Claims:

1. A recombinant gram-negative bacterial cell comprising:

    a mutated Tsp gene, wherein the mutated Tsp gene encodes a Tsp protein having 50% or less protease activity of the protease activity of a wild-type non-mutated Tsp protein or is a knockout mutated Tsp gene,

wherein the cell is isogenic to a wild-type bacterial cell except for the mutated Tsp gene and optionally a polynucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest.

2. A cell according to claim 1, wherein the mutated Tsp gene is a knockout mutated Tsp gene.

3. A cell according to claim 2, wherein the knockout mutated Tsp gene comprises a mutation to the gene start codon and/or one or more stop codons positioned downstream of the gene start codon and upstream of the gene stop codon.

4. A recombinant gram-negative bacterial cell according to any preceding claim comprising:

    a. a knockout mutated Tsp gene comprising a mutation to the gene start codon and/or one or more stop codons positioned downstream of the gene start codon and upstream of the gene stop codon; and

    b. optionally a mutated DegP gene encoding a DegP protein having chaperone activity and 50% or less protease activity of the protease activity of a wild-type non-mutated DegP protein.

5. A recombinant gram-negative bacterial cell according to claim 4 further comprising a knockout mutated ptr gene comprising a mutation to the gene start codon and/or one or more stop codons positioned downstream of the gene start codon and upstream of the gene stop codon.

6. A cell according to claim 4 or claim 5, wherein the cell is isogenic to a wild-type bacterial cell except for the mutated DegP gene and/or mutated ptr gene and mutated Tsp gene and optionally a polynucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest.

7. A cell according to claim 1, wherein the cell is strain MXE001 (Accession Number NCTC13444).

8. A cell according to any of claims 4 to 6, wherein the cell comprises a mutated DegP gene encoding a DegP protein having chaperone activity but not protease activity and a knockout mutated Tsp gene.

9. A cell according to claim 8, wherein the cell is strain MXE005 (Accession Number NCTC13448).

10. A cell according to any of claims 5 or 6, wherein the cell comprises a knockout mutated ptr gene and a knockout mutated Tsp gene.

11. A cell according to claim 10, wherein the cell is strain MXE004 (Accession Number NCTC13447).

12. A cell according to any preceding claim, wherein the mutated DegP gene, the mutated ptr gene and/or the mutated Tsp gene are mutated to comprise one or more restriction marker sites.

13. A cell according to claim 12, wherein the knockout mutated ptr gene and/or the knockout mutated Tsp gene are mutated to comprise a restriction marker site comprising an in-frame stop codon.

14. A cell according to claim 12, wherein the restriction marker site is an *Ase I* restriction site.

15. A cell according to any of claims 12 to 14, wherein the knockout mutated ptr gene and/or the knockout mutated Tsp gene comprise a restriction marker site created by a missense mutation to the gene start codon and optionally one or more further point mutations.

16. A cell according to claim 15, wherein the restriction marker site is an *EcoR I* marker site.

17. A cell according to any of claims 5, 6, 8, 10 or 11 to 16, wherein the knockout mutated ptr gene comprises SEQ ID NO:6.

18. A cell according to any of claims 1 to 16, wherein the knockout mutated Tsp gene comprises SEQ ID NO:3.

19. A cell according to any of claims 4 to 6, 8, 9, 12 or 14, wherein the mutated DegP gene comprises the mutation S210A.

20. A cell according to claim 19, wherein the mutated DegP gene comprises SEQ ID NO:9.

21. A cell according to any preceding claim, wherein the cell is *E. coli*.

22. A cell according to any of claims 1 to 21, wherein the cell is isogenic to *E. coli* cell W3110 except for the one or more mutated protease genes and optionally a polynucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest.

23. A cell according to any preceding claim, wherein the cell further comprises a polynucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest.

24. A cell according to claim 23, wherein the polynucleotide sequence encoding the protein of interest is exogenous.

25. A cell according to claim 24, wherein the cell comprises an expression cassette or a vector comprising the polynucleotide sequence encoding the protein of interest.

26. A cell according to any of claims 23 to 25, wherein the protein of interest is an antibody or an antigen binding fragment thereof.

27. A cell according to claim 26, wherein the antibody or antigen binding fragment thereof is specific for TNF.

28. A method for producing a recombinant protein of interest comprising expressing the recombinant protein of interest in a recombinant gram-negative bacterial cell as defined in any of claims 1 to 27.