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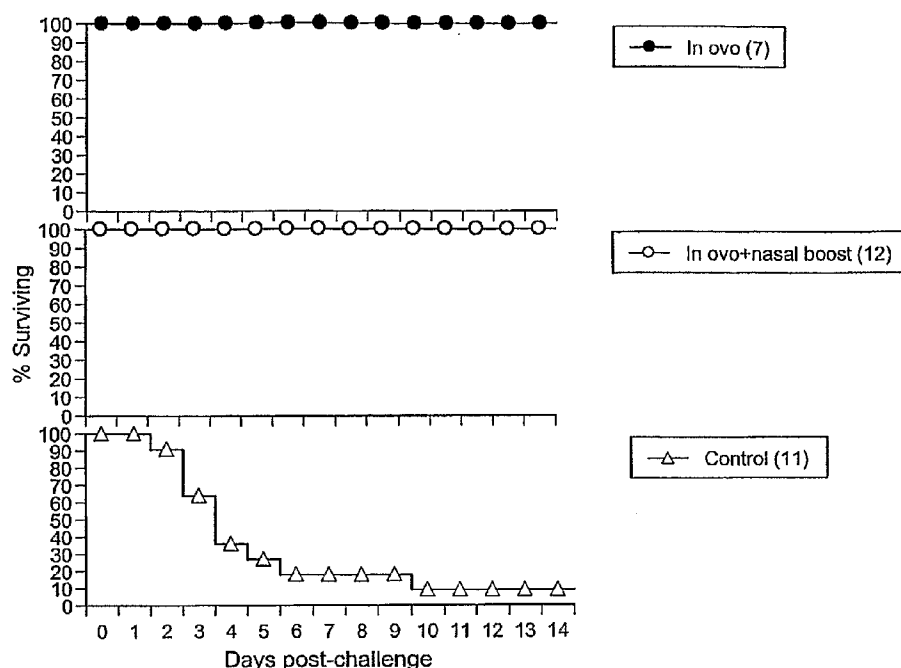
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(54) Title: IMMUNIZATION OF AVIANS BY ADMINISTRATION OF NON-REPLICATING VECTORED VACCINES



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates generally to the fields of immunology and vaccine technology. More specifically, the invention relates to recombinant human adenovirus vectors for delivery of avian immunogens and antigens, such as avian influenza into avians. The invention also provides methods of introducing and expressing an avian immunogen in avian subjects, including avian embryos, as well as methods of eliciting an immunogenic response in avian subjects to avian immunogens.

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

IMMUNIZATION OF AVIANS BY ADMINISTRATION OF NON-REPLICATING
VECTORED VACCINES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority from U.S. provisional application serial number 60/708,524, filed August 15, 2005 which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

Mention is also made of U.S. Patent Application Serial Nos. 10/052,323, filed January 18, 2002; 10/116,963, filed April 5, 2002; 10/346,021, filed January 16, 2003 and U.S. Patent
Nos. 6,706,693; 6,716,823; 6,348,450, and PCT/US98/16739, filed August 13, 1998 which
are incorporated by reference herein in their entirety.

Each of these applications, patents, and each document cited in this text, and each of
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documents"), and each document referenced or cited in the application cited documents,
either in the text or during the prosecution of the applications and patents thereof, as well as
all arguments in support of patentability advanced during prosecution thereof, are hereby
incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the fields of immunology and vaccine
technology. More specifically, the invention relates to recombinant non-replicating vectors
such as E1-defective human adenovirus vectors for delivery of avian immunogens and
antigens, such as avian influenza virus antigens, into avians. The invention also provides
methods of introducing and expressing an avian immunogen in avian subjects, including
avian embryos, as well as methods of eliciting an immune response in avian subjects to
immunogens.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Avian influenza (AI) is a serious pathogen that infects avians, other animals, and
humans. Since 1997, there have been several incidents of transmission of AI virus to humans
(Subbarao et al., 1998; Ungchusak et al., 2005). Evidence also shows that genetic
recombination between avian and human influenza viruses have occurred on multiple
occasions in medical history (Kawaoka et al., 1989). Since avians and humans are in close

contact,, it is believed that the generation of new AI virus strains that could potentially cross the species barrier into the human population will continue to be a public health concern.

Mass vaccination of avians appears to be the most promising approach to prevent dissemination of AI virus and to reduce the risk of human pandemics. Vaccination of avians with inactivated whole virus vaccines has been performed in some countries over the past several years. These AI vaccines are prepared from amnio-allantoic fluid harvested from infected eggs, and are subsequently inactivated by formalin or β -propiolactone (Tollis and Di Trani, 2002). However, the unpredictable emergence of new AI virus strains, the evolution of AI virus into a form highly lethal to chicken embryos (Wood et al., 2002), and possible dissemination of lethal AI strains by bioterrorists make the rapid development and timely supply of safe and efficacious AI vaccine a crucial, yet very difficult, task. In addition, it is not possible to discriminate field-infected chickens from those previously vaccinated with inactivated AI viruses of the same strains (Normile, 2004).

An experimental recombinant fowlpox virus encoding the hemagglutinin (HA) of an AI virus has protected chickens against a H5N2 AI virus challenge after wing-web puncture, although the hemagglutination-inhibition (HI) serologic response was negligible (Beard et al., 1992). Chickens inoculated through the wing web with a live recombinant vaccinia virus expressing HA also developed protective immunity against a lethal AI virus challenge with low levels of serum HI antibody detected (Chambers et al., 1988). Although AI isolates of waterfowl-origin that have a tropism for the alimentary tract have been inoculated into chickens as an oral AI vaccine (Crawford et al., 1998), those isolates are not expected to be broadly effective against new AI virus strains, due to the inherently dynamic evolution of this type of virus.

Avians have also been immunized by subcutaneous injection of HA proteins expressed from baculovirus vectors (Crawford et al., 1999), and inoculation of an expression plasmid encoding HA into the skin using a gene gun (Fynan et al., 1993). These AI vaccines are able to protect avians from exhibiting clinical signs and death, and reduce respiratory and intestinal replication of a challenge virus containing homologous HA. There is also evidence that a low-cost aerosol AI vaccine expressing HA from a Newcastle disease virus vector (Swayne, 2003) or a recombinant influenza virus containing a non-pathogenic influenza virus backbone may be efficacious (Lee et al., 2004; Webby et al., 2004).

Most of the above AI vaccines rely upon labor-intensive parenteral delivery. The oral and aerosol AI vaccines suffer from inconsistencies in delivering a uniform dose to individual birds during mass-inoculation. The replicating vectors used in some vaccines also pose a

biohazard by introducing unnatural microbial forms to the environment. The recombined influenza virus vaccine could even generate harmful reassortments through recombination between a reassortant influenza virus and a wild AI virus concurrently circulating in the environment (Hilleman, 2002).

5 There are several noteworthy reasons for utilizing recombinant Adenovirus ("Ad") vectors as a vaccine carrier. Ad vectors are able to transduce both mitotic and postmitotic cells *in situ*. Additionally, preparation of Ad stocks containing high titers of virus (i.e., greater than 10^{12} pfu [plaque-forming units] per ml) are easy to generate, which makes it possible to transduce cells *in situ* at high multiplicity of infection (MOI). Ad vectors also
10 have a proven safety record, based on their long-term use as a vaccine. Further, the Ad virus is capable of inducing high levels of gene expression (at least as an initial burst), and replication-defective Ad vectors can be easily bioengineered, manufactured, and stored using techniques well known in the art.

 Ad-based vaccines are more potent than DNA vaccines due to Ad vector's high
15 affinity for specific receptors and its ability to escape the endosomal pathway (Curiel, 1994). Ad vectors may transduce part of a chicken embryo through binding of its fiber to the coxsackie and adenovirus receptor (CAR) found on the surface of chicken cells (Tan et al., 2001). In addition, at least one of the Ad components, hexon, is highly immunogenic and can confer adjuvant activity to exogenous antigens (Molinier-Frenkel et al., 2002).

20 Ad-based vaccines mimic the effects of natural infections in their ability to induce major histocompatibility complex (MHC) class I restricted T-cell responses, yet eliminate the possibility of reversion back to virulence because only a subfragment of the pathogen's genome is expressed from the vector. This "selective expression" may solve the problem of differentiating vaccinated-but-uninfected animals from their infected counterparts, because
25 the specific markers of the pathogen not encoded by the vector can be used to discriminate the two events. Notably, propagation of the pathogen is not required for generating vectored vaccines because the relevant antigen genes can be amplified and cloned directly from field samples (Rajakumar et al., 1990). This is particularly important for production of highly virulent AI strains, such as H5N1, because this strain is too dangerous and difficult to
30 propagate (Wood et al., 2002). In addition to the above criteria, commercial concerns factor heavily in the poultry industry. The current AI vaccine alone costs about 7 cents per bird, not counting the labor of injecting running birds (Normile, 2004).

 Replication-incompetent E1/E3-defective human Ad serotype 5 (Ad5)-derived vectors have been extensively studied in mammals (Graham and Prevec, 1995). Although chickens

have been immunized by subcutaneous or intradermal injection of an avian Ad chicken embryo lethal orphan (CELO) viral vector encoding an antigen (Francois et al., 2004), the CELO vector has a low compliance rate and could be potentially harmful due to its ability to replicate in chicken cells. Since CELO possesses no identifiable E1, E3, and E4 regions (Chiocca et al., 1996), a replication-incompetent CELO vector is not available as a carrier for immunization at this time. The present invention addresses this need by providing a safe and efficient method for gene delivery to protect avians in a wide variety of disease settings, and consequently prevent transmission of avian pathogens to humans.

10 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It has now been surprisingly shown that intramuscular and *in ovo* delivery of human adenovirus-vectored vaccines can rapidly, safely, and effectively immunize avians. Mass immunization of avians against several avian pathogens is crucial to prevent enormous economic loss, and to impede transmission of avian pathogens, such as avian influenza virus, to the human population. *In ovo* delivery of vaccines or immunogenic compositions with a mechanized injector is a non-labor-intensive method for mass immunization of avians in a timely manner. Unlike other *in ovo* avian vaccines, production of human adenovirus-vectored vaccines or immunogenic compositions does not require the propagation of lethal pathogens and does not involve transmission of antigens or immunogens by a vector that is capable of replication in avians. Furthermore, immunization by this type of vaccine or immunogenic composition allows differentiation between vaccinated and naturally infected animals.

In one aspect, the present invention provides a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest.

Preferably, the human adenoviral sequences are derived from human adenovirus serotype 5. The human adenoviral sequences can be derived from replication-defective adenovirus, non-replicating adenovirus, replication-competent adenovirus, or wild-type adenovirus.

The promoter sequence can be selected from the group consisting of viral promoters, avian promoters, CMV promoter, SV40 promoter, β -actin promoter, albumin promoter, EF1- α promoter, PyK promoter, MFG promoter, and Rous sarcoma virus promoter.

The one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest can be derived from for example, avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, Herpesviruses such as infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, poxviruses including avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dove
5 dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus,
10 avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

Preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza, i.e., hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, and neuraminidase.

More preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are
15 derived from hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

Another aspect of the invention provides an immunogenic composition or vaccine for in vivo delivery into an avian subject comprising a veterinarily acceptable vehicle or excipient and a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a
20 foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest.

Preferably, the the adenoviral DNA sequence is derived from adenovirus serotype 5 (Ad5).

Preferably, the human adenoviral sequences are derived from human adenovirus serotype 5. The human adenoviral sequences can be derived from replication-defective
25 adenovirus.

The promoter sequence can be selected from the group consisting of viral promoters, avian promoters, CMV promoter, SV40 promoter, β -actin promoter, albumin promoter, EF1- α promoter, PyK promoter, MFG promoter, and Rous sarcoma virus promoter.

The one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest can be derived from for example, avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus,
30 Herpesviruses such as infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, poxviruses including avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous

virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or
5 avian spleen necrosis virus.

Preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza, i.e., hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, and neuraminidase.

More preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

10 The immunogenic composition or vaccine may further comprise an adjuvant.

The immunogenic composition or vaccine may further comprise an additional vaccine.

Another aspect of the invention provides a method of introducing and expressing one or more avian antigens or immunogens in a cell, comprising contacting the cell with a
15 recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest., and culturing the cell under conditions sufficient to express the one or more avian antigens or immunogens in the cell.

Preferably, the cell is a 293 cell or a PER.C6 cell.

20 Preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian
25 reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis
30 virus.

Preferably, the the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from one or more avian viruses.

Preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

Another aspect of the invention provides a method of introducing and expressing one or more avian influenza antigens or immunogens in an avian embryo, comprising contacting the avian embryo with a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest, thereby obtaining expression of the one or more avian influenza antigens or immunogens in the avian embryo.

Preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from one or more avian viruses.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

The method of introducing and expressing one or more avian influenza antigens or immunogens in an avian embryo preferably can occur by *in ovo* delivery.

Another aspect of the present invention provides a method of eliciting an immunogenic response in an avian subject, comprising administering an immunologically effective amount of the composition of the invention to the avian subject.

Yet another aspect of the present invention provides a method of eliciting an immunogenic response in an avian subject, comprising infecting the avian subject with an immunologically effective amount of an immunogenic composition comprising a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest, wherein the one or more avian antigens or

immunogens of interest are expressed at a level sufficient to elicit an immunogenic response to the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest in the avian subject.

Preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

The method may further comprise administering an additional vaccine.

Preferably, the method of infecting occurs by *in ovo* delivery.

Another aspect of the invention provides a method of eliciting an immunogenic response in an avian subject, comprising infecting the avian subject with an immunologically effective amount of an immunogenic composition comprising a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest, wherein the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are expressed at a level sufficient to elicit an immunogenic response to the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest in the avian subject.

Preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian

reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, 5 avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

10 More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

15 More preferably, the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

The method may further comprise administering an additional vaccine.

Preferably, the avian subject is infected by intramuscular injection of the wing-web, wing-tip, pectoral muscle, or thigh musculature.

20 The avian subject may also be infected *in ovo*.

Another aspect of the invention provides a method for inoculation of an avian subject, comprising *in ovo* administration of a recombinant human adenovirus containing and expressing an heterologous nucleic acid molecule encoding an antigen of a pathogen of the avian subject.

25 Preferably, the human adenovirus comprises sequences derived from adenovirus serotype 5.

Preferably, the human adenovirus comprises sequences derived from replication-defective adenovirus, non-replicating adenovirus, replication-competent adenovirus, or wild-type adenovirus.

30 Preferably, the antigen of a pathogen of the avian is derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian

retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian
5 myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

More preferably, the antigen of a pathogen of the avian is derived from avian influenza.

More preferably, the avian influenza antigens or immunogens are selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

10 More preferably, the avian influenza antigens or immunogens are selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

The method may further comprise administering an additional vaccine.

Another embodiment of the invention provides an *in ovo* administration apparatus for delivery of an immunogenic composition to an avian embryo wherein the apparatus contains
15 a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector expressing one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest, wherein the apparatus delivers to the recombinant human adenovirus to the avian embryo.

Preferably, the human adenovirus expression vector comprises sequences derived from adenovirus serotype 5.

20 Preferably, the human adenovirus expression vector comprises sequences derived from replication-defective adenovirus, non-replicating human adenovirus, replication-competent adenovirus, or wild-type adenovirus.

Preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian
25 herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus,
30 avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

More preferably, the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza.

More preferably, the avian influenza antigens or immunogens are selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

5 More preferably, the avian influenza antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

The method may further comprise administering an additional vaccine.

These and other embodiments are disclosed or are obvious from and encompassed by, the following Detailed Description.

10

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The following Detailed Description, given by way of example, but not intended to limit the invention to specific embodiments described, may be understood in conjunction with the accompanying Figures, incorporated herein by reference, in which:

15 Figure 1 is a graph depicting the immunization of chickens by *in ovo* and intramuscular injection of the recombinant adenovirus vector expressing avian influenza HA. Group 1 represents 9-day-old embryonated chicken eggs and Group 2 represents 18-day-old embryonated chicken eggs, respectively, in a volume of 200 μ l at a dose of 5×10^{10} pfu per egg. In Group 3, the recombinant adenovirus vector expressing avian influenza HA was
20 injected intramuscularly into three 4-week-old chickens in a volume of 100 μ l at a dose of 2.5×10^{10} pfu per animal.

Figure 2 is a graph depicting the hemagglutination inhibition antibody titers (dots) detected in 28-day-old SPF chickens vaccinated with AdTW68.H5 *in ovo* only at days 10 or 18 of incubation, and chickens that were vaccinated *in ovo* at days 10 or 18 of incubation and
25 were boosted by the nasal route at day 15 post-hatch. Bar, geometric mean $\log_2$ [HI titer]. No HI titers were detected in naïve control chickens (data not shown).

Figure 3 is a graph depicting the hemagglutination inhibition antibodies in SPF chickens at days 23 and 29 post-hatch either vaccinated *in ovo* only (7 chicks) at day 18 of embryonation or vaccinated *in ovo* and boosted intranasally at day 15 post-hatch (12 chicks)
30 with AdTW68.H5. D23 and D29, HI titers at days 23 and 29 post-hatch, respectively; dots, $\log_2$ [HI titer] in individual birds; bar, geometric mean $\log_2$ [HI titer]. No HI titers were detected in 11 naïve control chickens at days 23 and 29 post-hatch (data not shown).

Figure 4 is a graph depicting *in ovo* vaccination of day-18 white leghorn chicken embryos. *In ovo* vaccination was performed using 10^{11} vp of AdTW68.H5 (*in ovo*). In a

separate group, *in ovo*-vaccinated birds were boosted at day 15 post-hatch by intranasal instillation of AdTW68.H5 with the same dose (*in ovo*+nasal booster). Naïve embryos without immunization served as negative controls (Control). On day 34 of age chickens were intranasally challenged through the choanal slit with a lethal dose of the highly pathogenic A/Ck/Queretaro/14588-19/95 (H5N2) AI virus strain. Statistically significant changes in survival were determined throughout the study using the Logrank test (Prism 4.03, GraphPad Software). *In ovo* vaccination with AdTW68.H5 with or without nasal booster applications significantly protected chickens (100%) against a lethal challenge with AI virus, when compared to unvaccinated controls ($P<0.001$).

Figure 5 is a graph depicting A/Ck/Queretaro/14588-19/95 viral RNA quantitated by quantitative real-time RT-PCR (16) in oro-pharyngeal samples from vaccinated and control chickens after intranasal challenge with this highly pathogenic AI virus. Chickens were vaccinated as described in the description of Fig. 3. Samples were collected at 2, 4, and 7 days post-infection. A significant difference ($P<0.05$) in viral load was achieved at day 7 between vaccinated and unvaccinated controls.

Figure 6 is a graph depicting *in ovo* vaccination on day-18 performed by inoculation of the AdTW68.H5 vector at a dose of 3×10^8 ifu. The Ad5 vector was purified by the Sartobind Q5 membrane (Sartorius North America, Inc., Edgewood, NY) and resuspended in A195 buffer (Evans, 2004). Pre-challenge serum HI antibodies on D25 were analyzed. Minus sign (-) indicates birds that succumbed to challenge; plus sign (+) indicates birds that survived challenge. Survivors had significantly elevated pre-challenge serum HI activity ($P<0.001$) as compared to those that died (unpaired t-test; Prism 4.03). All naïve control birds and birds immunized by the control vector AdCMV-tetC produced no measurable HI antibody titers.

