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(54) Title: A METHOD OF EXPRESSION AND AGENTS IDENTIFIED THEREBY

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates generally to a method for the *in vitro* or *in vivo* production, by a eukaryotic host cell, of a protein from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus and, more particularly, to a method for the *in vitro* or *in vivo* production by a eukaryotic host cell of a protein from a virus of the family Paramyxoviradae and agents identified thereby. Still more particularly, said protein is the F, N, P or SH protein, the encoding nucleic acid molecule of which has been optimised for expression in a eukaryotic host cell. In yet another aspect, the present invention relates to a method for modulating the functional activity of an F protein. More particularly, said modulation is predicated on modulation of the functioning of a novel intrasequence cleavage event. In still another aspect, the protein expression product produced in accordance with the optimised expression method of the present invention and the method of modulating F protein functional activity are useful in a range of applications including, but not limited to, the identification, design and/or modification of agents capable of modulating functional activity of the subject protein. The proteins, encoding nucleic acid molecules and agents identified in accordance with the present invention are useful, *inter alia*, in the treatment and/or prophylaxis of viral infections.

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A METHOD OF EXPRESSION AND AGENTS IDENTIFIED THEREBY

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates generally to a method for the *in vitro* or *in vivo* production, by a eukaryotic host cell, of a protein from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus and, more particularly, to a method for the in vitro or in vivo production by a eukaryotic host cell of a protein from a virus of the family Paramyxoviradae and agents identified thereby. Still more particularly, said protein is the F, N, P or SH protein, the encoding nucleic acid molecule of which has been optimised for expression in a eukaryotic host cell. In yet another aspect, the present invention relates to a method for modulating the functional activity of an F protein. More particularly, said modulation is predicated on modulation of the functioning of a novel intrasequence cleavage event. In still another aspect, the protein expression product produced in accordance with the optimised expression method of the present invention and the method of modulating F protein 15 functional activity are useful in a range of applications including, but not limited to, the identification, design and/or modification of agents capable of modulating functional activity of the subject protein. The proteins, encoding nucleic acid molecules and agents identified in accordance with the present invention are useful, inter alia, in the treatment 20 and/or prophylaxis of viral infections.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Bibliographic details of the publications referred to by author in this specification are collected alphabetically at the end of the description.

The reference to any prior art in this specification is not, and should not be taken as, an acknowledgment or any form of suggestion that that prior art forms part of the common general knowledge in Australia.

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Paramyxoviridae describes a family of enveloped viruses which exhibit a non-segmented, negative sense single stranded RNA genome. This family includes some significant pathogens of humans, animals and birds including the causel agents of measles, mumps, Newcastle disease, various respiratory diseases, Rinderpest and canine distemper.

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Within this family exist two subfamilies (Paramyxovirinae and Pneumovirinae). Each subfamily comprises a number of genera - the genera of Pneumovirinae being Pneumovirus. In general, infection by these viruses occurs by fusion of the virus envelope with the plasma membrane of the host cell. Transcription and replication occur in the cytoplasm. Virions mature by budding through the host cell plasma membrane at sites containing the virus envelope proteins. Infected host cells commonly lyse, but temperate and persistent infections also occur. Infection of the host cell commonly results in cell fusion and syncytium formation, inclusions and haemadsorption.

The Pneumovirus genus of Paramyxoviridae differ from Rubulavirus, Morbillivirus and Paramyxovirus genera in that the members lack both haemagglutinin and neuraminidase activity. The Pneumovirus genus includes bovine and human respiratory syncytial virus amongst others. The latter virus is known to cause severe respiratory disease of humans whereas the former is an example of a family member responsible for animal diseases.

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In general terms, the Paramyxovirus virion consists of a helical nucleocapsid, composed of genomic single stranded RNA and proteins NP, P and L, surrounded by an envelope containing a non-glycosylated M protein in the inner layer and two glycoproteins which extend across the width of the envelope and beyond the outer surface to form spikes. The larger of the envelope glycoproteins (often designated HN) exhibits cell binding, haemagglutinating and neuraminidase activities, while the smaller F (fusion) protein often exhibits haemolytic activity and promotes fusion between the virus envelope and the host plasma membrane. The F protein can also promote cell-cell fusion. The F protein is generally synthesised as an inactive precursor which is activated by proteolytic cleavage.

