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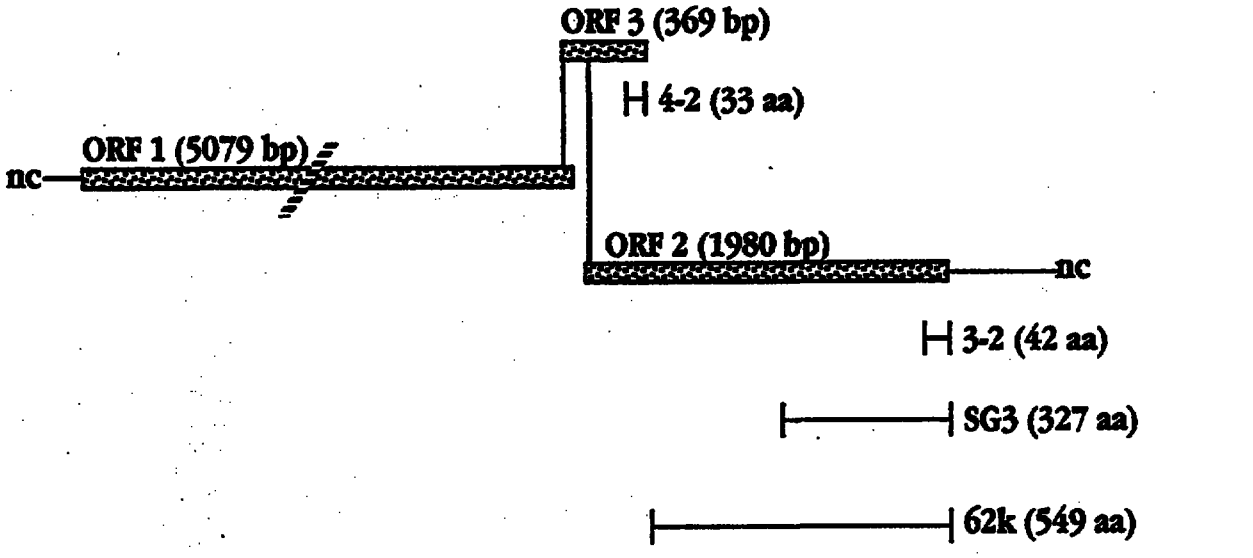
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(54) Title: HEPATITIS E VIRUS ANTIGENS AND USES THEREFOR



(57) Abstract

Antigens are provided which are derived from the enterically transmitted non-A/non-B viral hepatitis agent, known as hepatitis E virus (HEV). The HEV antigens and in particular, soluble species of the capsid protein encoded by the carboxy terminal region of HEV ORF2, are immunoreactive with sera from individuals infected with HEV. In one embodiment, these antigens may be produced by a baculovirus expression vector and form virus-like particles (VLPs). The antigens are useful as diagnostic reagents in diagnostic methods and kits for determining infection of an individual with HEV. The antigens are also useful in vaccine compositions effective in methods for preventing HEV infection.