Figure 7 is a graph depicting *in ovo* vaccination on day-18 performed by inoculation of the AdTW68.H5 vector at a dose of 3×10^8 ifu. The Ad5 vector was purified by the Sartobind Q5 membrane (Sartorius North America, Inc., Edgewood, NY) and resuspended in A195 buffer (Evans, 2004). Control and immunized birds were challenged by intranasal administration of 10^5 EID₅₀ of the H5N1 AI virus A/Swan/Mongolia//244L/2005 on D31.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In this disclosure, "comprises," "comprising," "containing" and "having" and the like can have the meaning ascribed to them in U.S. Patent law and can mean "includes," "including," and the like; "consisting essentially of" or "consists essentially" likewise has the

meaning ascribed in U.S. Patent law and the term is open-ended, allowing for the presence of more than that which is recited so long as basic or novel characteristics of that which is recited is not changed by the presence of more than that which is recited, but excludes prior art embodiments.

5 The term "nucleic acid" or "nucleic acid sequence" refers to a deoxyribonucleic or ribonucleic oligonucleotide in either single- or double-stranded form. The term encompasses nucleic acids, i.e., oligonucleotides, containing known analogues of natural nucleotides. The term also encompasses nucleic-acid-like structures with synthetic backbones, see e.g., Eckstein, 1991; Baserga et al., 1992; Milligan, 1993; WO 97/03211; WO 96/39154; Mata,
10 1997; Strauss-Soukup, 1997; and Samstag, 1996.

As used herein, "recombinant" refers to a polynucleotide synthesized or otherwise manipulated *in vitro* (e.g., "recombinant polynucleotide"), to methods of using recombinant polynucleotides to produce gene products in cells or other biological systems, or to a polypeptide ("recombinant protein") encoded by a recombinant polynucleotide.

15 "Recombinant means" also encompass the ligation of nucleic acids having various coding regions or domains or promoter sequences from different sources into an expression cassette or vector for expression of, e.g., inducible or constitutive expression of polypeptide coding sequences in the vectors of invention.

20 The term "heterologous" when used with reference to a nucleic acid, indicates that the nucleic acid is in a cell or a virus where it is not normally found in nature; or, comprises two or more subsequences that are not found in the same relationship to each other as normally found in nature, or is recombinantly engineered so that its level of expression, or physical relationship to other nucleic acids or other molecules in a cell, or structure, is not normally found in nature. A similar term used in this context is "exogenous". For instance, a
25 heterologous nucleic acid is typically recombinantly produced, having two or more sequences from unrelated genes arranged in a manner not found in nature; e.g., a human gene operably linked to a promoter sequence inserted into an adenovirus-based vector of the invention. As an example, a heterologous nucleic acid of interest can encode an immunogenic gene product, wherein the adenovirus is administered therapeutically or prophylactically as a
30 vaccine or vaccine composition. Heterologous sequences can comprise various combinations of promoters and sequences, examples of which are described in detail herein.

An "antigen" is a substance that is recognized by the immune system and induces an immune response. A similar term used in this context is "immunogen".

An "avian subject" in the context of the present invention refers to any and all domestic and wild members of the class *Aves*, which include, but are not limited to, Neognathae and Palaeognathae. The Neognathae order includes, among others, Anseriformes, Apodiformes, Buceroformes, Caprimulgiformes, Charadriiformes, Ciconiiformes, Coliiformes, Columbiformes, Coraciiformes, Cuculiformes, Falconiformes, Galbuliformes, Galliformes, Gaviiformes, Gruiformes, Musophagiformes, Opisthocomiformes, Passeriformes, Pelecaniformes, Phoenicopteriformes, Piciformes, Podicipediformes, Procellariiformes, Psittaciformes, Sphenisciformes, Strigiformes, Trochiliformes, Trogoniformes, Turniciformes, and Upupiformes. The Palaeognathae order includes, among others, Apterygiformes, Casuariiformes, Dinornithiformes, Rheiformes, Struthioniformes, and Tiniamiformes. Avian subjects can comprise adult avians, avian chicks, and avian embryos/eggs.

"Expression" of a gene or nucleic acid encompasses not only cellular gene expression, but also the transcription and translation of nucleic acid(s) in cloning systems and in any other context.

As used herein, a "vector" is a tool that allows or facilitates the transfer of an entity from one environment to another. By way of example, some vectors used in recombinant DNA techniques allow entities, such as a segment of DNA (such as a heterologous DNA segment, such as a heterologous cDNA segment), to be transferred into a target cell. The present invention comprehends recombinant vectors that can include viral vectors, bacterial vectors, protozoan vectors, DNA vectors, or recombinants thereof.

With respect to exogenous DNA for expression in a vector (e.g., encoding an epitope of interest and/or an antigen and/or a therapeutic) and documents providing such exogenous DNA, as well as with respect to the expression of transcription and/or translation factors for enhancing expression of nucleic acid molecules, and as to terms such as "epitope of interest", "therapeutic", "immune response", "immunological response", "protective immune response", "immunological composition", "immunogenic composition", and "vaccine composition", *inter alia*, reference is made to U.S. Patent No. 5,990,091 issued November 23, 1999, and WO 98/00166 and WO 99/60164, and the documents cited therein and the documents of record in the prosecution of that patent and those PCT applications; all of which are incorporated herein by reference. Thus, U.S. Patent No. 5,990,091 and WO 98/00166 and WO 99/60164 and documents cited therein and documents of record in the prosecution of that patent and those PCT applications, and other documents cited herein or otherwise incorporated herein by reference, can be consulted in the practice of this invention; and, all

exogenous nucleic acid molecules, promoters, and vectors cited therein can be used in the practice of this invention. In this regard, mention is also made of U.S. Patents Nos. 6,706,693; 6,716,823; 6,348,450; U.S. Patent Application Serial Nos. 10/424,409; 10/052,323; 10/116,963; 10/346,021; and WO 99/08713, published February 25, 1999, from
5 PCT/US98/16739.

As used herein, the terms “immunogenic composition” and “immunological composition” and “immunogenic or immunological composition” cover any composition that elicits an immune response against the antigen or immunogen of interest expressed from the adenoviral vectors and viruses of the invention; for instance, after administration into a
10 subject, elicits an immune response against the targeted immunogen or antigen of interest. The terms “vaccinal composition” and “vaccine” and “vaccine composition” covers any composition that induces a protective immune response against the antigen(s) of interest, or which efficaciously protects against the antigen; for instance, after administration or injection into the subject, elicits an protective immune response against the targeted antigen or
15 immunogen or provides efficacious protection against the antigen or immunogen expressed from the inventive adenovirus vectors of the invention. The term “veterinary composition” means any composition comprising a vector for veterinary use expressing a therapeutic protein as, for example, erythropoietin (EPO) or an immunomodulatory protein, such as, for example, interferon (IFN). Similarly, the term “pharmaceutical composition” means any
20 composition comprising a vector for expressing a therapeutic protein.

An “immunologically effective amount” is an amount or concentration of the recombinant vector encoding the gene of interest, that, when administered to a subject, produces an immune response to the gene product of interest.

A “circulating recombinant form” refers to recombinant viruses that have undergone
25 genetic reassortment among two or more subtypes or strains. Other terms used in the context of the present invention is “hybrid form”, “recombined form”, and “reassortant form”.

“Clinical isolates” refer to, for example, frequently used laboratory strains of viruses that are isolated from infected subjects and are reasserted in laboratory cells or subjects with laboratory-adapted master strains of high-growth donor viruses.

30 “Field isolates” refer to viruses that are isolated from infected subjects or from the environment.

The methods of the invention can be appropriately applied to prevent diseases as prophylactic vaccination or provide relief against symptoms of disease as therapeutic vaccination.

The recombinant vectors of the present invention can be administered to a subject either alone or as part of an immunological or immunogenic composition. The recombinant vectors of the invention can also be used to deliver or administer one or more proteins to a subject of interest by *in vivo* expression of the protein(s).

5 It is noted that immunological products and/or antibodies and/or expressed products obtained in accordance with this invention can be expressed *in vitro* and used in a manner in which such immunological and/or expressed products and/or antibodies are typically used, and that cells that express such immunological and/or expressed products and/or antibodies can be employed in *in vitro* and/or *ex vivo* applications, e.g., such uses and applications can
10 include diagnostics, assays, *ex vivo* therapy (e.g., wherein cells that express the gene product and/or immunological response are expanded *in vitro* and reintroduced into the host or animal), etc., *see* U.S. Patent No. 5,990,091, WO 99/60164 and WO 98/00166 and documents cited therein. Further, expressed antibodies or gene products that are isolated from herein methods, or that are isolated from cells expanded *in vitro* following herein administration
15 methods, can be administered in compositions, akin to the administration of subunit epitopes or antigens or therapeutics or antibodies to induce immunity, stimulate a therapeutic response and/or stimulate passive immunity.

The term "human adenovirus" as used herein is intended to encompass all human adenoviruses of the *Adenoviridae* family, which include members of the Mastadenovirus
20 genera. To date, over fifty-one human serotypes of adenoviruses have been identified (see, e.g., Fields et al., Virology 2, Ch. 67 (3d ed., Lippincott-Raven Publishers)). The adenovirus can be of serogroup A, B, C, D, E, or F. The human adenovirus can be a serotype 1 (Ad1), serotype 2 (Ad2), serotype 3 (Ad3), serotype 4 (Ad4), serotype 6 (Ad6), serotype 7 (Ad7), serotype 8 (Ad8), serotype 9 (Ad9), serotype 10 (Ad10), serotype 11 (Ad11), serotype 12
25 (Ad12), serotype 13 (Ad13), serotype 14 (Ad14), serotype 15 (Ad15), serotype 16 (Ad16), serotype 17 (Ad17), serotype 18 (Ad18), serotype 19 (Ad19), serotype 19a (Ad19a), serotype 19p (Ad19p), serotype 20 (Ad20), serotype 21 (Ad21), serotype 22 (Ad22), serotype 23 (Ad23), serotype 24 (Ad24), serotype 25 (Ad25), serotype 26 (Ad26), serotype 27 (Ad27), serotype 28 (Ad28), serotype 29 (Ad29), serotype 30 (Ad30), serotype 31 (Ad31), serotype
30 32 (Ad32), serotype 33 (Ad33), serotype 34 (Ad34), serotype 35 (Ad35), serotype 36 (Ad36), serotype 37 (Ad37), serotype 38 (Ad38), serotype 39 (Ad39), serotype 40 (Ad40), serotype 41 (Ad41), serotype 42 (Ad42), serotype 43 (Ad43), serotype 44 (Ad44), serotype 45 (Ad45), serotype 46 (Ad46), serotype 47 (Ad47), serotype 48 (Ad48), serotype 49 (Ad49), serotype

50 (Ad50), serotype 51 (Ad51), or preferably, serotype 5 (Ad5), but are not limited to these examples.

Also contemplated by the present invention are recombinant vectors, immunogenic compositions, and recombinant adenoviruses that can comprise subviral particles from more than one adenovirus serotype. For example, it is known that adenovirus vectors can display an altered tropism for specific tissues or cell types (Havenga, M.J.E. et al., 2002), and therefore, mixing and matching of different adenoviral capsids, i.e., fiber, or penton proteins from various adenoviral serotypes may be advantageous. Modification of the adenoviral capsids, including fiber and penton can result in an adenoviral vector with a tropism that is different from the unmodified adenovirus. Adenovirus vectors that are modified and optimized in their ability to infect target cells can allow for a significant reduction in the therapeutic or prophylactic dose, resulting in reduced local and disseminated toxicity.

Adenovirus is a non-enveloped DNA virus. Vectors derived from adenoviruses have a number of features that make them particularly useful for gene transfer. As used herein, a "recombinant adenovirus vector" is an adenovirus vector that carries one or more heterologous nucleotide sequences (e.g., two, three, four, five or more heterologous nucleotide sequences). For example, the biology of the adenoviruses is characterized in detail, the adenovirus is not associated with severe human pathology, the virus is extremely efficient in introducing its DNA into the host cell, the virus can infect a wide variety of cells and has a broad host range, the virus can be produced in large quantities with relative ease, and the virus can be rendered replication defective and/or non-replicating by deletions in the early region 1 ("E1") of the viral genome.

The genome of adenovirus is a linear double-stranded DNA molecule of approximately 36,000 base pairs ("bp") with a 55-kDa terminal protein covalently bound to the 5'-terminus of each strand. The Ad DNA contains identical Inverted Terminal Repeats ("ITRs") of about 100 bp, with the exact length depending on the serotype. The viral origins of replication are located within the ITRs exactly at the genome ends. DNA synthesis occurs in two stages. First, replication proceeds by strand displacement, generating a daughter duplex molecule and a parental displaced strand. The displaced strand is single stranded and can form a "panhandle" intermediate, which allows replication initiation and generation of a daughter duplex molecule. Alternatively, replication may proceed from both ends of the genome simultaneously, obviating the requirement to form the panhandle structure.

During the productive infection cycle, the viral genes are expressed in two phases: the early phase, which is the period up to viral DNA replication, and the late phase, which

coincides with the initiation of viral DNA replication. During the early phase, only the early gene products, encoded by regions E1, E2, E3 and E4, are expressed, which carry out a number of functions that prepare the cell for synthesis of viral structural proteins (Berk, A.J., 1986). During the late phase, the late viral gene products are expressed in addition to the early gene products and host cell DNA and protein synthesis are shut off. Consequently, the cell becomes dedicated to the production of viral DNA and of viral structural proteins (Tooze, J., 1981).

The E1 region of adenovirus is the first region of adenovirus expressed after infection of the target cell. This region consists of two transcriptional units, the E1A and E1B genes, both of which are required for oncogenic transformation of primary (embryonal) rodent cultures. The main functions of the E1A gene products are to induce quiescent cells to enter the cell cycle and resume cellular DNA synthesis, and to transcriptionally activate the E1B gene and the other early regions (E2, E3 and E4) of the viral genome. Transfection of primary cells with the E1A gene alone can induce unlimited proliferation (immortalization), but does not result in complete transformation. However, expression of E1A, in most cases, results in induction of programmed cell death (apoptosis), and only occasionally is immortalization obtained (Jochemsen et al., 1987). Co-expression of the E1B gene is required to prevent induction of apoptosis and for complete morphological transformation to occur. In established immortal cell lines, high-level expression of E1A can cause complete transformation in the absence of E1B (Roberts, B.E. et al., 1985).

The E1B encoded proteins assist E1A in redirecting the cellular functions to allow viral replication. The E1B 55 kD and E4 33 kD proteins, which form a complex that is essentially localized in the nucleus, function in inhibiting the synthesis of host proteins and in facilitating the expression of viral genes. Their main influence is to establish selective transport of viral mRNAs from the nucleus to the cytoplasm, concomitantly with the onset of the late phase of infection. The E1B 21 kD protein is important for correct temporal control of the productive infection cycle, thereby preventing premature death of the host cell before the virus life cycle has been completed. Mutant viruses incapable of expressing the E1B 21 kD gene product exhibit a shortened infection cycle that is accompanied by excessive degradation of host cell chromosomal DNA (deg-phenotype) and in an enhanced cytopathic effect (cyt-phenotype; Telling et al., 1994). The deg and cyt phenotypes are suppressed when in addition the E1A gene is mutated, indicating that these phenotypes are a function of E1A (White, E. et al., 1988). Furthermore, the E1B 21 kDa protein slows down the rate by which

E1A switches on the other viral genes. It is not yet known by which mechanisms E1B 21 kD quenches these E1A dependent functions.

In contrast to, for example, retroviruses, adenoviruses do not integrate into the host cell's genome, are able to infect non-dividing cells, and are able to efficiently transfer recombinant genes *in vivo* (Brody et al., 1994). These features make adenoviruses attractive candidates for *in vivo* gene transfer of, for example, an antigen or immunogen of interest into cells, tissues or subjects in need thereof.

Adenovirus vectors containing multiple deletions are preferred to both increase the carrying capacity of the vector and reduce the likelihood of recombination to generate replication competent adenovirus (RCA). Where the adenovirus contains multiple deletions, it is not necessary that each of the deletions, if present alone, would result in a replication defective and/or non-replicating adenovirus. As long as one of the deletions renders the adenovirus replication defective or non-replicating, the additional deletions may be included for other purposes, e.g., to increase the carrying capacity of the adenovirus genome for heterologous nucleotide sequences. Preferably, more than one of the deletions prevents the expression of a functional protein and renders the adenovirus replication defective and/or non-replicating and/or attenuated. More preferably, all of the deletions are deletions that would render the adenovirus replication-defective and/or non-replicating and/or attenuated. However, the invention also encompasses adenovirus and adenovirus vectors that are replication competent and/or wild-type, i.e. comprises all of the adenoviral genes necessary for infection and replication in a subject.

Embodiments of the invention employing adenovirus recombinants may include E1-defective or deleted, or E3-defective or deleted, or E4-defective or deleted or adenovirus vectors comprising deletions of E1 and E3, or E1 and E4, or E3 and E4, or E1, E3, and E4 deleted, or the "gutless" adenovirus vector in which all viral genes are deleted. The adenovirus vectors can comprise mutations in E1, E3, or E4 genes, or deletions in these or all adenoviral genes. The E1 mutation raises the safety margin of the vector because E1-defective adenovirus mutants are said to be replication-defective and/or non-replicating in non-permissive cells, and are, at the very least, highly attenuated. The E3 mutation enhances the immunogenicity of the antigen by disrupting the mechanism whereby adenovirus down-regulates MHC class I molecules. The E4 mutation reduces the immunogenicity of the adenovirus vector by suppressing the late gene expression, thus may allow repeated re-vaccination utilizing the same vector. The present invention comprehends adenovirus vectors of any serotype or serogroup that are deleted or mutated in E1, or E3, or E4, or E1 and E3, or

E1 and E4. Deletion or mutation of these adenoviral genes result in impaired or substantially complete loss of activity of these proteins.

The “gutless” adenovirus vector is another type of vector in the adenovirus vector family. Its replication requires a helper virus and a special human 293 cell line expressing both E1a and Cre, a condition that does not exist in natural environment; the vector is deprived of all viral genes, thus the vector as a vaccine carrier is non-immunogenic and may be inoculated multiple times for re-vaccination. The “gutless” adenovirus vector also contains 36 kb space for accommodating antigen or immunogen(s) of interest, thus allowing co-delivery of a large number of antigen or immunogens into cells.

Other adenovirus vector systems known in the art include the AdEasy system (He et al., 1998) and the subsequently modified AdEasier system (Zeng et al., 2001), which were developed to generate recombinant Ad vectors in 293 cells rapidly by allowing homologous recombination between donor vectors and Ad helper vectors to occur in *Escherichia coli* cells, such as BJ5183 cells, overnight. pAdEasy comprises adenoviral structural sequences that, when supplied *in trans* with a donor vector such as pShuttle-CMV expressing an antigen or immunogen of interest, results in packaging of the antigen or immunogen (e.g., immunogens and/or antigens) in an adenoviral capsid. The sequence of pAdEasy is well known in the art and is publicly and commercially available through Stratagene.