30 In Pneumoviruses the G glycoprotein substitutes for HN.

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Host cell infection is thought to occur by adsorption, via HN or G, to the cell surface, followed by F protein mediated fusion between the virus envelope and the host plasma membrane. Viral glycoproteins are also synthesised on membrane bound polysomes, glycosylated, and inserted into the host plasma membrane. During maturation, the virions bud through the region of the membrane containing these proteins. Accordingly, in terms of treating Paramyxoviridae virus infectivity, modulation of F protein functional activity provides a potential therapeutic mechanism since down-regulating or inhibiting F protein functioning would interfere with F protein mediated fusion of the virion with a potential host cell, and/or virion budding from cells which are already infected. However, in order to screen for agents which can modulate F protein functional activity, or to utilise F protein for any other purpose, it is necessary to establish an efficient and routinely reproducible in vitro system of producing recombinant F proteins, and in particular functionally active F proteins. To date this has proved elusive with existing expression systems producing only low levels of either inactive or very poorly active F proteins which often require coexpression with other viral glycoproteins to form syncytia. Further, to the extent that F protein is produced, albeit inactive or poorly active, only very low concentrations of protein products have been obtained.

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The notion of codon usage is a poorly understood phenomenon which impacts on the efficiency of expression product production by given cells. Specifically, it has been determined that the levels of expression of protein produced by a cell can vary depending on the particular form of codon which is expressed in relation to a given amino acid. Although some amino acids are encoded by only one type of codon, other amino acids are encoded by up to six different codons, the efficiency of expression of which will vary depending on the host cell in which it is being expressed. It appears that certain types of cells exhibits preferences for expressing certain codon forms.

In work leading up to the present invention, the inventors have developed an *in vitro* expression system which both facilitates the production of functionally active F protein expression product and facilitate the production of significantly higher concentrations of F protein, or fragments thereof, than has been previously available. This system is based on

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identification by the inventors of two aspects of negative sense single stranded RNA viral protein expression which are compromised when the subject expression is performed in eukaryotic cells *in vitro*, these being inefficient codon usage and the presence of unwanted intrasequence mRNA splice sites.

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With respect to the former aspect, the inventors have identified codons within the viral protein nucleic acid encoding molecule which are not efficiently expressed by a given eukaryotic host cell due to their not taking a form preferred by the host cell of interest. By establishing the form of codon preferably expressed by a given host cell, and modifying the viral protein encoding DNA sequence accordingly, the inventors have achieved levels of viral protein production, in particular F protein production, which have not, to date, been obtainable in normal mammalian expression systems. Further, the method of the present invention facilitates the production of functionally active F proteins.

In light of the fact that the basis and mechanism of codon usage preferences are not fully understood, there exist no conclusive theoretical principals by which one can predict with any certainty precisely which codons are not preferred by a given host cell nor which form they should ideally take. Accordingly, the successful development of viral protein encoding nucleic acid molecules which exhibits codons preferred by eukaryotic cells is a significant development.

With respect to the latter aspect of *in vitro* expression of the subject viral proteins, the inventors have further surprisingly determined that the *in vitro* expression of negative sense single stranded RNA viral proteins is compromised where *in vitro* expression is based on expression of a complementary DNA form of the naturally occurring RNA sequence encoding the protein of interest. This is due in part to the unexpected presence of RNA splice sites. Identification and removal of the unwanted splice sites has further facilitated efficient and increased viral protein production.

30 In a related aspect, and with respect to the F protein in particular, the inventors have identified a previously unknown intrasequence cleavage site which is involved in the

generation of functionally active F protein. Identification of this cleavage site now facilitates, *inter alia*, development of methods and identification of agents for modulation F protein cleavage and thereby methods of modulating F protein functioning.

