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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: MICROBIAL COMPOSITION FOR THE FERMENTATION OF COCOA MATERIAL

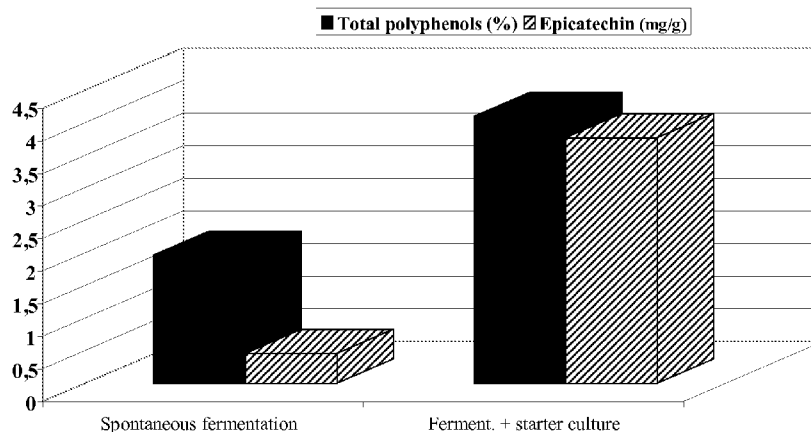


FIG. 5

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to the use of a microbial composition for regulating the fermentation of such materials, in particular using compositions comprising specific combinations of microorganisms including at least three *Lactobacillus* species and a yeast species. The present invention further relates to a method for regulating fermentation of cocoa material, such as beans and/or pulp by using a microbial composition as defined herein, and to the fermented cocoa material thereby obtained. The invention also relates to the use of the obtained fermented cocoa material for the preparation of cocoa products and products derived therefrom, including chocolate. The present invention further relates to a method for downstream processing of cocoa beans that have been fermented with a microbial composition as defined herein, and to the downstream products thereby obtained.

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