The present invention can be generated using the AdHigh system (U.S. Patent Provisional Application Serial No. 60/683,638). AdHigh is a safe, rapid, and efficient method of generating high titers of recombinant adenovirus without the risk of generating RCA, which may be detrimental or fatal to avian subjects. Further, RCA may be pathogenic to humans and undesirable to be present in the food chain. The AdHigh system uses modified shuttle plasmids, such as pAdHigh, to promote the production of RCA-free adenoviruses in permissive cells, such as PER.C6 cells after generating recombinants with an adenovirus backbone plasmid in *E. coli* cells. These shuttle plasmids contain polylinkers or multiple cloning sites for easy insertion of avian immunogens or antigens such as, for example, avian influenza immunogens or antigens. Recombination of the adenoviral shuttle plasmids in conjunction with an adenoviral helper plasmid such as pAdEasy in bacterial cells (i.e., BJ5183) can be easily implemented to produce the recombinant human adenoviruses expressing avian antigens or immunogens of the invention. Methods of producing recombinant vectors by cloning and restriction analysis are well known to those skilled in the art.

Specific sequence motifs such as the RGD motif may be inserted into the H-I loop of an adenovirus vector to enhance its infectivity. This sequence has been shown to be essential for the interaction of certain extracellular matrix and adhesion proteins with a superfamily of cell-surface receptors called integrins. Insertion of the RGD motif may be advantageously
5 useful in immunocompromised subjects. An adenovirus recombinant is constructed by cloning specific antigen or immunogen or fragments thereof into any of the adenovirus vectors such as those described above. The adenovirus recombinant is used to transduce cells of a vertebrate use as an immunizing agent. (See, for example, U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 10/424,409, incorporated by reference).

10 The adenovirus vectors of the present invention are useful for the delivery of nucleic acids expressing avian antigens or immunogens to cells both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. In particular, the inventive vectors can be advantageously employed to deliver or transfer nucleic acids to animal, more preferably avian and mammalian cells. Nucleic acids of interest include nucleic acids encoding peptides and proteins, preferably therapeutic (e.g., for
15 medical or veterinary uses) or immunogenic (e.g., for vaccines) peptides or proteins.

Preferably, the codons encoding the antigen or immunogen of interest are "optimized" codons, i.e., the codons are those that appear frequently in, i.e., highly expressed avian genes, instead of those codons that are frequently used by, for example, influenza. Such codon usage provides for efficient expression of the antigen or immunogen in human or avian cells.
20 In other embodiments, for example, when the antigen or immunogen of interest is expressed in bacteria, yeast or other expression system, the codon usage pattern is altered to represent the codon bias for highly expressed genes in the organism in which the antigen or immunogen is being expressed. Codon usage patterns are known in the literature for highly expressed genes of many species (e.g., Nakamura et al., 1996; Wang et al, 1998; McEwan et
25 al. 1998).

As a further alternative, the adenovirus vectors can be used to infect a cell in culture to express a desired gene product, e.g., to produce a protein or peptide of interest. Preferably, the protein or peptide is secreted into the medium and can be purified therefrom using routine techniques known in the art as well as those provided herein. Signal peptide sequences that
30 direct extracellular secretion of proteins are known in the art and nucleotide sequences encoding the same can be operably linked to the nucleotide sequence encoding the peptide or protein of interest by routine techniques known in the art. Alternatively, the cells can be lysed and the expressed recombinant protein can be purified from the cell lysate. Preferably,

the cell is an animal cell, more preferably an avian or mammalian cell. Also preferred are cells that are competent for transduction by adenoviruses.

Such cells include PER.C6 cells, 911 cells, and HEK293 cells. The invention also comprehends the use of avian cells, such as, but not limited to, avian embryonic fibroblasts, such as DF-1 cells, avian stem cells such as those described in U.S. Patent Nos. 6,872,561; 6,642,042; 6,280,970; and 6,255,108, incorporated by reference, avian lymphoblasts, avian epithelial cells, among others, such as chicken embryo-derived cell strain CHCC-OU2 (Ogura, H. et al., 1987; Japanese Patent Publication No. 9-173059), quail-derived cell strain QT-35 (Japanese Patent Publication No. 9-98778). Any avian cell that is competent for infection, transfection, or any type of gene transfer can be used in the practice of the invention.

A culture medium for culturing host cells includes a medium commonly used for tissue culture, such as M199-earle base, Eagle MEM (E-MEM), Dulbecco MEM (DMEM), SC-UCM102, UP-SFM (GIBCO BRL), EX-CELL302 (Nichirei), EX-CELL293-S (Nichirei), TFBM-01 (Nichirei), ASF104, among others. Suitable culture media for specific cell types can be found at the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) or the European Collection of Cell Cultures (ECACC). Culture media can be supplemented with amino acids such as L-glutamine, salts, anti-fungal or anti-bacterial agents such as Fungizone®, penicillin-streptomycin, animal serum, and the like. The cell culture medium can optionally be serum-free.

The present invention also provides vectors useful as vaccines. The immunogen or antigen can be presented in the adenovirus capsid, alternatively, the antigen can be expressed from an antigen or immunogen introduced into a recombinant adenovirus genome and carried by the inventive adenoviruses. The adenovirus vector can provide any antigen or immunogen of interest. Examples of immunogens are detailed herein.

The antigens or immunogens are preferably operably associated with the appropriate expression control sequences. Expression vectors include expression control sequences, such as an origin of replication (which can be bacterial origins, e.g., derived from bacterial vectors such as pBR322, or eukaryotic origins, e.g., autonomously replicating sequences (ARS)), a promoter, an enhancer, and necessary information processing sites, such as ribosome binding sites, RNA splice sites, polyadenylation sites, packaging signals, and transcriptional terminator sequences.

For example, the recombinant adenovirus vectors of the invention can contain appropriate transcription/translation control signals and polyadenylation signals (e.g.,

polyadenylation signals derived from bovine growth hormone, SV40 polyadenylation signal) operably associated with the antigen or immunogen sequence(s) to be delivered to the target cell. A variety of promoter/enhancer elements may be used depending on the level and tissue-specific expression desired. The promoter can be constitutive or inducible (e.g., the metallothionein promoter), depending on the pattern of expression desired. The promoter may be native or foreign and can be a natural or a synthetic sequence. By foreign, it is intended that the transcriptional initiation region is not found in the wild-type host into which the transcriptional initiation region is introduced. The promoter is chosen so that it will function in the target cell(s) or tissue(s) of interest. Brain-specific, hepatic-specific, and muscle-specific (including skeletal, cardiac, smooth, and/or diaphragm-specific) promoters are contemplated by the present invention. Mammalian and avian promoters are also preferred.

The promoter can advantageously be an "early" promoter. An "early" promoter is known in the art and is defined as a promoter that drives expression of a gene that is rapidly and transiently expressed in the absence of *de novo* protein synthesis. The promoter can also be a "strong" or "weak" promoter. The terms "strong promoter" and "weak promoter" are known in the art and can be defined by the relative frequency of transcription initiation (times per minute) at the promoter. A "strong" or "weak" promoter can also be defined by its affinity to RNA polymerase.

More preferably, the antigens or immunogens are operatively associated with, for example, a human cytomegalovirus (CMV) major immediate-early promoter, a simian virus 40 (SV40) promoter, a β -actin promoter, an albumin promoter, an Elongation Factor 1- α (EF1- α) promoter, a PyK promoter, a MFG promoter, or a Rous sarcoma virus promoter. Other expression control sequences include promoters derived from immunoglobulin genes, adenovirus, bovine papilloma virus, herpes virus, and so forth. Any mammalian viral promoter can also be used in the practice of the invention, in addition to any avian viral promoter. Among avian promoters of viral origin, the promoters of immediate early (i.e., ICP4, ICP27) genes of the infectious laryngotracheitis virus (ILTV) virus, early (i.e., thymidine kinase, DNA helicase, ribonucleotide reductase) or late (i.e., gB, gD, gC, gK), of the Marek's disease virus, (i.e., gB, gC, pp38, pp14, ICP4, Meq) or of the herpes virus of turkeys (i.e., gB, gC, ICP4) can be used in the methods and vectors of the present invention. Moreover, it is well within the purview of the skilled artisan to select a suitable promoter that expresses the antigen or immunogen of interest at sufficiently high levels so as to induce or

elicit an immunogenic response to the antigen or immunogen, without undue experimentation.

It has been speculated that driving heterologous nucleotide transcription with the CMV promoter can result in downregulation of expression in immunocompetent animals (see, e.g., Guo et al., 1996). Accordingly, it is also preferred to operably associate the antigen or immunogen sequences with, for example, a modified CMV promoter that does not result in this down-regulation of antigen or immunogen expression.

The vectors of the invention can also comprise a polylinker or multiple cloning site ("MCS"), which can advantageously be located downstream of a promoter. The polylinker provides a site for insertion of the antigen or immunogen molecules that are "in-frame" with the promoter sequence, resulting in "operably linking" the promoter sequence to the antigen or immunogen of interest. Multiple cloning sites and polylinkers are well known to those skilled in the art. As used herein, the term "operably linked" means that the components described are in a relationship permitting them to function in their intended manner.

Depending on the vector, selectable markers encoding antibiotic resistance may be present when used for *in vitro* amplification and purification of the recombinant vector, and, in the context of the commercially available AdEasy, AdEasier, and AdHigh adenoviral systems, to monitor homologous recombination between a donor vector and an adenoviral helper vector. The AdEasy, AdEasier, and AdHigh systems facilitate homologous recombination between a donor vector and an adenoviral helper vector at the ITR sequences. Each vector comprises a different antibiotic resistance gene, and by dual selection, recombinants expressing the recombined vector can be selected. Examples of such antibiotic resistance genes that can be incorporated into the vectors of the invention include, but are not limited to, ampicillin, tetracycline, neomycin, zeocin, kanamycin, bleomycin, hygromycin, chloramphenicol, among others.

In embodiments wherein there is more than one antigen or immunogen, the antigen or immunogen sequences may be operatively associated with a single upstream promoter and one or more downstream internal ribosome entry site (IRES) sequences (e.g., the picornavirus EMC IRES sequence).

In embodiments of the invention in which the antigen or immunogen sequence(s) will be transcribed and then translated in the target cells, specific initiation signals are generally required for efficient translation of inserted protein coding sequences. These exogenous translational control sequences, which may include the ATG initiation codon and adjacent sequences, can be of a variety of origins, both natural and synthetic.

Any avian antigen or immunogen derived from an avian pathogen can be used in the methods and recombinant vectors of the invention. Preferred antigens or immunogens include, but are not limited to, antigens or immunogens derived from avian influenza virus, such as hemagglutinin, neuraminidase, matrix, and nucleoprotein antigens or immunogens, infectious bursal disease virus antigens such as VP1, VP1s1, VP1s2, VP2 (Heine, H.G. et al., 1991; Dormitorio, T.V. et al., 1997; and Cao, Y.C. et al., 1998), VP2S, VP3, VP4, VP4S and VP5, Marek's disease virus antigens like thymidine kinase, gA, gB, gC, gD, gE, gH, gI, and gL (Coussens et al. 1988); Ross et al. 1989); Ross et al. 1991); International Publication No. WO 90/02803 (1990); Brunovskis and Velicer, 1995); and Yoshida et al. 1994), Herpesviruses such as infectious laryngotracheitis virus antigens including gA, gB, gD, gE, gI, and gG (Veits, J. et al 2003), avian infectious bronchitis virus antigens such as spike glycoprotein, integral membrane protein M, small membrane protein E, and polyprotein (Casais, R. et al 2003), avian reovirus antigens such as capsid, sigma NS, sigma A, sigma B, and sigma C proteins (Spandidos, D.A. et al, 1976), poxviruses including avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox antigens such as thymidine kinase, avian polyomavirus antigens such as VP1, VP2, VP3, and VP4 (Rott, O. et al 1988), Newcastle Disease virus antigens such as HN, P, NP, M, F, and L proteins (reviewed in Alexander, D.J., 1990), avian pneumovirus antigens SH, F, G and N (Seal, B.S., 2000), avian rhinotracheitis virus antigens such as glycoprotein, matrix, fusion, and nucleocapsid (Cook, J.K., 1990), avian reticuloendotheliosis virus antigens such as p29, envelope, gag, protease, and polymerase (Dornburg, R. 1995), avian retroviruses including avian carcinoma virus antigens gag, pol, and env, avian endogenous virus gag, pol, env, capsid, and protease (Rovigatti, U.G. et al, 1983), avian erythroblastosis virus gag, erbA, erbB (Graf, T. et al, 1983), avian hepatitis virus core protein, pol, and surface protein (Cova, L. et al, 1993), avian anemia virus VP1, VP2, VP3 (Rosenberger, J.K. et al, 1998), avian enteritis virus antigens polymerase, 52K protein, penton, IIIa, and core proteins (Pitcovski, J. et al., 1988), Pacheco's disease virus IE protein, glycoprotein K, helicase, glycoprotein N, VP11-12, glycoprotein H, thymidine kinase, glycoprotein B, and nuclear phosphoprotein (Kaleta E.F., 1990), avian leukemia virus antigens envelope, gag, and polymerase (Graf, T. et al, 1978), avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus antigens like NSP1, NSP2, NSP3, NSP4, VP1, VP2, VP3, VP4, VP5, VP6, and VP7 (Mori, Y. et al, 2003; Borgan, M.A. et al, 2003), avian leukosis virus antigens such as envelope, gag, and polymerase (Bieth, E. et al, 1992); avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus (Kawai, S. et al, 1992), avian myeloblastosis virus antigens p15, p27, envelope, gag, and polymerase, nucleocapsid, and gs-b (Joliot, V. et al., 1993), avian

myeloblastosis-associated virus (Perbal, B., 1995), avian myelocytomatosis virus (Petropoulos, C.J., 1997), avian sarcoma virus antigens such as p19 and envelope (Neckameyer, W.S. et al, 1985), and avian spleen necrosis virus gag, envelope, and polymerase (Purchase, H.G. et al, 1975).

5 Other immunogens/antigens that can be used in the context of the present invention include avian bacterial antigens from *Pasteurella multocida* strains, such as the 39 kDa capsular protein (Ali, H.A. et al, 2004; Rimler, R.B. 2001), 16-kDa outer membrane protein (Kasten, R.W., et al, 1995), lipopolysaccharide (Baert, K. et al, 2005), *Escherichia coli*, such as type 1 fimbriae, P fimbriae, and curli (Roland, K. et al, 2004); F1 pilus adhesin, P pilus
10 adhesin, aerobactin receptor protein, and lipopolysaccharide (Kariyawasam, S. et al, 2002), *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, such as the major membrane antigen pMGA (also known as P67; Jan, G. et al, 2001; Noormohammadi, A.H. et al, 2002a), TM-1 (Saito, S. et al, 1993), adhesin (Barbour, E.K. et al, 1989), P52 (Jan, G. et al, 2001) serum-plate-agglutination (SPA) antigen (Ahmad, I. et al, 1988), *Mycoplasma gallinaceum*, *Mycoplasma gallinarum*, *Mycoplasma*
15 *gallopavonis*, *Mycoplasma synoviae*, including antigens such as major membrane antigen MSPB (Noormohammadi, A.H. et al, 2002b) and 165-kDa protein (Ben Abdelmoumen, B. et al, 1999), *Mycoplasma meleagridis*, *Mycoplasma iowae*, *Mycoplasma pullorum*, *Mycoplasma imitans*, *Salmonella enteritidis* such as flagellin, porins, OmpA, SEF21 and SEF14 fimbriae (Ochoa-Reparaz, J. et al, 2004), *Salmonella enterica* serovars such as *Gallinarum* and
20 *Typhimurium* that express, for example, SEF14 and SEF21 (Li, W. et al, 2004), *Campylobacter jejuni*, such as flagellin, 67-kDa antigen, CjaA, CjaC, and CjaD proteins (Widders, P.R. et al, 1998; Wyszynska, A. et al, 2004), *Haemophilus paragallinarum* such as serogroups A, B, and C antigens like hemagglutinin (Yamaguchi, T. et al, 1988), *Riemerella anatipestifer*, such as bacterin antigens (Higgins, D.A. et al, 2000), *Chlamydia psittaci* strains
25 such as serovar A and 6B and expressing, for example, major outer membrane protein (MOMP) (Vanrompay, D. et al, 1999), *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* including 66-64 kDa protein antigen (Timoney, J.F. et al, 1993), *Erysipelothrix insidiosa* such as bacterin (Bigland, C.H. and Matsumoto, J.J., 1975), *Brucella abortus*, such as antigens P39 and bacterioferrin (Al-Mariri, A. et al, 2001), *Borrelia anserina* such as 22-kilodalton major outer
30 surface protein (Sambri, V. et al, 1999), outer membrane protein P66 (Bunikis, J. et al, 1998), and OspC (Marconi, R.T. et al, 1993), *Alcaligenes faecalis*, *Streptococcus faecalis*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, among many others.

The invention also comprehends the use of immunogens/antigens derived from avian protozoal antigens, such as, but not limited to *Eimeria acervulina* such as 3-1E antigen

(Lillehoj, H.S. et al, 2005; Ding, X. et al, 2004), apical complex antigens (Constantinoiu, C.C. et al, 2004), and lactate dehydrogenase (Schaap, D. et al, 2004), *Eimeria maxima* such as gam56 and gam82 (Belli, S.I. et al, 2004), 56 and 82 kDa antigen proteins (Belli, S.I. et al, 2002), and EmTFP250 (Witcombe, D.M. et al, 2004), *Eimeria necatrix* such as 35-kD protein (Tajima, O. et al, 2003), *Eimeria tenella* such as the TA4 and SO7 gene products (Wu, S.Q. et al, 2004; Pogonka, T. et al, 2003) and 12-kDa oocyst wall protein (Karim, M.J. et al, 1996), *Eimeria vermiformis*, *Eimeria adenoeides*, *Leucocytozoon caulleryi* such as R7 outer membrane antigen (Ito, A., et al, 2005), *Plasmodium relictum*, *Plasmodium gallinaceum* such as CSP protein (Grim, K.C. et al, 2004) and 17- and 32-kDa protein antigens (Langer, R.C. et al, 2002), and *Plasmodium elongatum*, among others.

A preferred embodiment of the invention utilizes avian influenza viral antigens or immunogens. The invention also provides a recombinant vector expressing various avian antigens or immunogens, such as, for example, a multivalent vaccine or immunogenic composition that can protect avians against multiple avian diseases with a single injection.

Avian influenza viruses have been transmitted to humans, pigs, horses, and even sea mammals, and have been key contributors to the emergence of human influenza pandemics. Influenza viruses, which belong to the *Orthomyxoviridae* family, are classified as A, B, and C based on antigenic differences in their nucleoprotein (NP) and matrix (M1) protein. All avian influenza viruses are classified as type A. Further subtyping is based on the antigenicity of two surface glycoproteins, hemagglutinin (HA) and neuraminidase (NA). Currently, 15 HA and 9 NA subtypes have been identified among influenza A viruses (Murphy, B.R. et al, 1996; Röhm, C. et al, 1996b). The amino acid sequences of the HA1 region, which is responsible for HA antigenicity, differ from subtype to subtype by 30% or more (Röhm, C. et al, 1996b). Although viruses with all HA and NA subtypes are found in avian species, viral subtypes of mammalian influenza viruses are limited.