The developments herein described now permit the identification and/or rational analysis, design and/or modification of agents for use in modulating viral protein functional activity and, in particular, F protein functional activity. Further, the developments of the present invention also facilitate generation of DNA and protein vaccines directed to the *in vivo* induction of an immune response to the subject proteins. The viral molecules produced in accordance with the method of the present invention and agents herein identified are useful *inter alia*, in a range of prophylactic and therapeutic applications relating to viral infections.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

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The subject specification contains nucleotide and amino acid sequence information prepared using the programme PatentIn Version 3.1, presented herein after the bibliography. Each nucleotide or amino acid sequence is identified in the sequence listing by the numeric indicator <210> followed by the sequence identifier (e.g. <210>1, <210>2, etc). The length, type of sequence (DNA, protein (PRT), etc) and source of organism for each nucleotide or amino acid sequence are indicated by information provided in the numeric indicator fields <211>, <212> and <213>, respectively. Nucleotide and amino acid sequences referred to in the specification are defined in the information provided in numeric indicator field <400> followed by the sequence identifier (e.g. <400>1, <400>2, etc). A summary of the sequence listings herein provided is detailed in Table 1.

Specific mutations in amino acid sequence are represented herein as "Xaa₁nXaa₂" where Xaa₁ is the original amino acid residue before mutation, n is the residue number and Xaa₂ is the mutant amino acid. The abbreviation "Xaa" may be the three letter or single letter amino acid code. A mutation in single letter code is represented, for example, by X₁nX₂ where X₁ and X₂ are the same as Xaa₁ and Xaa₂, respectively. The amino acid residues for F protein are numbered with the first residue R in the motif RARR being residue number 106.

One aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Another aspect of the present invention provides a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a virus of the family Paramyxoviridae, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic host cell.

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Yet another aspect of the present invention provides a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, which protein directly or indirectly facilitates fusion of any one or more viral components with any one or more host cell components, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Still another aspect of the present invention is therefore more particularly directed to a method of facilitating production of a F protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid

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molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Yet still another aspect of the present invention provides a method of facilitating production of a N protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said N protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

10 Still yet another aspect of the present invention provides a method of facilitating production of a P protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said P protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

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A further aspect provides a method of facilitating production of a SH protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said SH protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Another further aspect provides a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell.

Yet another further aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which

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nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation and/or nucleotide splice site deletion.

Still another further aspect provides a method of facilitating production of F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is nucleotide splice site deletion.

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10 Still yet another further aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of facilitating production of a F_{sol} portion of an F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F_{sol} portion or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is nucleotide splice site deletion.

Yet still another further aspect provides a method of facilitating production of F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

Another aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of facilitating production of a F_{sol} portion of an F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F_{sol} portion or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

30 Yet another aspect of the present invention provides a method of facilitating production of F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising

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expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is nucleotide splice site deletion and codon optimisation.

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Still another another aspect of the present invention provides a method of facilitating the production of a F protein or derivative thereof from a respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>5 or derivative thereof.

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Yet still another aspect provides a method of facilitating the production of a F_{sol} portion of an F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>6 or derivative thereof.

15 Still yet another aspect provides a method of facilitating production of P protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said P protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

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A further aspect provides a method of facilitating the production of a P protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>556 or derivative thereof.

Another further aspect provides a method of facilitating production of N protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said N protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

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Yet another further aspect provides a method of facilitating the production of a N protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>559 or derivative thereof.

5 Still another further aspect provides a method of facilitating production of SH protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said SH protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

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Still yet another further aspect provides a method of facilitating the production of a SH protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>562 or derivative thereof.

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In another aspect, the present invention should be understood to extend to the optimised nucleic acid molecules described herein and to the expression products derived therefrom.

Yet another aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein up-regulates F protein functional activity.

Still another aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of regulating the functional activity of a Paramyxoviridae derived F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence wherein excision of

at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein up-regulates F protein functional activity.

Yet still another aspect of the present invention provides a method of regulating the functional activity of a respiratory syncytial virus F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence, wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein up-regulates F protein functional activity and wherein said cleavage events occur at the cleavage sites defined by the peptide sequences RARR (<400>564) and KKRKRR (<400>563).

In a related aspect, the present invention provides a method of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises the structure:

$$X_1, X_2, X_3$$

20 wherein:

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 X_1 comprises the non-intervening peptide sequence region of the F2 portion; X_2 comprises the intervening peptide sequence region of the F_2 portion; and X_3 comprises the F1 portion

said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein up-regulates F protein functional activity.

