Claims:

1) A recombinant gram-negative bacterial cell comprising a mutated DegP gene encoding a DegP protein having chaperone activity and ~~reduced~~ 50% or less of the protease activity of a non-mutated DegP protein; wherein the cell is isogenic to a wild-type bacterial cell except for the mutated DegP gene and optionally a polynucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest.

2) A cell according to claim 1, wherein the cell comprises a mutated DegP gene encoding a DegP protein having chaperone activity but no protease activity.

3) A cell according to claim 1 or 2, comprising additionally

   a) a mutated Tsp gene encoding a Tsp protein having reduced protease activity or

   b) a knockout mutated Tsp gene.

4) A cell according to claim 1 or 2, comprising additionally

   a) a mutated ptr gene encoding a Protease III protein having reduced protease activity or

   b) a knockout mutated ptr gene.

5) A cell according to claim 3, wherein the mutated Tsp gene is a knockout mutated Tsp gene.

6) A cell according to claim 4, wherein the mutated ptr gene is a knockout mutated ptr gene.

7) A cell according to claim 5 or claim 6, wherein the knockout mutated 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.

8) A cell according claim 1 or 2 comprising additionally:

   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) 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.

9) A cell according to claim 1, wherein the cell is strain MXE003 (Accession Number NCTC 13446).

10) A cell according to claim 3, wherein the cell is strain MXE005 (Accession Number NCTC 13448).

11) A cell according to claim 4, wherein the cell is strain MXE006 (Accession Number NCTC13449).

12) A cell according to any of the preceding claims, 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 one 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 claim 5, wherein the knockout mutated Tsp gene comprises SEQ ID NO:3.

18) A cell according to claim 6, wherein the knockout mutated ptr gene comprises SEQ ID NO:6.

19) A cell according to any one of the preceding claims 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 one of the preceding claims, wherein the cell is *E. coli*.

22) A cell according to claim 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 one of the preceding claims, wherein the cell further comprises a polynucleotide sequence encoding a protein of interest.

24) A cell according to claim 23, wherein the cell comprises an expression cassette or a vector comprising the polynucleotide sequence encoding the protein of interest.

25) A cell according to claims 23 or 24, wherein the protein of interest is an antibody or an antigen binding fragment thereof.

26) A cell according to claim 25, wherein the antibody or antigen binding fragment thereof is specific for TNF.

27) 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 one of claims 1 to 27.