Avian influenza A viruses are defined by their virulence; highly virulent types that can cause fowl plagues, and avirulent types that generally cause only mild disease or asymptomatic infection. In rare instances, however, viruses with low pathogenicity in the laboratory cause outbreaks of severe disease in the field. Nonetheless, the morbidity and mortality associated with these viruses tend to be much lower than those caused by lethal viruses.

Highly virulent avian influenza viruses have caused outbreaks in poultry in Australia (1976 [H7] (Bashiruddin, J.B. et al, 1992); 1985 [H7] (Cross, G.M., 1987; Nestorowicz, A. et al, 1987), 1992 [H7] (Perdue, M.L. et al, 1997), 1995 [H7], and 1997 [H7]), England (1979

[H7] (Wood, G.W., et al, 1993) and 1991 [H5] (Alexander, D.J. et al, 1993), the United States (1983 to 1984 [H5] (Eckroade, R.J. et al, 1987), Ireland (1983 to 1984 [H5]) (Kawaoka, Y. et al, 1987), Germany (1979 [H7] (Röhm, C. et al, 1996a), Mexico (1994 to 1995 [H5] (Garcia, M. et al, 1996; Horimoto, T. et al, 1995), Pakistan (1995 [H7] (Perdue, M.L. et al, 1997), Italy (1997 [H5]), and Hong Kong (1997 [H5] (Claas, E.J. et al, 1988).

Without wishing to be bound by any one theory, it is believed that all of the pathogenic avian influenza A viruses are of the H5 or H7 subtype, although the reason for this subtype specificity remains unknown. There appears to be no association of NA subtypes with virulent viruses. Two additional subtypes, H4 [A/Chicken/Alabama/7395/75 (H4N8)] (Johnson, D.C. et al, 1976) and H10 [A/Chicken/Germany/N/49 (H10N7)], have been isolated from chickens during severe fowl plague-like outbreaks.

The structures of influenza A viruses are quite similar (Lamb, R.A. et al, 1996). By electron microscopy, the viruses are pleomorphic, including virions that are roughly spherical (approximately 120 nm in diameter) and filamentous. Two distinct types of spikes (approximately 16 nm in length), corresponding to the HA and NA molecules, reside on the surface of the virions. These two glycoproteins are anchored to the lipid envelope derived from the plasma membrane of host cells by short sequences of hydrophobic amino acids (transmembrane region). HA is a type I glycoprotein, containing an N-terminal ectodomain and a C-terminal anchor, while NA is a type II glycoprotein, containing an N-proximal anchor and a C-terminal ectodomain. HA enables the virion to attach to cell surface sialyloligosaccharides (Paulson, J.C., 1985) and is responsible for its hemagglutinating activity (Hirst, G.K., 1941). HA elicits virus-neutralizing antibodies that are important in protection against infection. NA is a sialidase (Gottschalk, A., 1957) that prevents virion aggregation by removing cell and virion surface sialic acid (the primary moiety in sialyloligosaccharides recognized by HA) (Paulson, J.C., 1985). Antibodies to NA are also important in protecting hosts (Webster, R.G., et al, 1988).

In addition to HA and NA, a limited number of M1 proteins are integrated into the virions (Zebedee, S.L. et al, 1988). They form tetramers, have H1 ion channel activity, and, when activated by the low pH in endosomes, acidify the inside of the virion, facilitating its uncoating (Pinto, L.H. et al, 1992). M1 protein that lies within the envelope is thought to function in assembly and budding. Eight segments of single-stranded RNA molecules (negative sense, or complementary to mRNA) are contained within the viral envelope, in association with NP and three subunits of viral polymerase (PB1, PB2, and PA), which together form a ribonucleoprotein (RNP) complex that participates in RNA replication and

transcription. NS2 protein, now known to exist in virions (Richardson, J.C. et al, 1991; Yasuda, J. et al, 1993), is thought to play a role in the export of RNP from the nucleus (O'Neill, R.E. et al, 1998) through interaction with M1 protein (Ward, A.C. et al, 1995). NS1 protein, the only nonstructural protein of influenza A viruses, has multiple functions, including regulation of splicing and nuclear export of cellular mRNAs as well as stimulation of translation (Lamb, R.A. et al, 1996). Its major function is believed to counteract the interferon activity of the host, since an NS1 knockout virus was viable although it grew less efficiently than the parent virus in interferon-non-defective cells (Garcia-Sastre, A. et al, 1988).

The avian influenza immunogens or antigens useful in the present invention include, but are not limited to, HA, NA, as well as M1, NS2, and NS1. Particularly preferred avian influenza immunogens or antigens are HA and NA. The avian influenza immunogens or antigens can be derived from any known strain of AI, including all avian influenza A strains, clinical isolates, field isolates, and reassortments thereof. Examples of such strains and subtypes include, but are not limited to, H10N4, H10N5, H10N7, H10N8, H10N9, H11N1, H11N13, H11N2, H11N4, H11N6, H11N8, H11N9, H12N1, H12N4, H12N5, H12N8, H13N2, H13N3, H13N6, H13N7, H14N5, H14N6, H15N8, H15N9, H16N3, H1N1, H1N2, H1N3, H1N6, H2N1, H2N2, H2N3, H2N5, H2N7, H2N8, H2N9, H3N1, H3N2, H3N3, H3N4, H3N5, H3N6, H3N8, H4N1, H4N2, H4N3, H4N4, H4N5, H4N6, H4N8, H4N9, H5N1, H5N2, H5N3, H5N7, H5N8, H5N9, H6N1, H6N2, H6N4, H6N5, H6N6, H6N7, H6N8, H6N9, H7N1, H7N2, H7N3, H7N5, H7N7, H7N8, H8N4, H8N5, H9N1, H9N2, H9N3, H9N5, H9N6, H9N7, H9N8, and H9N9. The invention also relates to the use of mutated or otherwise altered avian influenza immunogens or antigens that reflect, among other things, antigenic drift and antigenic shift.

The antigenicity of influenza viruses changes gradually by point mutation (antigenic drift) or drastically by genetic reassortment (antigenic shift) (Murphy, B.R. et al, 1996). Immunological pressure on HA and NA is thought to drive antigenic drift. Antigenic shift can be caused by either direct transmission of nonhuman influenza viruses to humans or the reassortment of genes from two different influenza viruses that have infected a single cell (Webster, R.G. et al, 1982). Theoretically, 256 different combinations of RNA can be produced from the shuffling of the eight different genomic segments of the virus. Genetic reassortment is well documented both *in vitro* and *in vivo* under laboratory conditions (Webster, R.G. et al, 1975). More importantly, mixed infections occur relatively frequently in nature and can lead to genetic reassortment, resulting in new field isolates, hybrid forms, or

reassortant forms (Bean, W.J. et al, 1980; Hinshaw, V.S. et al, 1980; Young, J.F., et al, 1979). Reemergence of a previously circulating virus is another mechanism by which antigenic shift can occur.

Thus, the invention also concerns the use of avian influenza immunogens or antigens that have undergone antigenic drift or antigenic shift, including clinical isolates of avian influenza, field or environmental isolates of avian influenza, hybrid forms, and reassortant forms of avian influenza. Moreover, the invention comprehends the use of more than one avian influenza immunogen or antigen in the vectors and methods disclosed herein, delivered either in separate recombinant vectors, or together in one recombinant vector so as to provide a multivalent avian influenza vaccine or immunogenic composition that stimulates or modulates immunogenic response to one or more avian influenza strains and/or hybrids.

Many domestic and wild avian species are infected with influenza viruses. These include chickens, turkeys, ducks, guinea fowl, domestic geese, quail, pheasants, partridge, mynah birds, passerines, psittacines, budgerigars, gulls, shorebirds, seabirds, and emu (Easterday, B.C. et al, 1997; Webster, R.G. et al, 1988). Some infected birds show symptoms of influenza, while others do not. Among domestic avian species, turkeys are the most frequently involved in outbreaks of influenza; chickens have also been involved but less frequently. Avian influenza A viruses produce an array of syndromes in birds, ranging from asymptomatic to mild upper respiratory infections to loss of egg production to rapidly fatal systemic disease (Eckroade, R.J. et al, 1987). The severity of disease depends on multiple factors, including the virulence of the virus, the immune status and diet of the host, accompanying bacterial infections, and stresses imposed on the host. Depending on their pathogenicity in chickens and turkeys, avian influenza A viruses are classified as virulent (capable of causing fowl plague) or avirulent (causing mild or asymptomatic disease). Even when highly pathogenic for one avian species, influenza A viruses may not be pathogenic for another avian species (Alexander, D.J. et al, 1986). For example, ducks are typically resistant to viruses that are lethal in chickens. As another example, A/Turkey/Ireland/1378/85 (H5N8), which readily kills chickens and turkeys, does not cause disease symptoms in ducks, even though it can be detected in a variety of internal organs and in the blood of infected birds (Kawaoka, Y. et al, 1987).

Influenza viruses are secreted from the intestinal tract into the feces of infected birds (Kida, H., et al, 1980; Webster, R.G. et al, 1978). The modes of transmission can be either direct or indirect; they include contact with aerosol and other virus-contaminated materials. Since infected birds excrete large amounts of virus in their feces, many different items can

become contaminated (e.g., feed, water, equipment, and cages) and contribute to dissemination of the virus. Waterborne transmission may provide a mechanism for the year-to-year perpetuation of avian influenza viruses in natural waterfowl habitats. The typical signs and symptoms manifested by commercial avians, such as poultry infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses include decreased egg production, respiratory signs, rales, excessive lacrimation, sinusitis, cyanosis of unfeathered skin (especially the combs and wattles), edema of the head and face, ruffled feathers, diarrhea, and nervous system disorders.

The number of presenting features depends on the species and age of the bird, the strain of virus, and accompanying bacterial infections (Easterday, B.C. et al, 1997; Webster, R.G. et al, 1988). Occasionally, a bird will die without showing any signs of illness (Alexander, D.J. et al, 1993; Wood, G.W., et al, 1994). The gross and histological lesions in chickens inoculated with highly pathogenic viruses are quite similar but do show some strain variation (Alexander, D.J. et al, 1986; Mo, I.P. et al, 1997; Swayne, D.E. et al, 1997). Some of the differences among reported cases may reflect differences in experimental conditions, including the route of inoculation, the breed and age of the chickens, and the dose of virus. Swelling of the microvascular endothelium, systemic congestion, multifocal hemorrhages, perivascular mononuclear cell infiltration, and thrombosis are commonly seen in chickens infected with highly virulent viruses. Such viruses replicate efficiently in the vascular endothelium and perivascular parenchymatous cells, a property that can be important for viral dissemination and systemic infection (Kobayashi, Y. et al, 1996; Suarez, D.L. et al, 1998). Viral antigens can also be found in necrotic cardiac myocytes in addition to cells in other organs with necrotic and inflammatory changes (Kobayashi, Y. et al, 1996).

The present invention also relates to methods of expressing one or more antigens or immunogens in a cell. As a preliminary step in the laboratory setting, the antigen or immunogen can instead be replaced by a heterologous nucleotide sequences encoding proteins and peptides that include those encoding reporter proteins (e.g., an enzyme). Reporter proteins are known in the art and include, but are not limited to, Green Fluorescent Protein, β -galactosidase, β -glucuronidase, luciferase, alkaline phosphatase, and chloramphenicol acetyltransferase gene. Many of these reporter proteins and methods of their detection are included as a part of many commercially available diagnostic kits. The antigen or immunogen of interest may encode an antisense nucleic acid, small interfering RNAs (siRNAs), a ribozyme, or other non-translated RNAs, such as "guide" RNAs (Gorman et al., 1998), and the like.

The recombinant vectors and methods of the invention also comprehend the use of therapeutic proteins or adjuvant molecules that can modulate immune responses upon delivery of recombinant vectors or immunogenic compositions. Such therapeutic proteins or adjuvant molecules can include, but are not limited to, immunomodulatory molecules such as interleukins, interferon, and co-stimulatory molecules. Avian cytokines that are known in the art to modulate immune responses in an avian subject are chicken interferon- α (IFN α) (Karaca, K. et al, 1998; Schijns, V.E. et al, 2000), chicken interferon- γ (IFN γ) , chicken interleukin-1 β (ChIL-1 β) (Karaca, K. et al, 1998), chicken interleukin-2 (ChIL-2) (Hilton, L.S. et al, 2002), and chicken myelo-monocytic growth factor (cMGF1 York, J.J. et al, 1996; Djeraba, A. et al, 2002). The immunomodulatory molecules can be co-administered with the inventive immunogenic compositions, or alternatively, the nucleic acid of the immunomodulatory molecule(s) can be co-expressed along with the avian immunogens or antigens in the recombinant vectors of the invention.

Expression in the subject of the heterologous sequence, i.e. avian influenza immunogens, can result in an immune response in the subject to the expression products of the antigen or immunogen. Thus, the recombinant vectors of the present invention may be used in an immunological composition or vaccine to provide a means to induce an immune response, which may, but need not be, protective. The molecular biology techniques used in the context of the invention are described by Sambrook *et al.* (2001).

Even further alternatively or additionally, in the immunogenic or immunological compositions encompassed by the present invention, the nucleotide sequence encoding the antigens or immunogens can have deleted therefrom a portion encoding a transmembrane domain. Yet even further alternatively or additionally, the vector or immunogenic composition can further contain and express in a host cell a nucleotide sequence encoding a heterologous tPA signal sequence such as human or avian tPA and/or a stabilizing intron, such as intron II of the rabbit β -globin gene.

The present invention also provides a method of delivering and/or administering a heterologous nucleotide sequence into a cell *in vitro* or *in vivo*. According to this method a cell is infected with a recombinant human adenovirus vector according to the present invention (as described in detail herein). The cell may be infected with the adenovirus vector by the natural process of viral transduction. Alternatively, the vector may be introduced into the cell by any other method known in the art. For example, the cell may be contacted with a targeted adenovirus vector (as described below) and taken up by an alternate mechanism,

e.g., by receptor-mediated endocytosis. As another example the vector may be targeted to an internalizing cell-surface protein using an antibody or other binding protein.

A vector can be administered to an avian subject in an amount to achieve the amounts stated for gene product (e.g., epitope, antigen, therapeutic, and/or antibody) compositions. Of course, the invention envisages dosages below and above those exemplified herein, and for any composition to be administered to an avian subject, including the components thereof, and for any particular method of administration, it is preferred to determine therefor: toxicity, such as by determining the lethal dose (LD) and LD₅₀ in a suitable avian model; and, the dosage of the composition(s), concentration of components therein and timing of administering the composition(s), which elicit a suitable response, such as by titrations of sera and analysis thereof, e.g., by ELISA and/or seroneutralization analysis. Such determinations do not require undue experimentation from the knowledge of the skilled artisan, this disclosure and the documents cited herein.

Examples of compositions of the invention include liquid preparations for orifice, or mucosal, e.g., oral, nasal, anal, vaginal, peroral, intragastric, etc., administration such as suspensions, solutions, sprays, syrups or elixirs; and, preparations for parenteral, epicutaneous, subcutaneous (i.e., through lower neck), intradermal, intraperitoneal, intramuscular (i.e., through wing-web, wing-tip, pectoral, and thigh musculature puncture), intranasal, or intravenous administration (e.g., injectable administration) such as sterile suspensions or emulsions. Reference is made to U.S. Patent No. 6,716,823 issued April 6, 2004; U.S. Patent No. 6,706,693 issued March 16, 2004; U.S. Patent No. 6,348,450 issued February 19, 2002; U.S. Application Serial Nos. 10/052,323 and 10,116,963; and 10/346,021, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference and which disclose immunization and delivery of immunogenic or vaccine compositions through a non-invasive mode of delivery, i.e. epicutaneous and intranasal administration. Other methods of administration and delivery to avians include administering the recombinant vectors or immunogenic compositions in drinking water or feed, wherein the dose of vaccine can be selected between 10¹ and 10⁴ per animal.

For intramuscular injections, administration can occur through the breast (pectoral), leg (upper thigh/lateral flank musculature), wing-web (patagium), under wings (axilla), and wing-tip. The length and diameter (gauge) of the needle used should be such that it will allow delivery of the vaccine to the center of the chosen muscle.

A particularly preferred method of administration is *in ovo* delivery (Gildersleeve, R.P., 1993a; Gildersleeve, R.P. et al, 1993b; Sharma, J.M., 1985; Sharma, J.M. et al, 1984).

In ovo delivery is emerging as a promising method for mass immunization of avians as administration of a uniform dose of vaccines by a robotic injector is both labor- and time-saving (Johnston et al., 1997; Oshop et al., 2002). To date, over 80% of U.S. commercial broiler chickens are treated *in ovo* with a mechanized injector against Marek's disease (Wakenell et al., 2002). This method is also being used increasingly to administer infectious bursal disease (IBD) and Newcastle disease (ND) vaccines. Immune responses have also been elicited in chickens by *in ovo* delivery of DNA vaccines (Kapczynski et al., 2003; Oshop et al., 2003) and a replicating alphavirus-vectored vaccine (Schultz-Cherry et al., 2000). Compared with their replicating counterparts, DNA and viral vectored *in ovo* vaccines and immunogenic compositions are less likely to kill or harm the embryo and Ad vectors in particular have a higher compliance rate due to their incompetence to replicate *in ovo*.

Mechanized systems, apparatuses, and devices, such as those commercially available as INOVOJECT®, gently injects compounds, vaccines, and immunogenic compositions in precisely calibrated volumes without causing trauma to the developing embryo, thereby reducing chick handling, improving hatchery manageability through automation, and reducing costs of live production. INOVOJECT® and other mechanized systems, devices, or apparatuses, work by gently lowering an injection head onto the top of the egg and a small diameter hollow punch pierces a small opening in the shell. A needle descends through a tube to a controlled depth (usually 2.54 cm), a small, pre-determined volume of vaccine, immunogenic composition, or compound is delivered to the embryo, and then the needle is withdrawn and cleansed in a sterilization wash. Methods of *in ovo* vaccine and gene delivery can be found in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,458,630; RE 35973; 6,668,753; 6,601,534; 6,506,385; 6,395,961; 6,286,455; 6,244,214; 6,240,877; 6,032,612; 5,784,992; 5,699,751; 5,438,954; 5,339,766; 5,176,101; 5,136,979; 5,056,464; 4,903,635; 4,681,063; U.S. Application Serial Nos. 10/686,762, filed on October 16, 2003; 10/216,427, filed on August 9, 2002; 10/074,714, filed on February 13, 2002; and 10/043,025, filed on January 9, 2002, the contents of which are expressly incorporated by reference. Accordingly, the invention contemplates a device or apparatus for *in ovo* delivery or administration of the recombinant vectors, vaccine or immunogenic compositions described herein. The device or apparatus can optionally comprise the recombinant human adenovirus vectors or immunogenic compositions of the present invention, i.e. can be pre-loaded with the vectors or immunogenic compositions for *in ovo* administration into an avian.