Still yet another aspect provides a method of inhibiting, retarding or otherwise downregulating the functional activity of a Paramyxoviridae derived F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise

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associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising inhibiting or otherwise down-regulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence.

A further aspect of the present invention provides a method of down-regulating the functional activity of a Paramyxoviradae derived F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises the structure:

 $X_1X_2X_3$

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wherein:

X₁ comprises the non-intervening peptide sequence region of the F2 portion;

X₂ comprises the intervening peptide sequence region of the F2 portion; and

X₃ comprises the F1 portion

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said method comprising inhibiting or otherwise down-regulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence.

Another further aspect provides a method for detecting an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein or derivative thereof said method comprising contacting a eukaryotic cell expressing an optimised nucleic acid molecule encoding said viral F protein or derivative thereof, as hereinbefore described, with a putative modulatory agent and detecting an altered expression phenotype and/or functional activity.

In yet another aspect there is provided a method for detecting an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein or derivative thereof said method comprising contacting a host cell, which host cell expresses a nucleic acid molecule encoding the non-fully functional form of said viral F protein or derivate thereof as hereinbefore described, with a putative modulatory agent and detecting an altered expression phenotype and/or altered functional activity wherein said agent modulates cleavage of the intervening peptide sequence.

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Still another further aspect of the present invention is directed to a method for analysing, designing and/or modifying an agent capable of interacting with a viral F protein or derivative thereof and modulating at least one functional activity associated with said protein, which protein is produced in accordance with the method of the present invention said method comprising contacting said F protein or derivate thereof with a putative agent and assessing the degree of interactive complementarity of said agent with said protein.

Still yet another further aspect of the present invention is directed to an agent capable of interacting with a viral F protein and modulating at least one functional activity associated with said viral protein.

In still another aspect there is provided a viral F protein variant comprising a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits modulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant.

Another aspect of the present invention provides a viral F protein variant comprising a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant.

Yet another aspect provides a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant comprising a mutation in the cleavage site defined by amino acids RARR (<400>564) wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant.

Preferably said mutation comprises one or more of the amino acid substitutions selected from the following list:

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(i) R106G

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- (ii) A107Q
- (iii) R108G

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Still more preferably said F protein variant comprises the sequence substantially as set forth in <400>565.

Still another aspect provides a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant comprising a multiple amino acid deletion from the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent of said variant.

It is more preferably provided that said amino acid deletion is a partial deletion of the intervening peptide sequence and more preferably a deletion of the peptide sequence

15 RARRELPRFMNYTLNNAKKTNVTLS <400>569.

Still more preferably said variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>567.

- Yet still another aspect of the present invention is directed to an isolated nucleic acid molecule selected from the list consisting of:
 - (i) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits modulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- (ii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic

of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.

- An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the cleavage site defined by amino acids RARR wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
 - (iv) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises one or more of the amino acid substitutions selected from the following list:
 - (a) R106G
 - (b) A107Q
 - (c) R108G

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- (v) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a multiple amino acid deletion from the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- (vi) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F
 protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic

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of said variant, which variant comprises a partial deletion of the intervening peptide sequence and more preferably a deletion of the peptide sequence

RARRELPRFMNYTLNNAKKTNVTLS <400>569.

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(vii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>567.

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(viii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>565.

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(ix) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising the nucleotide substantially as set forth in <400>568.

(x) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising the nucleotide substantially as set forth in <400>566.

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Still yet another aspect of the present invention provides a recombinant viral construct comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a viral F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule comprises codons optimised for expression in a eukaryotic cell, wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein.

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A further aspect of the present invention provides a recombinant viral construct comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative thereof wherein

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said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein variant.

Another further aspect of the present invention relates to a vaccine comprising a recombinant viral construct which construct comprises a nucleic acid molecule encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression in a eukaryotic cell wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein.

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Yet another further aspect of the present invention relates to a vaccine comprising a recombinant viral construct which construct comprises a nucleic acid molecule encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant or derivative thereof, wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein variant.

