colony PCR.

[00108] Host strain Y1912 was generated by transforming strain YBBB with the Phase III marker recycling construct. Host cell transformants were selected on CSM lacking methionine and uracil. The URA3 marker was excised by growing the cells overnight in YPD medium at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200rpm, and then plating the cells onto agar containing 5-FOA. Marker excision was confirmed by colony PCR.

6.2 Example 2: Generation of Genetically Modified Sporulation and Endogenous Mating Impaired Haploid Cells

[00109] This example describes an exemplary method for disrupting a sporulation gene and a pheromone response gene in a genetically modified haploid *S. cerevisiae* cell to yield a genetically modified haploid *S. cerevisiae* cell that is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired.

[00110] The STE5 disruption construct (Figure 7; SEQ ID NO: 147) comprises as a disrupting sequence nucleotide sequences that encode a selectable marker (URA3, which confers the ability to grow on media lacking uracil); and an enzyme of the *S. cerevisiae* MEV pathway (the truncated HMG1 coding sequence, which encodes a truncated HMG-CoA reductase), under regulatory control of the promoter of the *S. cerevisiae* TDH3 gene; flanked by homologous sequences consisting of upstream and downstream nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* STE5 locus. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the STE5 disruption construct can integrate by homologous recombination into the STE5 locus of the *S. cerevisiae* host cell genome, functionally disrupting the STE5 locus by replacing the STE5 coding sequence with its disrupting sequence.

[00111] The IME1 disruption construct (Figure 8; SEQ ID NO: 148) comprises as a disrupting sequence nucleotide sequences that encode a selectable marker (LEU2, which confers the ability to grow on media lacking leucine), and an enzyme of the *A. annua* (the FS coding sequence, which encodes a farnesene synthase), under regulatory control of the promoter of the *S. cerevisiae* TDH3 gene; flanked by homologous sequences consisting of upstream and downstream nucleotide sequences of the *S. cerevisiae* IME5 locus. Upon introduction into a *S. cerevisiae* host cell, the IME1 disruption construct can integrate by homologous recombination into the IME1 locus of the *S. cerevisiae* host cell genome, functionally disrupting the IME1 locus by replacing the IME1 coding sequence with its disrupting sequence.

[00112] Host strain Y1913 was generated by transforming strain Y1912 (see Example 1) with the STE5 disruption construct. Host cell transformants were selected on CSM lacking methionine and uracil, and positive transformants were verified by PCR amplification.

[00113] Host strain Y1915 was generated from strain Y1913 by curing the strain from pAM404 and transforming the resulting strain with the *IME1* disruption construct. Strain Y1913 was propagated in non-selective YPD medium for 3 days at 30°C on a rotary shaker at 200rpm. Approximately 100 cells were plated onto YPD solid medium and allowed to grow for 3 days at 30°C before they were replica-plated on CSM plates lacking methionine and leucine where they were grown for another 3 days at 30°C. Cured cells were identified by their ability to grow on minimal medium containing leucine and their inability to grow on medium lacking leucine. A single such colony was picked and transformed with the IME1 disruption construct. Host cell transformants were selected on CSM lacking methionine and leucine.

6.3 Example 3: Generation of Genetically Modified Sporulation and Endogenous Mating Impaired Diploid Cells

[00114] This example describes an exemplary method for rendering diploid a genetically modified haploid *S. cerevisisea* cell that is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired.

[00115] Diploid host strain Y1979 was generated by self-mating of strain Y1915. To generate cells of opposite mating types and to transiently render strain Y1915 capable of mating, the strain was co-transformed with plasmid pAM1124 (SEQ ID NO: 149), which encodes the HO protein and the nourseothricin resistance marker; and plasmid pAM1758 (SEQ ID NO: 150), which encodes STE5 and the G418 resistance marker. Host cell transformants were selected on CSM containing G418 and nourseothricin. Positive transformants were replated for single colonies on a non-selective medium, and G418 sensitive, nourseothricin sensitive diploids were identified through screening using colony PCR.

6.4 Example 4: Confirmation of Sporulation and Endogenous Mating Impairment

[00116] This example describes exemplary methods with which to confirm the sporulation and endogenous mating impairment of genetically modified *S. cerevisiae* cells.

[00117] To confirm the inability of strain Y1915 to mate, haploid Y1915 cells (MATα Kan^S URA3 ^ste5) or haploid Y1912 cells (MATα Kan^S URA3 STE5) were combined on

YEPD solid medium with haploid Y1792 cells (MATa Kan^R ura3 STE5). The mating cultures were incubated for 16 hours at 30°C. Identical aliquots of each mating culture were then plated on CSM solid medium lacking uracil and containing G418, and the cultures were incubated for one week at 30°C. As shown in Figure 9, colony growth was observed only on plates containing an aliquot of the Y1792 x Y1912 mating culture but not on plates containing an aliquot of the Y1792 x Y1915 mating culture.