The invention also comprehends sequential administration of inventive compositions or sequential performance of herein methods, e.g., periodic administration of inventive compositions such as in the course of therapy or treatment for a condition and/or booster administration of immunological compositions and/or in prime-boost regimens; and, the time and manner for sequential administrations can be ascertained without undue experimentation.

Further, the invention comprehends compositions and methods for making and using vectors, including methods for producing gene products and/or immunological products and/or antibodies *in vivo* and/or *in vitro* and/or *ex vivo* (e.g., the latter two being, for instance, after isolation therefrom from cells from a host that has had an administration according to the invention, e.g., after optional expansion of such cells), and uses for such gene and/or immunological products and/or antibodies, including in diagnostics, assays, therapies, treatments, and the like.

Vector compositions are formulated by admixing the vector with a suitable carrier or diluent; and, gene product and/or immunological product and/or antibody compositions are likewise formulated by admixing the gene and/or immunological product and/or antibody with a suitable carrier or diluent; *see, e.g.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,990,091, WO 99/60164, WO 98/00166, documents cited therein, and other documents cited herein, and other teachings herein (for instance, with respect to carriers, diluents and the like).

In such compositions, the recombinant vectors may be in admixture with a suitable veterinarily or pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent, or excipient such as sterile water, physiological saline, glucose or the like. The compositions can also be lyophilized. The compositions can contain auxiliary substances, such as wetting or emulsifying agents, pH buffering agents, adjuvants, gelling or viscosity enhancing additives, preservatives, flavoring agents, colors, and the like, depending upon the route of administration and the preparation desired.

DMSO has been known to enhance the potency of vaccine and immunogenic compositions, particularly in regard to *in ovo* delivery of vectors or immunogenic compositions comprising vectors. DMSO is thought to enhance the potency of vaccines by increasing the permeability of cellular membranes (Oshop et al, 2003). Other agents or additives that are capable of permeabilizing cells, reducing the viscosity of amniotic fluid, and exhibiting a higher compliance rate as compared to DMSO can be used in the formulation of vaccines or immunogenic compositions, especially when administered by *in ovo* delivery. Absorption of a variety of proteins, such as insulin, leptin, and somatotropin, have been shown to be enhanced by surfactants such as tetradecyl maltoside (TDM) without

appreciable side effects, following intranasal administration (Arnold, et al, 2004). The present invention therefore comprehends the use of TDM in the methods and compositions described herein.

Formulations containing 0.125% TDM can cause moderate alterations in cell morphology, while higher concentrations of TDM (i.e., 0.5%) can transiently induce more extensive morphological changes. TDM is believed to enhance vector delivery in an *in ovo* setting due to the viscous nasal mucus in mammals and amniotic fluid of embryonated avian eggs. The safety profile of TDM as described in Arnold, et al (2004) is also particularly advantageous to promote the health of immunized avians and compliance for entering the food chain.

The quantity of vector to be administered will vary for the subject and condition being treated and will vary from one or a few to a few hundred or thousand micrograms of body weight per day and preferably the dose of vaccine or immunogenic composition being chosen preferably between 10^1 - 10^6 plaque forming units (PFU), preferably 10^2 - 10^5 PFU per bird. For injection, vaccines containing the above titer should be diluted with a pharmaceutically or veterinarily acceptable liquid such as physiological saline to a final volume of approximately 0.1 ml or 0.01 ml in the case of wing web administration. The vectors and methods of the present invention permit vaccination *in ovo* and vaccination of 1-day old-chicks, as well as vaccination of older chicks and adults.

A vector can be non-invasively administered to an avian subject in an amount to achieve the amounts stated for gene product (e.g., epitope, antigen, therapeutic, and/or antibody) compositions. Of course, the invention envisages dosages below and above those exemplified herein, and for any composition to be administered to an avian subject, including the components thereof, and for any particular method of administration, it is preferred to determine therefor: toxicity, such as by determining the lethal dose (LD) and LD₅₀ in a suitable avian model; and, the dosage of the composition(s), concentration of components therein and timing of administering the composition(s), which elicit a suitable response, such as by titrations of sera and analysis thereof, e.g., by ELISA and/or seroneutralization analysis. Such determinations do not require undue experimentation from the knowledge of the skilled artisan, this disclosure and the documents cited herein.

Recombinant vectors can be administered in a suitable amount to obtain *in vivo* expression corresponding to the dosages described herein and/or in herein cited documents. For instance, suitable ranges for viral suspensions can be determined empirically. If more than one gene product is expressed by more than one recombinant, each recombinant can be

administered in these amounts; or, each recombinant can be administered such that there is, in combination, a sum of recombinants comprising these amounts.

In vector or plasmid compositions employed in the invention, dosages can be as described in documents cited herein or as described herein or as in documents referenced or cited in herein cited documents. Advantageously, the dosage should be a sufficient amount of plasmid to elicit a response analogous to compositions wherein the antigen(s) are directly present; or to have expression analogous to dosages in such compositions; or to have expression analogous to expression obtained *in vivo* by recombinant compositions.

However, the dosage of the composition(s), concentration of components therein and timing of administering the composition(s), which elicit a suitable immunological response, can be determined by methods such as by antibody titrations of sera, *e.g.*, by ELISA and/or seroneutralization assay analysis. Such determinations do not require undue experimentation from the knowledge of the skilled artisan, this disclosure and the documents cited herein. And, the time for sequential administrations can be likewise ascertained with methods ascertainable from this disclosure, and the knowledge in the art, without undue experimentation.

The immunogenic or immunological compositions contemplated by the invention can also contain an adjuvant. Suitable adjuvants include fMLP (N-formyl-methionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine; U.S. Patent No. 6,017,537) and/or acrylic acid or methacrylic acid polymer and/or a copolymer of maleic anhydride and of alkenyl derivative. The acrylic acid or methacrylic acid polymers can be cross-linked, *e.g.*, with polyalkenyl ethers of sugars or of polyalcohols. These compounds are known under the term "carbomer" (*Pharmeuropa*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 1996). A person skilled in the art may also refer to U.S. Patent No. 2,909,462 (incorporated by reference), which discusses such acrylic polymers cross-linked with a polyhydroxylated compound containing at least 3 hydroxyl groups: in one embodiment, a polyhydroxylated compound contains not more than 8 hydroxyl groups; in another embodiment, the hydrogen atoms of at least 3 hydroxyls are replaced with unsaturated aliphatic radicals containing at least 2 carbon atoms; in other embodiments, radicals contain from about 2 to about 4 carbon atoms, *e.g.*, vinyls, allyls and other ethylenically unsaturated groups. The unsaturated radicals can themselves contain other substituents, such as methyl. The products sold under the name Carbopol® (Noveon Inc., Ohio, USA) are particularly suitable for use as an adjuvant. They are cross-linked with an allyl sucrose or with allylpentaerythritol, as to which, mention is made of the products Carbopol® 974P, 934P, and 971P.

As to the copolymers of maleic anhydride and of alkenyl derivative, mention is made of the EMA® products (Monsanto), which are copolymers of maleic anhydride and of ethylene, which may be linear or cross-linked, for example cross-linked with divinyl ether. Also, reference may be made to U.S. Patent No. 6,713,068 and Regelson, W. et al., 1960; incorporated by reference).

Cationic lipids containing a quaternary ammonium salt are described in U.S. Patent No. 6,713,068, the contents of which are incorporated by reference, can also be used in the methods and compositions of the present invention. Among these cationic lipids, preference is given to DMRIE (N-(2-hydroxyethyl)-N,N-dimethyl-2,3-bis(tetradecyloxy)-1-propane ammonium; WO96/34109), advantageously associated with a neutral lipid, advantageously DOPE (dioleoyl-phosphatidyl-ethanol amine; Behr J. P., 1994), to form DMRIE-DOPE.

A recombinant vaccine or immunogenic or immunological composition can also be formulated in the form of an oil-in-water emulsion. The oil-in-water emulsion can be based, for example, on light liquid paraffin oil (European Pharmacopea type); isoprenoid oil such as squalane, squalene, EICOSANETM or tetratetracontane; oil resulting from the oligomerization of alkene(s), *e.g.*, isobutene or decene; esters of acids or of alcohols containing a linear alkyl group, such as plant oils, ethyl oleate, propylene glycol di(caprylate/caprata), glyceryl tri(caprylate/caprata) or propylene glycol dioleate; esters of branched fatty acids or alcohols, *e.g.*, isostearic acid esters. The oil advantageously is used in combination with emulsifiers to form the emulsion. The emulsifiers can be nonionic surfactants, such as esters of sorbitan, mannide (*e.g.*, anhydromannitol oleate), glycerol, polyglycerol, propylene glycol, and oleic, isostearic, ricinoleic, or hydroxystearic acid, which are optionally ethoxylated, and polyoxypropylene-polyoxyethylene copolymer blocks, such as the Pluronic® products, *e.g.*, L121. The adjuvant can be a mixture of emulsifier(s), micelle-forming agent, and oil such as that which is available under the name Provax® (IDEC Pharmaceuticals, San Diego, CA).

The recombinant adenovirus, or recombinant adenoviral vector expressing one or more antigen or immunogen of interest, *e.g.*, vector according to this disclosure, can be preserved and/or conserved and stored either in liquid form, at about 5°C, or in lyophilized or freeze-dried form, in the presence of a stabilizer. Freeze-drying can be according to well-known standard freeze-drying procedures. The pharmaceutically acceptable stabilizers may be SPGA (sucrose phosphate glutamate albumin; Bovarnick, et al., 1950), carbohydrates (*e.g.*, sorbitol, mannitol, lactose, sucrose, glucose, dextran, trehalose), sodium glutamate (Tsvetkov, T. et al., 1983; Israeli, E. et al., 1993), proteins such as peptone, albumin or

casein, protein containing agents such as skimmed milk (Mills, C.K. et al., 1988; Wolff, E. et al., 1990), and buffers (e.g., phosphate buffer, alkaline metal phosphate buffer). An adjuvant and/or a vehicle or excipient may be used to make soluble the freeze-dried preparations.

The invention will now be further described by way of the following non-limiting Examples, given by way of illustration of various embodiments of the invention and are not meant to limit the present invention in any fashion.

EXAMPLES

Example 1: Construction of an Ad vector encoding the A/Panama/2007/99 HA

The influenza virus strain, A/Panama/2007/99 (H3N2) (SEQ ID NOs: 1, 2), selected for vaccine production in 2003-2004, was provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The hemagglutinin (HA) gene was cloned by reverse transcription of the influenza RNA, followed by amplification of the HA gene with polymerase chain reaction (PCR) using the following primers in Table 1.

Table 1: Primers Used in Construction of Ad vectors

Primer	Sequence
5' HA	5'-CACACAGGTACCGCCATGAAGACTATCATTGCTTTGAGC-3' (SEQ ID NO: 9)
3' HA	5'-CACACAGGTACCTCAAATGCAAATGTTGCACC-3' (SEQ ID NO: 10)

These primers contain sequences that anneal to the 5' and 3' ends of the A/Panama/2007/99 HA gene, as well as sequences corresponding to an eukaryotic ribosomal binding site (Kozak, 1986) immediately upstream from the HA initiation ATG codon, and *Kpn*I sites for subsequent cloning. The *Kpn*I fragment containing the full-length HA gene was inserted into the *Kpn*I site of pShuttle-CMV (He et al., 1998) (provided by T. He) in the correct orientation under transcriptional control of the human cytomegalovirus (CMV) early promoter. An E1/E3-defective Ad5 vector encoding the A/Panama/2007/99 HA (AdPNM2007/99.H3) was generated in human 293 cells using a simplified recombination system as described (Zeng et al., 2001).

The AdPNM2007/99.H3 vector was validated by sequencing both 5' and 3' junctions between the HA insert and vector. HI antibodies against A/Panama/2007/99 were elicited in mice after intranasal administration of AdPNM2007/99.H3.

Example 2. Immunization of chickens by *in ovo* and intramuscular injection of a recombinant Ad vector

Immunization of chickens by inoculation of a human Ad-vectored vaccine has not been heretofore reported. Since Ad5 is not naturally found in birds, this vector was believed

to be unable to infect and/or replicate in chicken cells efficiently. Surprisingly, serum HI titers of 512 were achieved in all 3 chickens two weeks after intramuscular injection of AdPNM2007/99.H3 (Figure 1).

When AdPNM2007/99.H3 vectors were injected into 9-day-old and 18-day-old embryonated chicken eggs, serum HI titers of 8 and 16 were achieved in the former, and HI titers of <4, 4, and 8 were achieved in the latter two weeks post-hatch. The results suggest that the E1/E3-defective human Ad5 vector can be used as a vaccine carrier in avians due to its competence to transduce and inability to replicate in avian cells. The relatively low HI titers induced by *in ovo* vaccination may be attributed to, among other things, the dosage and the age of the embryos. The Ad5 vector may have transduced part of the chicken embryo through binding of its fiber to the coxsackievirus and adenovirus receptor (CAR) found on the surface of chicken cells (Tan et al., 2001). An immune response can be elicited in chickens following transduction of only a small number of cells, because Ad is a potent vector capable of protecting the vector DNA by disrupting endosomes after internalization (Curiel, 1994). In addition, at least one of the Ad components, the hexon, is highly immunogenic and confers adjuvant activity to exogenous antigens (Molinier-Frenkel et al., 2002).

The AdPNM2007/99.H3 vector was injected into the amnion of 9-day-old (Group 1) and 18-day-old (Group 2) embryonated chicken eggs, respectively, in a volume of 200 μ l at a dose of 5×10^{10} pfu per egg. There were 6 eggs per group; however, only 2 birds hatched in Group 1 and 3 birds in Group 2. Serum HI titers were determined as described (Van Kampen et al., 2005) 2 weeks post-hatch. In Group 3, the AdPNM2007/99.H3 vector was injected intramuscularly into three 4-week-old chickens in a volume of 100 μ l at a dose of 2.5×10^{10} pfu per animal. HI titers were determined two weeks post-immunization.

In Group 1 (*in ovo* immunization of 9-day-old embryos), HI titers of 8 and 16 were achieved; in Group 2 (*in ovo* immunization of 18-day-old embryos), HI titers of <4 (arbitrarily assigned a titer of 2), 4, and 8 were achieved; and in Group 3 (intramuscular immunization of 4-week-old chickens), HI titers of 512 were achieved in all three birds. Figure 1 shows the HI titers on log₂ scale. The squares correspond to HI titers in individual birds in Group 1; while the triangles correlate to HI titers in individual birds in Group 2. The circles correspond to HI titers in individual birds in Group 3.

Example 3. Construction of an Ad vector encoding the A/Turkey/Wisconsin/68 H gene (AdTW68.H5)

The DNA template of the A/Turkey/WI/68 H (SEQ ID NOs: 3, 4) encoding the H of the AI virus strain, was provided by USDA Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory, Athens GA, and was PCR amplified using the primers shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Primers Used in Construction of Ad vectors

Primer	Sequence
5' HA	5'CACACAAAGCTTGCCGCCATGGAAAGAATAGTGATTGC3' (SEQ ID NO: 10)
3' HA	5'CACACAGGATCCATCTGAACTCACAATCCTAGATGC3' (SEQ ID NO: 11)

These primers contain sequences that anneal to the 5' and 3' ends of the A/Turkey/Wisconsin/68 H gene, an eukaryotic ribosomal binding site (Kozak, 1986) immediately upstream from the H initiation ATG codon, and unique restriction sites for subsequent cloning. The fragment containing the full-length H gene was inserted into the HindIII-BamHI site of the shuttle plasmid pAdApt (provided by Crucell, Leiden, The Netherlands) in the correct orientation under transcriptional control of the human cytomegalovirus (CMV) early promoter. An RCA-free, E1/E3-defective Ad vector encoding the A/Turkey/Wisconsin/68 H gene (AdTW68.H5) was subsequently generated in human PER.C6 cells (provided by Crucell) by co-transfection of pAdApt-TW68.H5 with the Ad5 backbone plasmid pAdEasy1 (He et al., 1998) as described (Shi et al., 2001). The AdTW68.H5 vector was validated by sequencing both 5' and 3' junctions between the H insert and the vector backbone.

Ad-vectored *in ovo* AI vaccines may be produced rapidly and mass-administered into chicken populations within the context of a superb safety profile in response to an emerging AI pandemic. Large-scale production of RCA-free Ad5 vectors in the well-characterized PER.C6 cell line in serum-free suspension bioreactors (Lewis, 2006) in conjunction with chromatography-mediated purification (Konz, 2005) and buffers that do not require freezers for long-term storage (Evans, 2004) should greatly reduce the production costs of Ad5 vectors. The use of cultured cells instead of embryonated eggs as a substrate for AI vaccine production is significant, particularly during an AI outbreak when fertile eggs may be in short supply. This Ad5-vectored AI vaccine is in compliance with a DIVA strategy because the vector only encodes the viral HA. Thus, analysis of serum HI antibodies together with measurement of anti-AI nucleoprotein by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay would allow rapid determination of exposure to the AI vaccine or virus.

Although an aerosol AI vaccine may be developed by expressing HA from a Newcastle disease virus vector (Swayne, 2003) or a reassortant influenza virus containing a

non-pathogenic influenza virus backbone (Lee, 2004), the RCA-free Ad5-vectored *in ovo* AI vaccine provides a unique platform capable of arresting HPAI virus infections in immunized birds through automated delivery of a uniform dose of non-replicating AI vaccine that is compatible with a DIVA strategy. Unlike replicating recombinant vectors that are associated with the risk of generating revertants and allow spread of genetically modified organisms in both target and non-target species in the environment, the RCA-free Ad5 vectors will not propagate in the field. In contrast to the reassortant AI virus vaccine that may generate undesirable further reassortments with a concurrently circulating wild influenza virus (Hilleman, 2002), it is not possible for the DNA genome of Ad5 to undergo reassortment with the segmented RNA genome of an influenza virus.

Example 4. *In ovo* inoculation of AdTW68.H5

In ovo inoculation was performed as described (Senne, 1998; Sharma et al., 1982). Before inoculation all embryos were candled for viability, and the site of inoculation marked and disinfected with a solution of 70% ethyl alcohol containing 3.5% iodine. A hole was made in the shell using a rotating drill equipped with a pointed tip. Inoculation was performed by the amnion-allantoic route by use of 1 ml syringes. After inoculation, the hole was sealed with melted paraffin.

Example 5. Serology post-inoculation of AdTW68.H5

AI strain A/Turkey/WI/68 was passaged in SPF embryonated chicken eggs to achieve a titer of 10^6 embryo infective doses 50% /ml. Amnioallantoic fluids were tested for hemagglutinating activity. Antibody titers in individual serum samples were determined by hemagglutination inhibition using 4 hemagglutinating units of the AI virus as described (Swayne et al., 1998, Thayer et al., 1998).

Example 6. Sampling and quantification of AI genomes

Oro-pharyngeal samples from individual birds were suspended in 1.0 ml of brain heart infusion medium (Difco, Detroit, Mich.) and stored at -70°C. RNA was extracted by using the RNeasy mini kit (Qiagen). Quantitative real-time RT-PCR was performed with primers specific for type A influenza virus matrix RNA, as described previously (Spackman, 2002). Viral RNA was interpolated from the cycle thresholds by using standard curves generated from known amounts of control A/Ck/Queretaro/14588-19/95 RNA ($10^{1.0}$ to $10^{6.0}$ EID₅₀/mL).