In accordance with these aspects of the present invention, the nucleotide sequence of the subject nucleic acid molecule is preferably the nucleotide sequence defined in <400>5, <400>6, <400>566 or <400>568.

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Still another further aspect of the present invention provides the method of modulating at least one functional activity associated with a viral F protein in a subject, said method comprising introducing into said subject and effective amount of an F protein modulatory agent for a time and under condition sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.

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Still yet another further aspect of the present invention provides a method of modulating at least one functional activity associated with a viral F protein, said method comprising contacting said viral F protein with an effective amount of an F protein modulatory agent for a time and under conditions sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.

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Yet still another further aspect of the present invention relates to a method for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus in a subject, said method comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of an agent, which agent is capable of down-regulating at least one functional activity of the F protein expressed by said virus, for a time and under conditions sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.

In still yet another aspect, the present invention relates to a method for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus in a subject, said method comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof and/or a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant as hereinbefore defined or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent a mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule for a time and under conditions sufficient for said composition to down-regulate said viral F protein functional activity.

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In another aspect the present invention relates to the use of an agent capable of modulating at least one functional activity of a viral F protein, which agent is identified and/or generated in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.

In still another aspect the present invention relates to the use of a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof, nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant as hereinbefore defined or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.

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In another aspect the present invention relates to the use of an agent, which agent is identified in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined, in the manufacture of a medicament for the modulation of at least one viral F protein associated functional activity.

- 5 Yet another aspect relates to agents for use in modulating the functional activity of a viral F protein wherein said agent is identified in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined.
- Still yet another aspect relates to agents for use in the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus wherein said agent is identified in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined.
- Yet still another aspect relates to a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof, a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant as hereinbefore defined or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule for use in the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.
- 20 In yet another aspect the present invention relates to a pharmaceutical composition comprising an active ingredient, as hereinbefore defined, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents.

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Single and three letter abbreviations used throughout the specification are defined in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Single and three letter amino acid abbreviations

Amino Acid	Three-letter Abbreviation	One-letter Symbol
Arginine	Arg	R
Asparagine	Asn	N
Aspartic acid	Asp	D
Cysteine	Cys	C
Glutamine	Gln	Q
Glutamic acid	Glu	Е
Glycine	Gly	G
Histidine	His	Н
Isoleucine	Ile	I
Leucine	Leu	L
Lysine	Lys	K
Methionine	Met	M
Phenylalanine	Phe	F
Proline	Pro	P
Serine	Ser	S
Threonine	The	T
Tryptophan	Trp	W
Tyrosine	Tyr	Y
Valine	Val	V
Any residue	Xaa	X

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1a is a schematic representation of the 574 amino acid sequence of the human RSV fusion protein F. Amino acid numbers 1-22 comprises the signal sequence. The F2 subunit comprises amino acid numbers 23-130. The fusion cleavage (site 1) is amino acid numbers 131-136. Site 2 comprises residues 106-109. The F1 subunit comprises residues 136-574. The transmembrane domain is believed to span residues 525-548. The cytoplasmic domain comprises residues 549-574.

- 10 **Figure 1b** is a schematic representation of the amino acid sequence of the 524 residue soluble F protein. This protein is referred to as F_{sol}. F_{sol} is formed by expressing the coding sequence for F minus the residues encoding the transmembrane domain and the cytoplasmic domain of F.
- Figure 1c is a schematic representation of F and F_{sol}. Cleavage positions of site 1 and site 2 are designated. Hydrophobic regions are shaded in black (from left to right, signal sequence, fusion peptide and transmembrane domain). Downward facing flags designate positions of potential N-linked glycosylation sites. The 24 amino acid region bounded by cleavage sites 1 and 2 is shown as a cross-hatched region.

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Figure 2a is a schematic representation of the alignment of sequences coding for the human RSV F protein. F.viral refers to the sequence as found in wild type A2 RSV strain. F refers to the sequence which differs in 27/1725 positions from the viral sequence. Those changes where made in order to introduce unique restriction sites to the sequence. F.opt. refers to the F coding sequence which has been changed to allow for higher expression levels as outlined in the accompanying application. A total of 378/1725 nucleotides have been changed from the F.viral sequence. Underneath the boxed sequence a consensus sequence is shown.