[00118] To confirm the inability of strain Y1979 to sporulate, strain Y1979 cells and strain Y1198 cells were cultivated for 7 days in sporulation induction medium (medium lacking a non-fermentative carbon source, *e.g.*, potassium acetate, which induces native *S. cerevisiae* cells to abandon the cellular mitotic cycle and go into meiosis and sporulate). The cultures were then divided and treated for 15 minutes with water or diethyl ether. The suspensions were homogenized by inversion, re-suspended in sterile water, diluted, plated on YEPD solid medium, and grown for 3 days. As shown in Figure 10, 95% of strain Y1198 cells formed tetrad spores under these conditions whereas strain Y1979 cells did not.

6.5 Example 5: Confirmation of Inability of Sporulation and Endogenous Mating Impaired Cells to Disseminate in Nature

[00119] This example describes exemplary methods with which to confirm the inability of sporulation of endogenous mating impaired genetically modified diploid *S. cerevisiae* cells to disseminate in nature.

[00120] The survival of Y1979 and its non-transgenic isoline, Y1198 (PE-2), in soil was assessed. To this end, 45 L flasks were filled with approximately 25% vermiculite and 75% soil from the cane field (total of 40 L) and planted with 1 *Saccharum* spp, cultivar RB 86-7515 sugar cane plant (approximately 6 months old). Each pot was fertilized with a dry Nitrogen/Phosphorous/Potassium mix of 5-25-30, and the plants were grown for 14 days in a containment greenhouse. To each pot was added 600 mL of cell suspensions of strain Y1979 or strain Y1198. The application of yeast cells is equivalent to attaining a concentration of 10^7 cells/g in the first surface 5 cm of the soil. Five samples of 1.5 x 5 cm soil cores were collected at the following time points: t=0 (pre-exposure), 0 (post exposure), 3, 7, 14, 28, 40, 60, and 90 days (total volume of soil sampled was 44 mL, and total weight of soil sampled was approximately 50 g). From the composite samples, 10 grams were separated and resuspended in 100 mL of distilled water. To quantify yeast survival, 100 µL of the aqueous extractions were plated directly onto YPED medium (25 mL/plate), pH 5.5 adjusted with sulfuric acid 6N with addition of 0.05 g/L bengal rose (Sigma #R3877) and containing 0,2 g/L ampicillin (Sigma A0166). Samples were plated in duplicate, in dilution series from 1-

10^7, or the number of dilutions to be plated was based on the counts of survival obtained in the previous samplings for each treatment. Immediately after the plating the liquid was spread with a Drigalski spatula. The plates were left open to the flow for up to 30 minutes for total evaporation of the liquid and were then closed, inverted, and incubated for 48 hours at 30 °C. The colony number per plate was read using a colony counter (CP600 Plus, Phoenix), in countable dilutions, and the result was expressed in CFU/plate. Counts were considered only if the total number of colonies was between 30-300 colonies. As shown in Figure 11 (each data point is an average of five repetitions), Y1979 cells were clearly less viable in the soil than the genetically unmodified and sporulation and mating proficient parent cells of strain Y1198.

[00121] All publications, patents and patent applications cited in this specification are herein incorporated by reference as if each individual publication or patent application were specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference. Although the foregoing invention has been described in some detail by way of illustration and example for purposes of clarity of understanding, it will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in light of the teachings of this invention that certain changes and modifications may be made thereto without departing from the spirit or scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. A genetically modified diploid yeast cell comprising:

(a) a functional disruption in at least one sporulation gene;

(b) a functional disruption in at least one pheromone response gene; and

(c) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest;

wherein said genetically modified diploid yeast cell is sporulation impaired and endogenous mating impaired.

2. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 1 that is heterothallic (*ho*).

3. The genetically modified diploid yeast cell of claim 2 that is homozygous other than for its mating type allele.

4. A genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) haploid yeast cell comprising:

(a) a functional disruption in at least one sporulation gene;

(b) a functional disruption in at least one pheromone response gene; and

(c) a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest;

wherein said genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) haploid yeast cell is sporulation impaired and endogenous mating impaired.

5. The genetically modified haploid yeast cell of claim 4, further comprising a recombinant plasmid encoding a functional homothallism (HO) protein.

6. The genetically modified haploid yeast cell of claim 5, further comprising at least one recombinant plasmid encoding a functional copy of the at least one pheromone

response gene that is functionally disrupted in said genetically modified haploid yeast cell.

7. The genetically modified yeast cell of any one of claims 1-6 that is a *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell.

8. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 7, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the Baker's yeast, Mauri, Santa Fe, IZ-1904, TA, BG-1, CR-1, SA-1, M-26, Y-904, PE-2, PE-5, VR-1, BR-1, BR-2, ME-2, VR-2, MA-3, MA-4, CAT-1, CB-1, NR-1, BT-1 or AL-1 strain.

9. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 7, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the PE-2 strain.

10. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 7, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the CAT-1 strain.

11. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 1 or 4, wherein said at least one sporulation gene is selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21.*

12. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 1 or 4, wherein said at least one pheromone response gene is selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11.*

13. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 11 comprising a functional disruption of the *IME1* gene.

14. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 12 comprising a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene.

15. The genetically modified yeast cell of claim 1 or 4 comprising a functional disruption of the *IME1* gene and the *STE5* gene.

16. The genetically modified haploid yeast cell of claim 6 that comprises a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene and a recombinant plasmid encoding a functional *STE5* protein.

17. A method of generating a genetically modified diploid yeast cell that is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired, the method comprising:

(a) transforming each of a first and a second genetically modified haploid yeast cell with at least one plasmid encoding a protein capable of complementing an endogenous mating impairment of said first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells,

wherein said first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest, and wherein said second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired, is of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, and comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest;

(b) mating the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid yeast cell; and,

(c) eliminating the one or more plasmids from the genetically modified diploid yeast cell,

wherein the resulting genetically modified diploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises two copies of a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest;

wherein the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of at least one pheromone response gene.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein step (a) comprises transforming each of the first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells with at least one plasmid encoding a functional copy of the at least one pheromone response gene that is

functionally disrupted in said first and second genetically modified haploid yeast cells.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the pheromone response gene is selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11.*

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the pheromone response gene is selected from the group consisting of *STE5, STE4, STE18, STE12, STE7,* and *STE11.*

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the pheromone response gene is *STE5.*

22. The method of claim 18, wherein the pheromone response gene is *STE5.*

23. The method of claim 17, wherein the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell are sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of at least one sporulation gene.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the sporulation gene is selected from the group consisting of *IME1, IME2, NDT80, SPO11, SPO20, AMA1, HOP2,* and *SPO21.*

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the sporulation gene is *IME1.*

26. The method of claim 17, wherein the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell are endogenous mating impaired due to a functional disruption of the *STE5* gene, and are sporulation impaired due to a functional disruption of the *IME1* gene.

27. The method of claim 17, wherein the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell is obtained by inducing a mating type switch in a population of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the population of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is heterothallic (*ho*) and is induced to switch mating type by

transforming the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with a recombinant plasmid encoding a functional homothallism (HO) protein, wherein expression of the HO protein is capable of inducing a mating type switch of said first genetically modified haploid yeast cell.

29. The method of claim 17, wherein the genetically modified diploid yeast cell is a *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the Baker's yeast, IZ-1904, TA, BG-1, CR-1, SA-1, M-26, Y-904, PE-2, PE-5, VR-1, BR-1, BR-2, ME-2, VR-2, MA-3, MA-4, CAT-1, CB-1, NR-1, BT-1 or AL-1 strain.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the PE-2 strain.

32. The method of claim 29, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the CAT-1 strain.

33. A sporulation and endogenous mating impaired diploid yeast cell generated by the method of any one of claims 17-32.

34. A method for generating a sporulation and endogenous mating impaired genetically modified heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell, the method comprising:

(a) transforming a population of a first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell with a plasmid encoding a functional homothallism (HO) protein to yield a first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, wherein expression of the HO protein is capable of inducing a mating-type switch of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell, whereby a second genetically modified haploid yeast cell of the opposite mating type as the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell is obtained,

wherein the first genetically modified heterothallic haploid yeast cell comprises a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest and functional disruptions in the *STE5* gene and the *IME1* gene;

(b) transforming each of the first and the second genetically modified haploid yeast cells with a plasmid encoding a *STE5* protein, whereby said transforming results in mating of the first genetically modified haploid yeast cell with the second genetically modified haploid yeast cell, thereby forming a genetically modified diploid yeast cell; and,

(c) eliminating any plasmids from the genetically modified diploid yeast cell to yield a genetically modified heterothallic diploid yeast cell,

wherein the resulting genetically modified heterothallic diploid yeast cell is sporulation and endogenous mating impaired and comprises two copies of a chromosomally integrated heterologous nucleotide sequence encoding said protein of interest.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein the sporulation and endogenous mating impaired heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell is a *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the Baker's yeast, Mauri, Santa Fe, IZ-1904, TA, BG-1, CR-1, SA-1, M-26, Y-904, PE-2, PE-5, VR-1, BR-1, BR-2, ME-2, VR-2, MA-3, MA-4, CAT-1, CB-1, NR-1, BT-1 or AL-1 strain.

37. The method of claim 35, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the PE-2 strain.

38. The method of claim 35, wherein the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* cell is of the CAT-1 strain.

39. A sporulation and endogenous mating impaired heterothallic (*ho*) diploid yeast cell generated by the method of any one of claims 34-38.

40. A *MATα/***a** *ste5/ste5 ime1/ime1* yeast cell.