Example 7. Immunization of chickens by *in ovo* inoculation of AdTW68.H5 followed by post-hatch boost

Immunization of chickens by inoculation was accomplished by administering 300 µl of the AdTW68.H5 containing 10^{11} viral particles/ml (vp/ml) into SPF embryonated eggs on

days 10 or 18 of embryonation. Hatched chicks of each group were equally divided into two groups: half of the chickens were revaccinated via the nasal route with the same dose of AdTW68.H5 at day 15 post-hatch, and the remaining chickens did not receive a booster application post-hatch.

5 The HI antibody titers detected in sera obtained at day 28 post-hatch from these bird groups are shown in Fig. 2. Chicks vaccinated *in ovo* on day 10 of embryonation showed HI titers varying between 2 and 7 log₂ (mean of 4.2); chickens vaccinated at day 10 of embryonation with post-hatch booster application showed HI titers varying between 2 and 9 log₂ (mean of 5.5); chicks vaccinated at day 18 of embryonation showed titers varying
10 between 2 and 9 log₂ (mean of 5.5); and chickens vaccinated at day 18 of embryonation and boosted at day 15 post-hatch showed HI values between 2 and 8 log₂ (mean of 5.7). Overall, *in ovo* administration of this human Ad-vectored AI vaccine induced a robust immune response against AI in chickens, whereas intranasal instillation of this vectored vaccine into chickens, as recently demonstrated (Gao, 2006), is ineffective.

15 Example 8. In ovo inoculation of AdTW68.H5 protects against lethal challenge with the highly pathogenic avian influenza strain HPAI A/Ck/Queretaro/19/95 (H5N2)

19 SPF chicken embryos were immunized by the *in ovo* route at day 18 of incubation with the same dose of AdTW68.H5 as described in Example 7. Hatched chickens were individually identified by wing band. A group of 12 chickens was boosted via the nasal route
20 at day 15 after hatch and the remaining 7 chickens were not boosted. Blood samples were obtained from each wing-banded bird at days 23 and 29 of age and tested by HI for antibodies against avian influenza strain A/Turkey/Wisconsin/68. Overall, the HI antibody titers detected in these birds (Fig. 3) were similar to the values obtained in the previous trial (Fig. 2). Most birds achieved titers ≥ 5 log₂. Chicks inoculated only *in ovo* achieved titers
25 between 5 and 9 log₂ at day 23 post-hatch (Fig 3). Those chickens either maintained or increased their antibody titers by day 29 post-hatch. *In ovo* vaccination in conjunction with intranasal booster showed antibody titers varying between 3 and 9 log₂ by day 23 post-hatch (Fig 3). Similarly as in the previous group, most chicks had increased their titers by 1 or 2 log₂ steps by day 29 post-hatch.

30 Challenge was performed in biosafety level 3+ facilities by oro-pharyngeal inoculation with 10⁵ embryo infective doses (EID₅₀) of the HPAI A/Ck/Queretaro/19/95 (H5N2) (Horimoto, 1995, Garcia, 1998). The H gene of this challenge strain has 90.1% nucleotide identity and 94.4% deduced amino acid similarity with the H of AI strain

A/Tk/WI/68 used in the Ad-vectored vaccine (GenBank accessions U79448 & U79456) (SEQ ID NOs: 5, 6, 7, 8).

A total of 30 chickens, including 7 chicks vaccinated *in ovo* and 12 chicks vaccinated *in ovo* and subsequently boosted intranasally at day 15 post-hatch, as well as 11 unvaccinated controls, were challenged at day 34 post-hatch.

Challenged birds were observed daily for morbidity and mortality throughout an experimental period of 14 days. Clinical signs of AI, including swelling of comb and wattles, conjunctivitis, anorexia and hypothermia, were observed two days post-challenge in 10 of 11 control birds. Two days later, most survivors in the control group exhibited comb necrosis, swelling of wattles, diarrhea, dehydration, lethargy, and subcutaneous hemorrhages of the leg shank. No signs of disease were developed in any of the vaccinated birds. All birds vaccinated with the AdTW68.H5 (19/19) (*in ovo* only and *in ovo* + nasal boost) survived the challenge (Fig. 4).

Viral genomes of the A/Chicken/Queretaro/19/95 in challenged birds were quantitatively determined by real-time reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) in oropharyngeal swabs collected 2, 4, and 7 days post-challenge. There was a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in the concentration of AI viral genomes between vaccinated and unvaccinated chickens 7 days after challenge (Fig. 5). Absence of detectable viral RNA in immunized birds provides evidence that *in ovo* vaccination elicited an immune response capable of controlling AI virus shedding within a week.

These results collectively show that chickens immunized *in ovo* with RCA-free human Ad vectors encoding H genes from different influenza viruses (human and avian origin) developed HI antibody titers against the homologous AI virus, and were protected against lethal challenge with a highly pathogenic AI virus strain of the same H type.

Example 9. In ovo inoculation of AdTW68.H5 protects against lethal challenge with the highly pathogenic avian influenza strain A/Swan/Mongolia/244L/2005 (H5N1)

To determine whether the AdTW68.H5-vectored AI vaccine can confer protection against a recent H5N1 HPAI virus strain, 31 chickens were vaccinated *in ovo* with the AdTW68.H5 vector at a dose of 2×10^8 ifu. Control groups included 10 chickens vaccinated with an Ad5 vector (AdCMV-tetC) encoding an irrelevant antigen (tetanus toxin C-fragment) (Shi et al., 2001) and 10 chickens which were not exposed to Ad5 vectors.

On D31, control and immunized chickens were challenged with the H5N1 AI virus A/Swan/Mongolia/244L/2005 (the HA of this challenge strain has 89% deduced HA amino acid sequence similarity with the HA of the A/Turkey/Wisconsin/68 strain). As shown in

Fig. 6, *in ovo* immunization induced antibodies within a range of 1 and 6 log₂ on D25. None of the unvaccinated (10/10) and AdCMV-tetC-immunized (10/10) birds produced measurable HI antibodies and all died from AI within 9 days post-challenge, whereas 68% (21/31) of the AdTW68.H5-vaccinated birds survived without clinical signs 10 days after the challenge (Fig. 7). Notably, 7 birds in the immunized group with HI titers of ≥ 3 log₂ (Fig. 6) were still killed by this highly lethal H5N1 AI virus. It is likely that the survival rate against this H5N1 AI virus may be improved by *in ovo* vaccination with an Ad5 vector encoding an HA with closer antigenicity.

These results demonstrate that chickens immunized *in ovo* with an RCA-free human Ad5 vector encoding avian H5 HA could elicit protective immunity against HPAI viruses. Having thus described in detail preferred embodiments of the present invention, it is to be understood that the invention defined by the appended claims is not to be limited by particular details set forth in the above description as many apparent variations thereof are possible without departing from the spirit or scope thereof.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest.
2. The expression vector according to claim 1, wherein the adenoviral DNA sequence is derived from adenovirus serotype 5 (Ad5).
3. The expression vector according to claim 1, wherein the adenoviral DNA sequence is selected from the group consisting of replication-defective adenovirus, non-replicating adenovirus, replication-competent adenovirus, or wild-type adenovirus.
4. The expression vector according to claim 1, wherein the promoter sequence is selected from the group consisting of viral promoters, avian promoters, CMV promoter, SV40 promoter, β -actin promoter, albumin promoter, Elongation Factor 1- α (EF1- α) promoter, PyK promoter, MFG promoter, or Rous sarcoma virus promoter.
5. The expression vector according to claim 1, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.
6. The expression vector according to claim 5, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from one or more avian viruses.
7. The expression vector according to claim 5, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

8. The expression vector of claim 7, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.
- 5 9. The expression vector of claim 7, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.
- 10 10. An immunogenic composition or vaccine for in vivo delivery into an avian subject comprising a veterinarily acceptable vehicle or excipient and a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest.
- 11 11. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 10, wherein the adenoviral DNA sequence is derived from adenovirus serotype 5 (Ad5).
- 15 12. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 10, wherein the adenoviral DNA sequence is selected from the group consisting of replication-defective adenovirus, non-replicating adenovirus, replication-competent adenovirus, or wild-type adenovirus.
- 20 13. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 10, wherein the promoter sequence is selected from the group consisting of viral promoters, avian promoters, CMV promoter, SV40 promoter, β -actin promoter, albumin promoter, Elongation Factor 1- α (EF1- α) promoter, PyK promoter, MFG promoter, or Rous sarcoma virus promoter.
- 25 14. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 10, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, 30 avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian

myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

15. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 10, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from one or more avian viruses.

16. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 10, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

17. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 16, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

18. The immunogenic composition or vaccine of claim 17, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3 or 5.

19. The composition or vaccine of claim 10, further comprising an adjuvant.

20. The composition or vaccine of claim 10, further comprising an additional vaccine.

21. A method of introducing and expressing one or more avian antigens or immunogens in a cell, comprising contacting the cell with a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest., and culturing the cell under conditions sufficient to express the one or more avian antigens or immunogens in the cell.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the cell is a 293 cell.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the cell is a PER.C6 cell.

24. The method of claim 21, wherein the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis

virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from one or more avian viruses.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

29. A method of introducing and expressing one or more avian influenza antigens or immunogens in an avian embryo, comprising contacting the avian embryo with a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest, thereby obtaining expression of the one or more avian influenza antigens or immunogens in the avian embryo.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from one or more avian viruses.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.

34. The method of claim 29 further comprising administering an additional vaccine.

35. The method of claim 29, wherein the contacting occurs by *in ovo* delivery.

36. A method of eliciting an immunogenic response in an avian subject, comprising administering an immunologically effective amount of the composition of any one of claims 10-20 to the avian subject.

37. A method of eliciting an immunogenic response to avian influenza in an avian subject, comprising administering an immunologically effective amount of the composition of any one of claims 10-20 to the avian subject.

38. A method of eliciting an immunogenic response in an avian subject, comprising infecting the avian subject with an immunologically effective amount of an immunogenic composition comprising a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector that comprises and expresses an adenoviral DNA sequence, and a promoter sequence operably linked to a foreign sequence encoding one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest, wherein the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are expressed at a level sufficient to elicit an immunogenic response to the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest in the avian subject.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is derived from avian influenza.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.
42. The method of claim 41, wherein the foreign sequence encoding the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.
43. The method of claim 38 further comprising an additional vaccine.
44. The method of claim 38, wherein the avian subject is infected by intramuscular injection of the wing-web, wing-tip, pectoral muscle, or thigh musculature.
45. The method of claim 38, wherein the avian subject is infected *in ovo*.
46. A method for inoculation of an avian subject, comprising *in ovo* administration of a recombinant human adenovirus containing and expressing an heterologous nucleic acid molecule encoding an antigen of a pathogen of the avian subject.
47. The method of claim 46, wherein the human adenovirus comprises sequences derived from adenovirus serotype 5.
48. The method of claim 46, wherein the human adenovirus comprises sequences derived from replication-defective adenovirus, non-replicating adenovirus, replication-competent adenovirus, or wild-type adenovirus.
49. The method of claim 46, wherein the antigen of a pathogen of the avian is derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.
50. The method of claim 49, wherein the antigen of a pathogen of the avian is derived from avian influenza.

51. The method of claim 50, wherein the avian influenza antigens or immunogens are selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.
52. The method of claim 50, wherein the avian influenza antigens or immunogens are selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.
53. The method of claim 46 further comprising administering an additional vaccine.
54. An *in ovo* administration apparatus for delivery of an immunogenic composition to an avian embryo wherein the apparatus contains a recombinant human adenovirus expression vector expressing one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest, wherein the apparatus delivers the recombinant human adenovirus to the avian embryo.
55. The apparatus of claim 54, wherein the human adenovirus expression vector comprises sequences derived from adenovirus serotype 5.
56. The apparatus of claim 54, wherein the human adenovirus expression vector comprises sequences derived from replication-defective adenovirus, non-replicating human adenovirus, replication-competent adenovirus, or wild-type adenovirus.
57. The apparatus of claim 54, wherein the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza virus, infectious bursal disease virus, Marek's disease virus, avian herpesvirus, infectious laryngotracheitis virus, avian infectious bronchitis virus, avian reovirus, avipox, fowlpox, canarypox, pigeonpox, quailpox, and dovepox, avian polyomavirus, Newcastle Disease virus, avian pneumovirus, avian rhinotracheitis virus, avian reticuloendotheliosis virus, avian retroviruses, avian endogenous virus, avian erythroblastosis virus, avian hepatitis virus, avian anemia virus, avian enteritis virus, Pacheco's disease virus, avian leukemia virus, avian parvovirus, avian rotavirus, avian leukosis virus, avian musculoaponeurotic fibrosarcoma virus, avian myeloblastosis virus, avian myeloblastosis-associated virus, avian myelocytomatosis virus, avian sarcoma virus, or avian spleen necrosis virus.
58. The method of claim 57, wherein the one or more avian antigens or immunogens of interest are derived from avian influenza.

59. The method of claim 58, wherein the avian influenza antigens or immunogens are selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin, nucleoprotein, matrix, or neuraminidase.
60. The method of claim 58, wherein the avian influenza antigens or immunogens of interest is selected from the group consisting of hemagglutinin subtype 3, 5, 7, or 9.
61. The method of claim 58 further comprising administering an additional vaccine.
62. A method of immunizing an avian host comprising inoculation of a non-replicating expression vector that encodes one or more pathogen-derived antigens.

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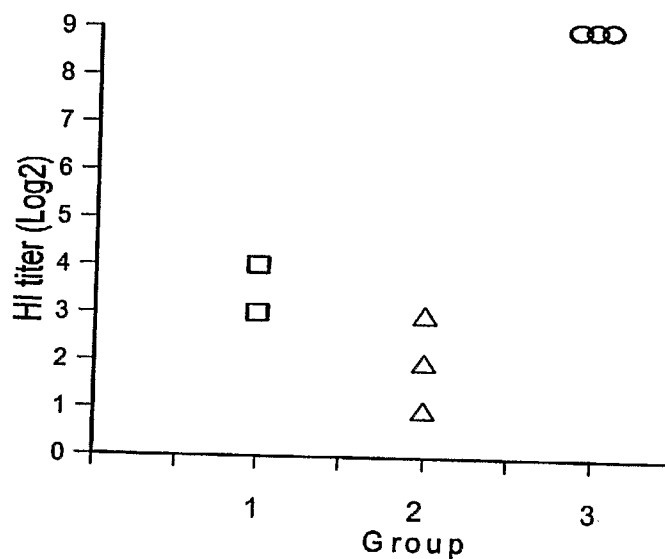


FIGURE 1

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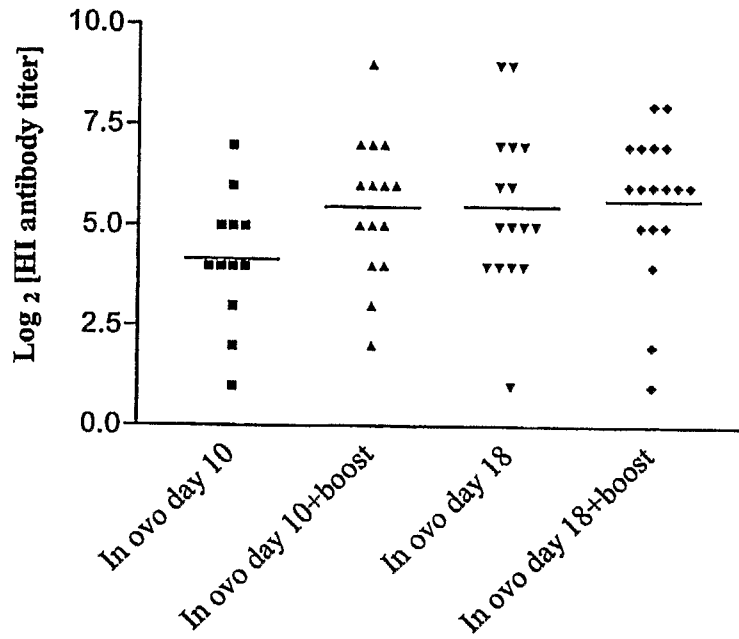