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Figure 2b is a schematic representation of the alignment of sequences coding for the human RSV F_{sol} protein. F_{sol} viral refers to the sequence as found in the wild type A2 RSV strain. F_{sol} refers to the sequence which differs from the viral sequence in 24/1575 nucleotides. All of these changes were incorporated to introduce unique restriction sites. F_{sol} opt. refers to the F_{sol} coding sequence optimised as described herein. A total of 334/1575 nucleotides have been changed. A consensus is shown under the boxed sequences.

Figures 3a and b are schematic representations of the DNA sequences optimised for expression as cloned in the expression vector pCICO.F.FL.opt (a) and pCICO.F.opt (b). The plasmid pCICO.F.FL.opt contains the sequence referred to in Figure 2a as F.opt.. The plasmid pCICO.F.opt contains the sequence referred to in Figure 2b as F.sol.opt. 5' and 3' untranslated sequences not included in the Figure 2 sequences are shown in this Figure.

Figures 4a and b are schematic representations of the construction of F and F_{sol} expression vectors. These diagrams describe in detail the steps involved in constructing expression vectors pCICO.F.FL.opt and pCICO.F.opt. See text of examples for details. As previously noted pCICO.F.FL.opt contains the optimised sequence F.opt. (Figure 2a) and pCICO.F.opt contains the optimised sequence F.sol.opt (Figure 2b).

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Figure 5 is an image of an autoradiograph of a 10% SDS-PAGE gel of a immunoprecipitation of 35-5 labelled supernatents from 293 cells transfected with lane (a) pCICO.FS3 (containing viral F_{sol} sequence) lane (b) pCICO.F.opt (containing optimised F_{sol} sequence). Lane (c) is from mock-transfected cells. Lane (d) contains readioactively labelled molecular weight markers. The F_{sol} protein migrates at approximately 60 kd in size.

Figure 6 is a schematic representation of the alignment of sequences coding for the human RSV F protein. F.viral refers to the sequence as found in wild type A2 RS strain (<400>571). F.nat refers to the sequence found in a RSV A2 cDNA clone assembled in these studies (<400>572). The two sequences differ in two places (nt 174 and 222) which

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does not effect the coding potential. Underneath the boxed sequence a consensus sequence is shown (<400>573).

Figure 7 is a western blot of protein samples derived from 293 cells transfected with WT (pCICO.F.FL.opt), A2 (pCICO.F.nat) and Ctrl (control) plasmids. Cells were havested at 24, 48 and 72 hours post transfection. Cell lysates were analysed by 12% polyacrylamide SDS-PAGE and after electrophoresis proteins were electroblotted onto a nitrocellulose membrane. F protein was detected as described in example 5. The immuno-reactive F bands F1 and F1' are indicated by arrows. The position of molecular weight markers is shown.

Figure 8 is photographs of 293 cells transfected with pCICO.F.FL.opt (a), pCICO.F.nat (b) and control plasmid (c). Photographs were taken 48 hours post transfection and the magnification is 400X. Figures a, b and c flow from top to bottom.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention is predicated, in part, on the development of a negative sense single stranded RNA viral protein expression system based on optimisation of expression of the viral protein encoding nucleic acid sequence such that expression of the subject nucleic acid molecule sequence by a given eukaryotic host cell is facilitated and/or improved. In a related aspect, the inventors have identified a novel cleavage site in the F viral protein, the cleavage of which is thought to be essential for the generation of a fully functionally active F protein. These developments now permit the recombinant production of viral proteins and the identification and design of agents for use in modulating functional activity of the subject proteins.

Accordingly, one aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Reference to a "negative sense single stranded RNA virus" should be understood as a 20 reference to any negative sense single stranded RNA virus, and includes, but is not limited to, viruses of the family Paramyxoviridae, Rhabdoviridae, Filoviridae, Orthomyxoviridae, Bunyaviridae or Arenaviridae. Preferably, said negative sense single stranded RNA virus is of the family Paramyxoviridae. Without limiting the present invention to any one theory or mode of action, viruses of the family Paramyxoviridae are cytoplasm replicating viruses. In this regard, RNA replication involves mRNA transcription from the genomic 25 RNA via the virion transcriptase. Utilising the protein products of this transcription, there follows the production of a full length positive stranded template which is used for the synthesis of genomic RNA. The genome is transcribed from the the 3' end by virion associated enzymes into mRNAs. Replication takes place in the cytoplasm and assembly occurs via budding on the plasma membrane. The subject budding occurs through the host 30 cell plasma membrane at sites containing the virus envelope proteins.

