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Abstract

Full-length and deletion subclones of cDNAs for Factor C of *Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda* are provided. These cDNAs have been cloned into λgt 22 and pGEM 11Zf(+). Further manipulations of the 5′ and 3′ ends of these cDNAs have been carried out, and these cDNAs have been further subcloned into other expression vectors such as pGEMEX-1, pET 3b, and the yeast shuttle vectors YEpsec 1 and pEMBLyex 4, and pPIC 9 and pHIL D2. Also provided are host cells transformed with expression vectors containing DNA molecules encoding proteins having Factor C-like enzymatic activity, methods of producing such proteins, methods for purifying Factor C zymogens, and methods for protecting Factor C zymogens from autoactivation by Gram negative bacterial endotoxin while the proenzyme is being purified and/or processed from amoebocyte lysates or from recombinant clones, or during storage or subsequent handling. This protection is afforded by the addition of 5-30% Me_2SO, which reversibly inhibits the Factor C zymogen.