FIGURE 2

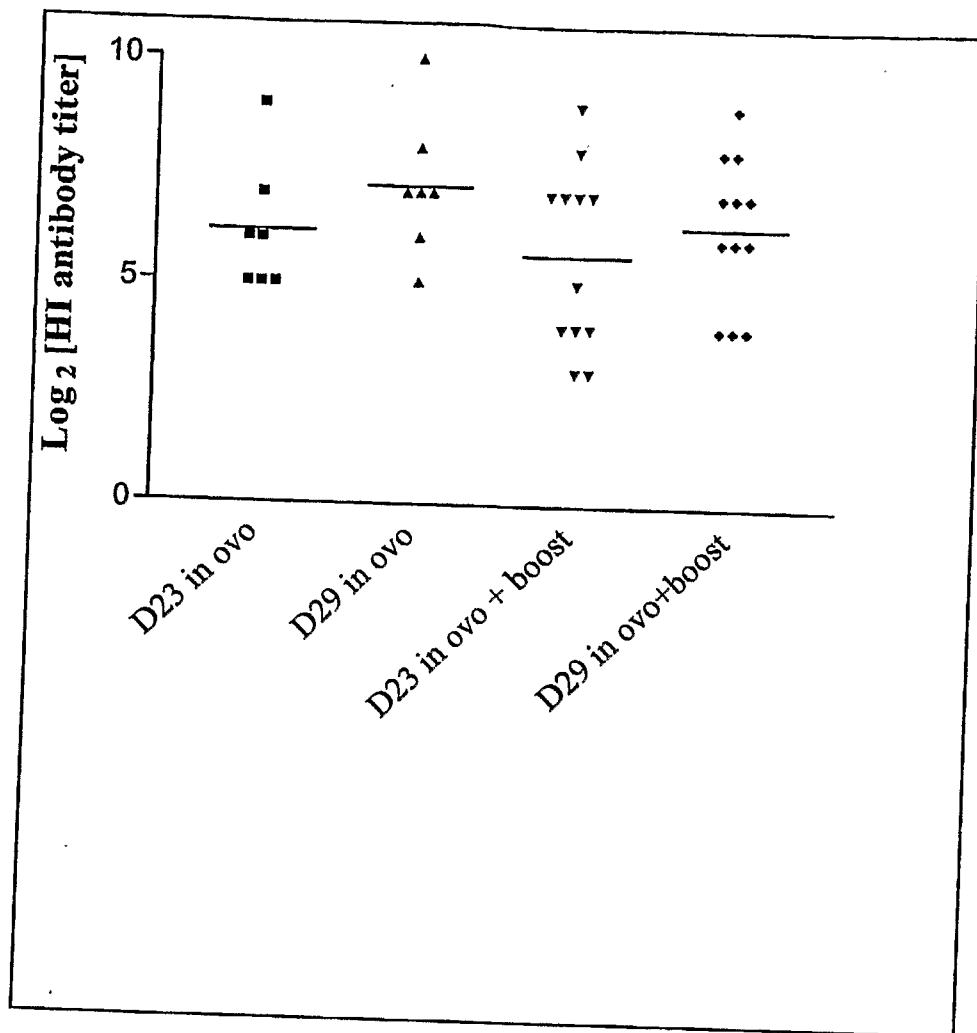


FIGURE 3

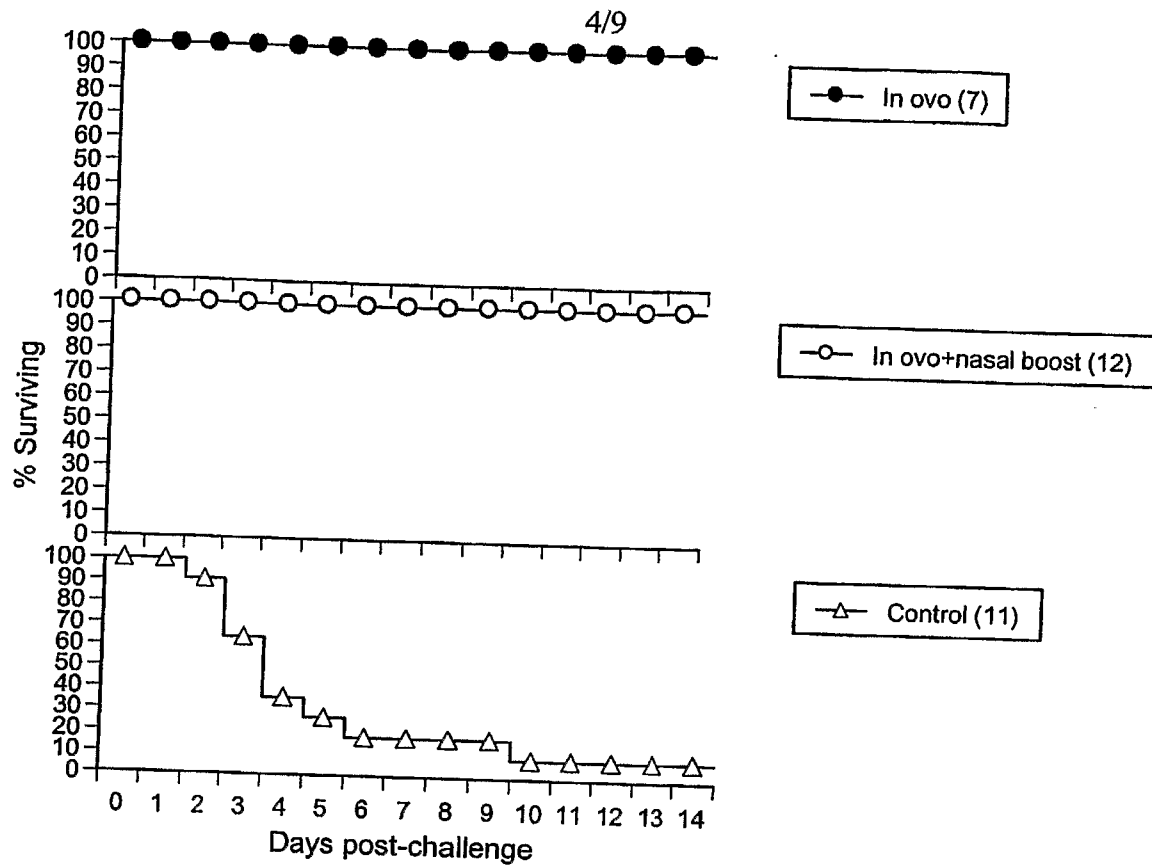


FIGURE 4

5/9

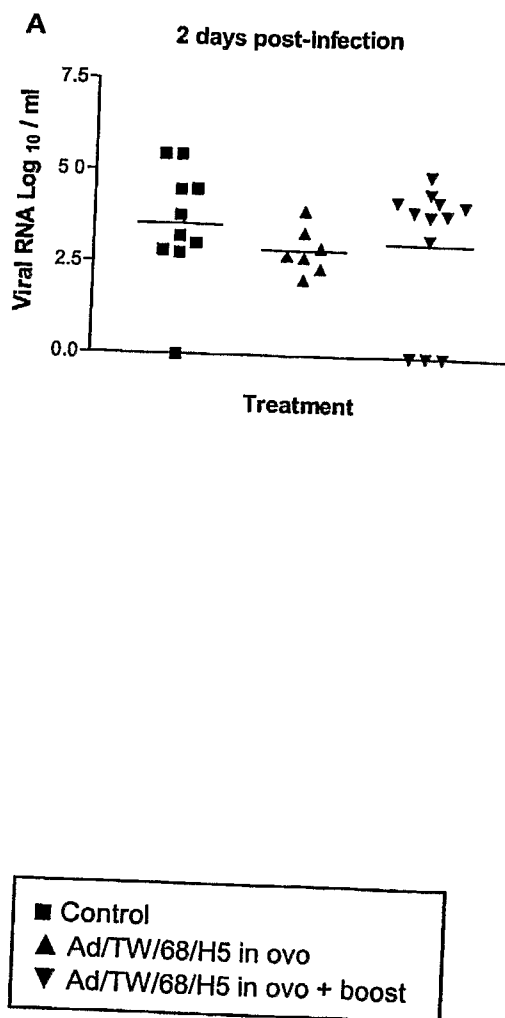


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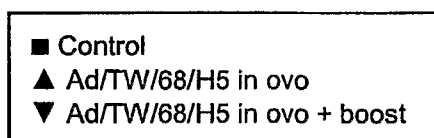


FIGURE 5B

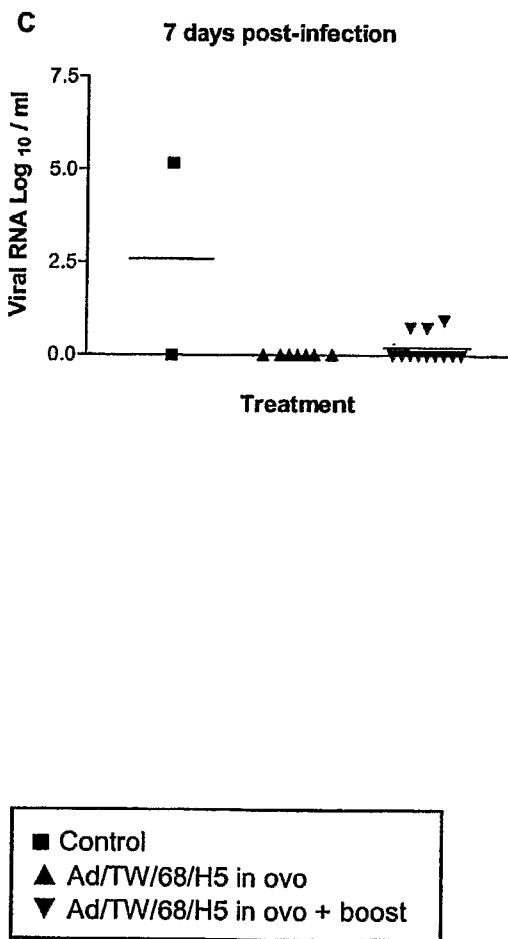


FIGURE 5C

8/9

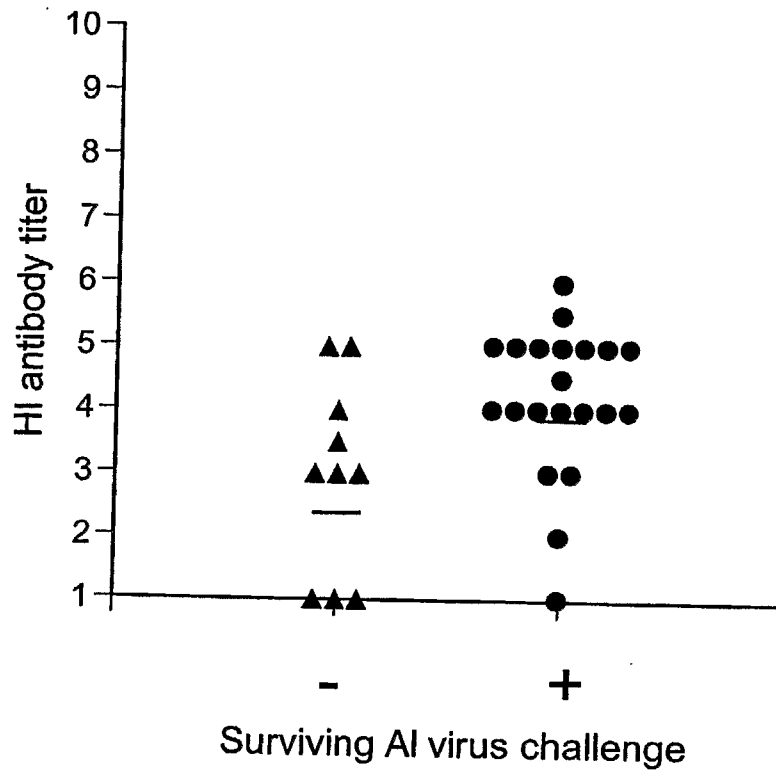


FIGURE 6

9/9

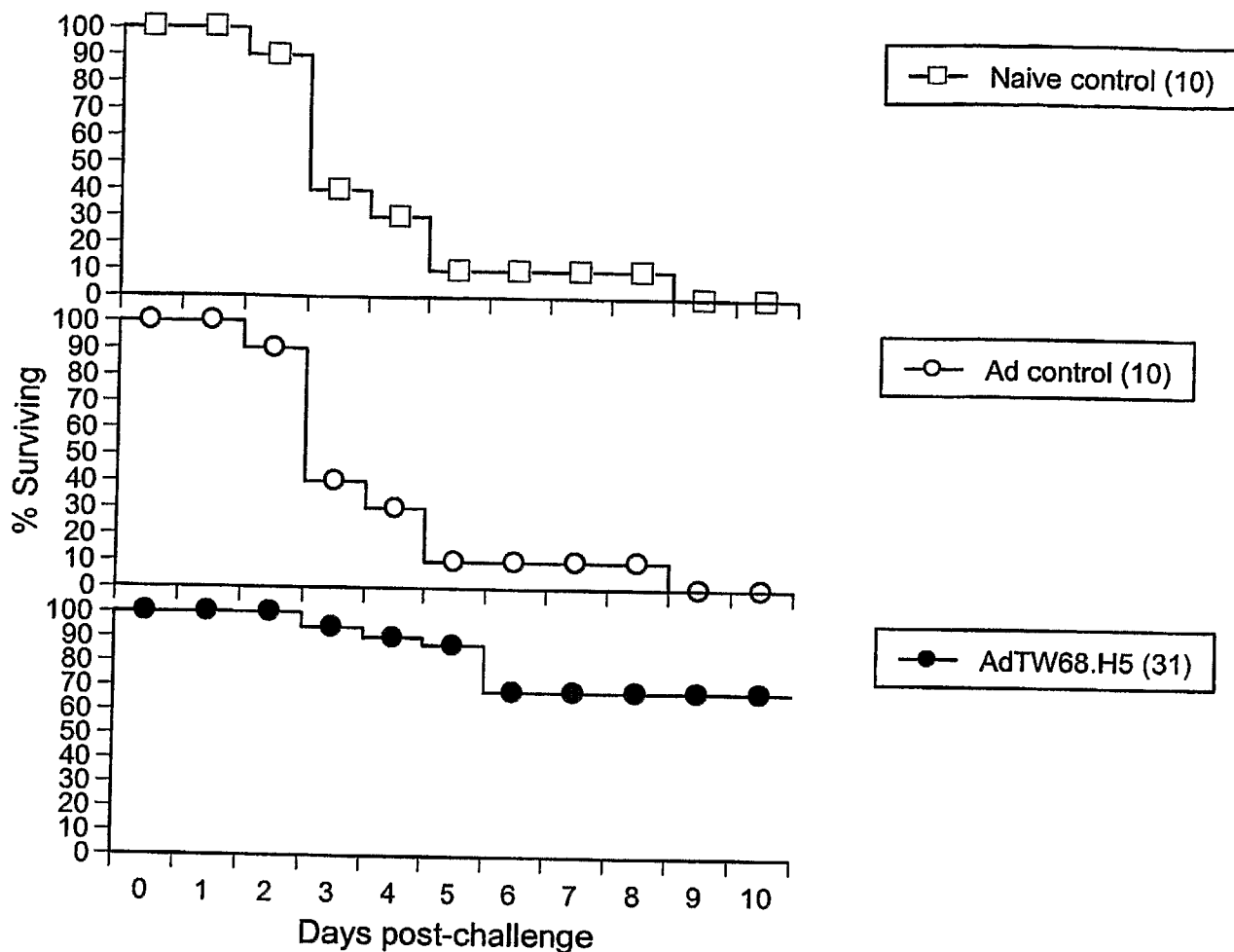


FIGURE 7

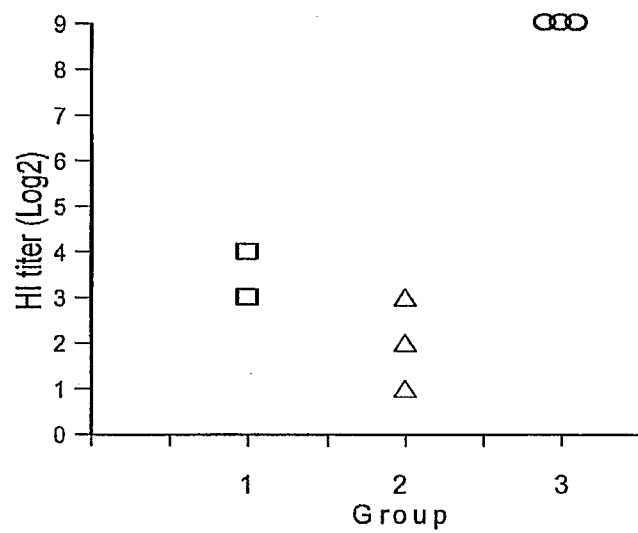


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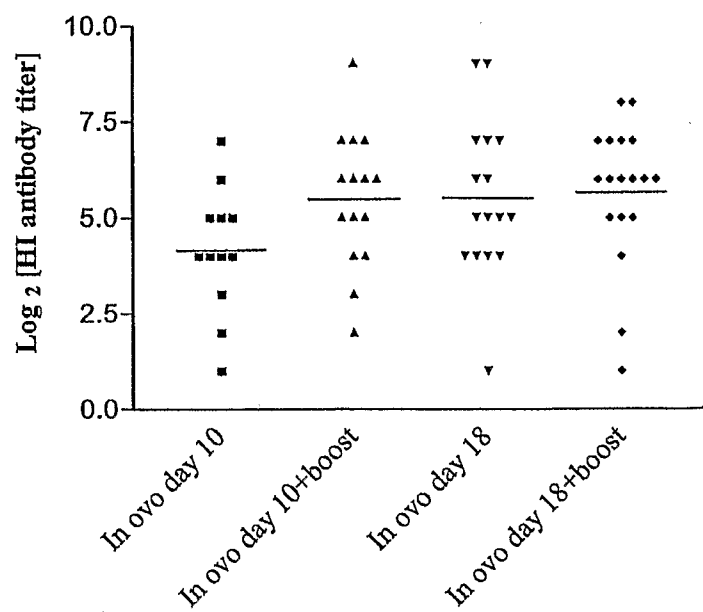


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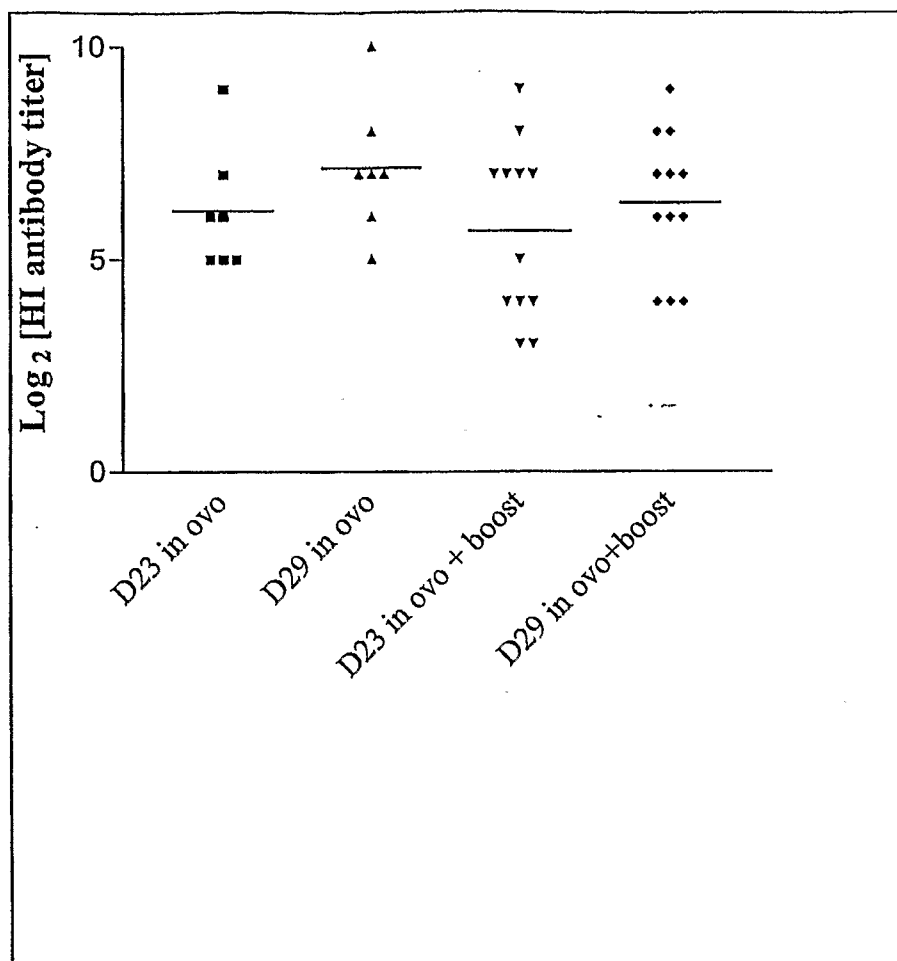