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Accordingly, there is more particularly provided a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a virus of the family Paramyxoviridae, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic host cell.

Still more preferably, said virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae and most preferably said virus is respiratory syncytial virus.

- Reference to a "protein from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus" should be understood as a reference to any protein which is expressed by the subject virus or a derivative of said protein. Examples of proteins include, but are not limited to, nucleocapsid associated proteins such as RNA binding proteins (e.g. N, NP), phosphoproteins (e.g. P), polymerase proteins (e.g. L), or envelope proteins (e.g. F, G, H, HN or SH). It should be understood that the subject protein may exist, in its naturally occurring form, either in isolation or fused or otherwise linked to any other proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecule. Preferably, the subject protein is a fusion protein, N, P or SH.
- Accordingly, in one embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, which protein directly or indirectly facilitates fusion of any one or more viral components with any one or more host cell components, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Reference to a viral protein which "directly or indirectly facilitates fusion of any one or more viral components with any one or more host cell components" should be understood as a reference to any viral protein which functions to induce or otherwise contribute to the fusion of one or more viral molecules (such as a protein or structural component) with any one or more host cell molecules. It should be understood that this activity may comprise

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any one of a number of functional activities attributable to the subject protein, which other activities are not necessarily related to fusion. It should also be understood that the subject functional activity may either directly facilitate fusion or it may induce or otherwise contribute to the functioning of an unrelated molecule, which unrelated molecule directly facilitates the subject fusion. Preferably the viral protein is an F protein.

This embodiment of the present invention is therefore more particularly directed to a method of facilitating production of a F protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Reference to a "F protein" should be understood as a reference to the viral molecule which, *inter alia*, facilitates fusion between the virus envelope and the host cell plasma membrane of infected cells. The term "F protein" should be understood to encompass all forms of F protein including, for example, any mutant, polymorphic or homologous forms of F protein. Without limiting the present invention in any way, the F protein generally comprises, at the amino terminus, an F2 portion which is linked to an F1 portion. The F1 contains a transmembrane region of the molecule which is, in turn, linked to an extracellular portion of the F protein. The cytoplasmic portion of the F protein comprises the carboxy terminus. As detailed earlier, the F protein is generally synthesised in a precursor form which is activated by proteolytic cleavage at the F2/F1 junction. It is though that this cleavage step reveals a fusion peptide which interacts with the host cell. The F2/F1 junction of the respiratory syncytial virus F protein is shown in Figure 1.

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In another embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of a N protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said N protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

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In yet another preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of a P protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said P protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

In still yet another preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of a SH protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said SH protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.

Preferably, the negative sense single stranded RNA virus of these preferred embodiments of the present invention is a virus of the family Paramyxoviridae. More preferably the virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae and still more preferably the subject virus is a virus of the genus Pneumovirus. Most preferably, the virus is respiratory syncytial virus.

To the extent that it is not otherwise specified, reference to a viral "protein" extends to derivatives thereof.

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"Derivatives" of the subject protein include fragments, parts, portions, mutants, variants and mimetics thereof including fusion proteins. Parts or fragments include, for example, active regions of the subject protein. In one aspect of the present invention, for example, the subject protein is a F protein which does not comprise the transmembrane and cytoplasmic portions (herein referred to as F_{sol}). The F_{sol} fragment of the F protein is useful for X-ray crystallography and other forms of modelling for purposes such as rational drug design. Derivatives may be derived from insertion, deletion or substitution of amino acids. Amino acid insertional derivatives include amino and/or carboxylic terminal fusions as well as intrasequence insertions of single or multiple amino acids. Insertional amino acid sequence variants are those in which one or more amino acid residues are introduced into a predetermined site in the protein although random insertion is also possible with

suitable screening of the resulting product. Deletional variants are characterised by the removal of one or more amino acids from the sequence. Substitutional amino acid variants are those in which at least one residue in the sequence has been removed and a different residue inserted in its place. An example of substitutional amino acid variants are conservative amino acid substitutions. Conservative amino acid substitutions typically include substitutions within the following groups: glycine and alanine; valine, isoleucine and leucine; aspartic acid and glutamic acid; asparagine and glutamine; serine and threonine; lysine and arginine; and phenylalanine and tyrosine. Additions to amino acid sequences include fusions with other peptides, polypeptides or proteins.