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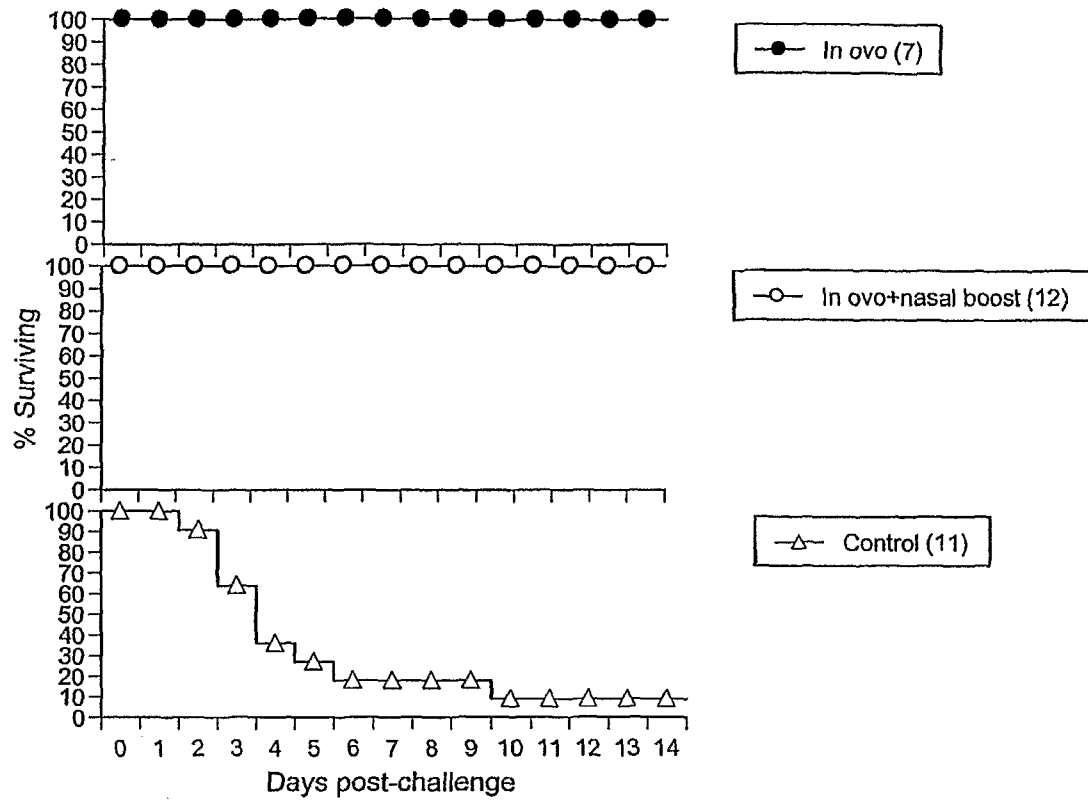


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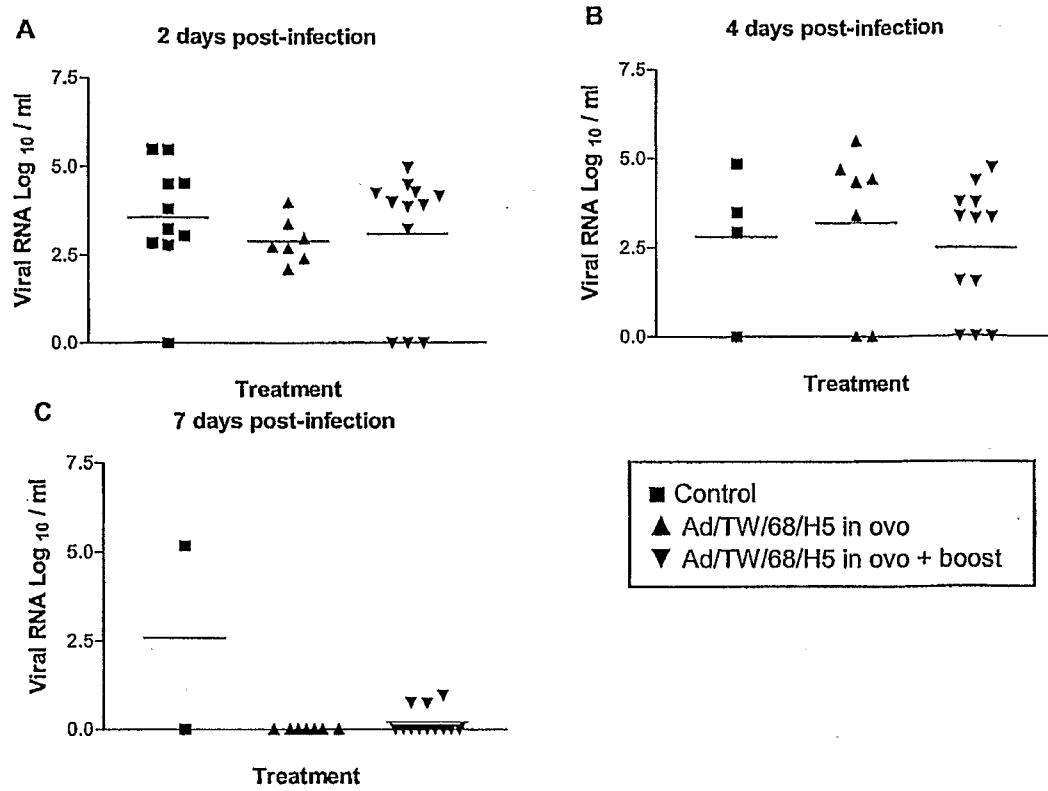


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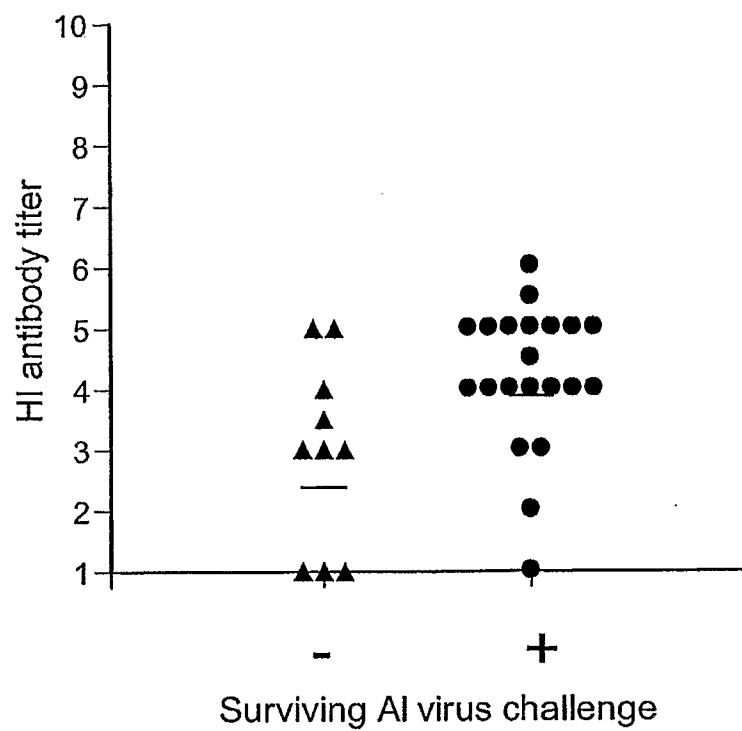


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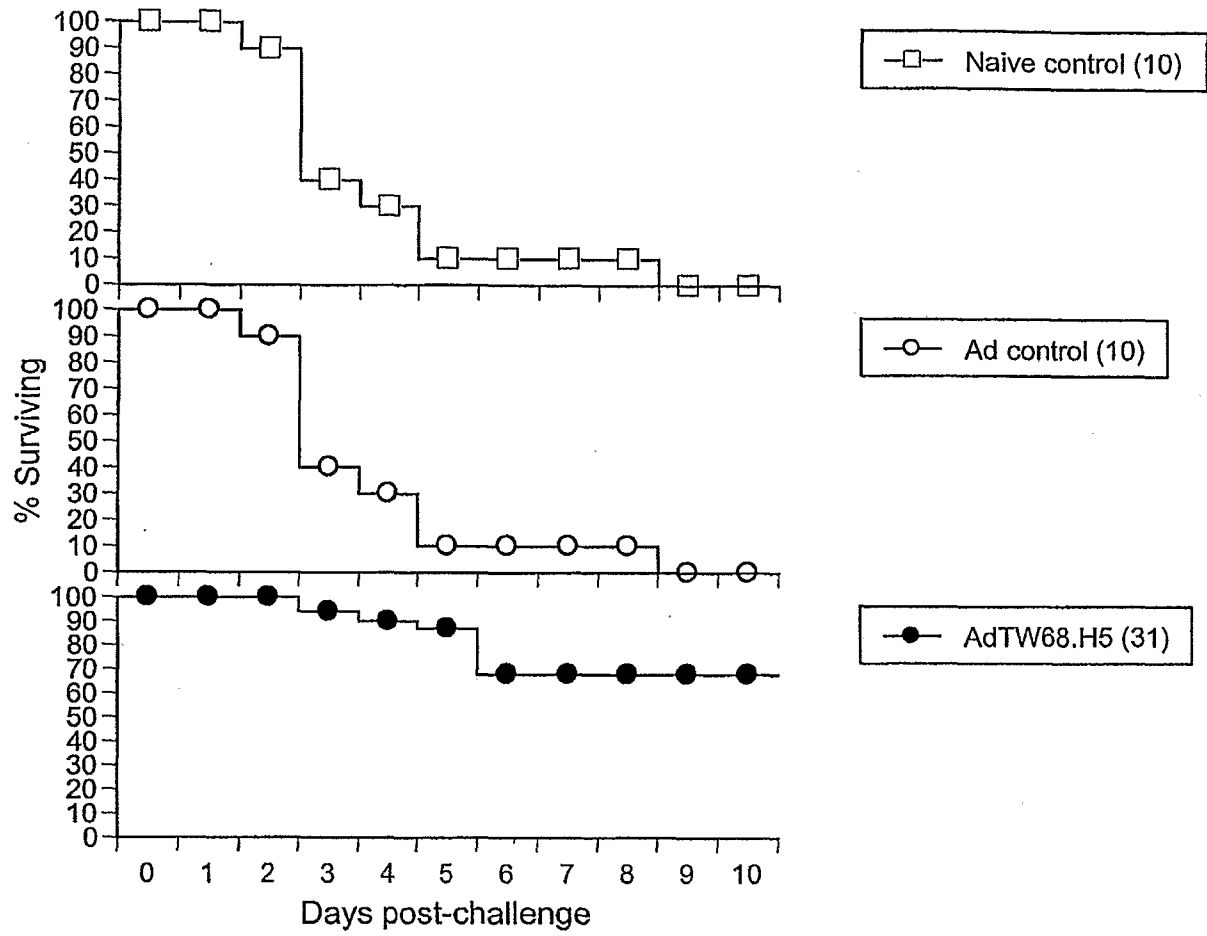


FIGURE 7

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 15 1584 aac aac cgg ttc cag atc aaa ggt gtt gag ctg aag tca gga tac aaa
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20	Gly Val Ala Gln Asn Gly Thr Ser Ser Ala Cys Lys Arg Arg Ser Asn 145	150	155 160
25	Lys Ser Phe Phe Ser Arg Leu Asn Trp Leu His Gln Leu Lys Tyr Lys 165	170	175
30	Tyr Pro Ala Leu Asn Val Thr Met Pro Asn Asn Glu Lys Phe Asp Lys 180	185	190
35	Leu Tyr Ile Trp Gly Val His His Pro Ser Thr Asp Ser Asp Gln Ile 195	200	205
40	Ser Ile Tyr Ala Gln Ala Ser Gly Arg Val Thr Val Ser Thr Lys Arg 210	215	220
45	Ser Gln Gln Thr Val Ile Pro Asn Ile Gly Ser Ser Pro Trp Val Arg 225	230	235 240
50	Gly Val Ser Ser Arg Ile Ser Ile Tyr Trp Thr Ile Val Lys Pro Gly 245	250	255
55	Asp Ile Leu Leu Ile Asn Ser Thr Gly Asn Leu Ile Ala Pro Arg Gly 260	265	270
60	Tyr Phe Lys Ile Arg Ser Gly Lys Ser Ser Ile Met Arg Ser Asp Ala 275	280	285
	Pro Ile Gly Lys Cys Asn Ser Glu Cys Ile Thr Pro Asn Gly Ser Ile 290	295	300
	Pro Asn Asp Lys Pro Phe Gln Asn Val Asn Arg Ile Thr Tyr Gly Ala 305	310	315 320
	Cys Pro Arg Tyr Val Lys Gln Asn Thr Leu Lys Leu Ala Thr Gly Met 325	330	335

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ctg gaa aaa gag cac aac ggg aaa ctc tgc agt ctc aaa gga gtg agg

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Pro Met Cys Asp Glu Phe Leu Asn Val Pro Glu Trp Ser Tyr Ile Val
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Glu Lys Asp Asn Pro Thr Asn Gly Leu Cys Tyr Pro Gly Asp Phe Asn
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Genbank Accession No. U79448

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	816	att aaa aaa gga gat tca gca atc atg aaa agt gaa ctg aat tat ggt
10		Ile Lys Lys Gly Asp Ser Ala Ile Met Lys Ser Glu Leu Asn Tyr Gly 260 265 270
	864	aac tgt gat acc aaa tgt cag acc cca gcg ggt gct ata aat tcc agg
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	912	atg cct ttt cac aat gtc cat cct ttt act att ggg gag tgc ccc aag
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	960	tat gtc aaa tcg aaa aaa cta gtt ctt gca aca ggg cta aga aac gta
25		Tyr Val Lys Ser Lys Lys Leu Val Leu Ala Thr Gly Leu Arg Asn Val 305 310 315 320
	1008	ccc caa aga aaa aga aaa aga aaa aca aga ggc cta ttt gga gca ata
30		Pro Gln Arg Lys Arg Lys Arg Lys Thr Arg Gly Leu Phe Gly Ala Ile 325 330 335
	1056	gcc gga ttc ata gaa gga gga tgg caa gga atg gtg gat gga tgg tat
35		Ala Gly Phe Ile Glu Gly Gly Trp Gln Gly Met Val Asp Gly Trp Tyr 340 345 350
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40		Gly Tyr His His Ser Asn Glu Gln Gly Ser Gly Tyr Gly Glu Asp Asn 355 360 365
	1152	gaa tct aca cag aaa gca atc gat ggg atc act aat aaa gtc aac tca
45		Glu Ser Thr Gln Lys Ala Ile Asp Gly Ile Thr Asn Lys Val Asn Ser 370 375 380
	1200	atc att gac aaa atg aac act caa ttc gaa gcc gtt ggg aaa gaa ttc
50		Ile Ile Asp Lys Met Asn Thr Gln Phe Glu Ala Val Gly Lys Glu Phe 385 390 395 400
	1248	aac aac cta gaa agg aga ata gaa aat ttg aat aag aaa atg gaa gat
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	1296	ggc ttt ata gat gta tgg act tac aat gcg gaa ctt cta gtg ctc atg
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 Tyr Asp Arg Val Arg Leu Gln Leu Arg Asp Asn Ala Lys Glu Leu Gly
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5 Pro Met Cys Asp Glu Phe Leu Asn Val Pro Glu Trp Ser Tyr Ile Val
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10 Asp Tyr Glu Glu Leu Lys His Leu Met Ser Ser Thr Asn His Phe Glu
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15 Lys Ile Gln Ile Phe Pro Arg Ser Ser Trp Ser Asn His Asp Ala Ser
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25 Arg Asn Val Val Trp Leu Ile Lys Lys Asn Asn Val Tyr Arg Thr Ile
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Lys Arg Thr Tyr His Asn Thr Asn Val Glu Asp Leu Leu Ile Leu Trp
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30 Gly Ile His His Pro Asn Asp Ala Ala Glu Gln Ile Lys Leu Tyr Gln
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35 Asn Pro Asn Thr Tyr Val Ser Val Gly Thr Ser Thr Leu Asn Gln Arg
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40 Ser Ile Pro Glu Ile Ala Thr Arg Pro Lys Val Asn Gly Gln Ser Gly
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50 Ile Lys Lys Gly Asp Ser Ala Ile Met Lys Ser Glu Leu Asn Tyr Gly
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60 Met Pro Phe His Asn Val His Pro Phe Thr Ile Gly Glu Cys Pro Lys
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	Tyr Val Lys Ser Lys Lys Leu Val Leu Ala Thr Gly Leu Arg Asn Val	
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10	Ala Gly Phe Ile Glu Gly Gly Trp Gln Gly Met Val Asp Gly Trp Tyr	
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20	Glu Ser Thr Gln Lys Ala Ile Asp Gly Ile Thr Asn Lys Val Asn Ser	
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25	Ile Ile Asp Lys Met Asn Thr Gln Phe Glu Ala Val Gly Lys Glu Phe	
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30	Asn Asn Leu Glu Arg Arg Ile Glu Asn Leu Asn Lys Lys Met Glu Asp	
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35	Gly Phe Ile Asp Val Trp Thr Tyr Asn Ala Glu Leu Leu Val Leu Met	
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40	Glu Asn Glu Arg Thr Leu Asp Leu His Asp Ser Asn Val Lys Lys Leu	
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45	Tyr Asp Arg Val Arg Leu Gln Leu Arg Asp Asn Ala Lys Glu Leu Gly	
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50	Asn Gly Cys Phe Glu Phe Tyr His Lys Cys Asp Asn Glu Cys Met Glu	
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65	Thr Tyr Gln Ile Leu Ser Ile Tyr Ser Thr Val Ala Ser Ser Leu Ala	
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 Genbank Accession No. U79456

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 96 Asp Thr Ile Met Glu Lys Asn Val Thr Val Thr His Ala Gln Asp Ile
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30 ctg gaa aaa gag cac aac ggg aaa ctc tgc agt ctc aaa gga gtg agg
 144 Leu Glu Lys Glu His Asn Gly Lys Leu Cys Ser Leu Lys Gly Val Arg
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35 ccc ctc att ctg aag gat tgc agt gtg gct gga tgg ctt ctt ggg aac
 192 Pro Leu Ile Leu Lys Asp Cys Ser Val Ala Gly Trp Leu Leu Gly Asn
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 240 Pro Met Cys Asp Glu Phe Leu Asn Val Pro Glu Trp Ser Tyr Ile Val
 65 70 75 80

45 gag aag gac aat cca acc aat ggc tta tgt tat ccg gga gac ttc aat
 288 Glu Lys Asp Asn Pro Thr Asn Gly Leu Cys Tyr Pro Gly Asp Phe Asn
 85 90 95

50 gat tat gaa gaa ctg aag tat tta atg agc aac aca aac cat ttt gag
 336 Asp Tyr Glu Glu Leu Lys Tyr Leu Met Ser Asn Thr Asn His Phe Glu
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55 aaa att caa ata atc cct agg aac tct tgg tcc aat cat gat gcc tca
 384 Lys Ile Gln Ile Ile Pro Arg Asn Ser Trp Ser Asn His Asp Ala Ser
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60 tca gga gtg agc tca gca tgc cca tac aat ggt agg tct tcc ttt ttc
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		Phe	Glu	Ser	Asn	Gly	Asn	Phe	Ile	Ala	Pro	Glu	Tyr	Ala	Tyr	Lys	Ile
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		Asn	Cys	Asp	Thr	Lys	Cys	Gln	Thr	Pro	Val	Gly	Ala	Ile	Asn	Ser	Ser
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		Tyr	Val	Lys	Ser	Asp	Lys	Leu	Val	Leu	Ala	Thr	Gly	Leu	Arg	Asn	Val
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 15 Lys Ala Ile Asp Gly Ile Thr Asn Lys Val Asn Ser Ile Ile Asp Lys
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 35 Thr Leu Asp Phe His Asp Ser Tyr Val Lys Asn Leu Tyr Asp Lys Val
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 1392 cga ctc cag ctg aga gat aat gca aaa gaa ttg ggc aat ggg tgt ttg
 40 Arg Leu Gln Leu Arg Asp Asn Ala Lys Glu Leu Gly Asn Gly Cys Leu
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 50 Gly Thr Tyr Asp Tyr Pro Gln Tyr Ser Glu Glu Ser Arg Leu Asn Arg
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