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The derivatives include fragments having particular portions of the entire protein fused to peptides, polypeptides or other proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecules.

"Mutants" include variants of the subject protein which variants exhibit modified sequences, structures and/or functions. For example, the F protein variants described herein, which variants exhibit amino acid sequence alterations leading to altered cleavage properties, fall within the scope of the term "mutants".

The term "protein" should be understood to encompass peptides, polypeptides and proteins. The protein may be glycosylated or unglycosylated and/or may contain a range of other molecules fused, linked, bound or otherwise associated to the protein such as amino acids, lipids, carbohydrates or other peptides, polypeptides or proteins. Reference hereinafter to a "protein" includes a protein comprising a sequence of amino acids as well as a protein associated with other molecules such as amino acids, lipids, carbohydrates or other peptides, polypeptides or proteins.

The method of the present invention is predicated on the production of a viral protein by expressing a nucleic acid molecule as herein described. In this regard, the term "expressing" should be understood to refer to the transcription and translation of a nucleic acid molecule resulting in the synthesis of a peptide, polypeptide or protein expression

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product. The synthesis of an expression product via the translation step of nucleic acid molecule expression is herein referred to as "production" of that expression product.

The viral protein encoding nucleic acid molecule of the present invention is expressed in a eukaryotic host cell. By "host cell" is meant any eukaryotic cell which can be transformed or transfected with a nucleotide sequence. Preferred eukaryotic host cells are mammalian cells and even more preferably 293 cells and Chinese Hamster Ovary cells.

Accordingly, there is provided a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell.

Preferably, the subject protein is a fusion protein (more particularly the F protein), N, P or SH.

Preferably, the negative sense single stranded RNA virus of these preferred embodiments of the present invention is a virus of the family Paramyxoviridae. More preferably the virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae and still more preferably the subject virus is a virus of the genus Pneumovirus. Most preferably, the virus is respiratory syncytial virus.

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The nucleic acid molecule which is expressed in accordance with the method of the present invention encodes a viral protein or derivative thereof. By "encodes" is meant that the expression product comprises the subject protein or derivative. However, it should be understood that this is not intended as a restriction in any way on the diversity of the subject expression product other than that it should comprise the subject protein or derivative thereof. For example, the nucleic acid molecule which is introduced into the host cell may encode the protein fused to another protein, peptide or polypeptide (which is consistent with the definition of protein "derivative" as hereinbefore provided) or the

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nucleic acid molecule may encode multiple proteins wherein at least one of those proteins is the subject protein or derivative thereof.

Reference to the subject nucleic acid molecule being "optimised" for expression by a eukaryotic host cell should be understood as a reference to a nucleic acid molecule which has been mutated or otherwise varied such that its recombinant expression by a eukaryotic host cell is facilitated. Said "facilitation" includes, but is not limited to, inducing or improving levels of protein expression and/or functional activity of the expression product. Preferably, said optimisation takes the form of codon optimisation and/or nucleotide splice site deletion.

By "codon optimisation" is meant that at least one codon of the naturally occurring viral protein encoding nucleotide sequence has been altered such that it encodes the same amino acid as the naturally occurring codon but uses an alternative codon to that which naturally encodes the subject amino acid, which alternative codon form is more preferably expressed by a eukaryotic cell than the naturally occurring codon form.

The present invention is exemplified herein with respect to the F, P, N and SH proteins, the naturally occurring encoding nucleic acid sequences of which are defined in <400>1, <400>505, <400>508 and <400>511, respectively. Without limiting the present invention to any one theory or mode of action, the inventors have determined that eukaryotic expression of a viral gene becomes possible where selected A rich and T rich regions of the naturally occurring gene are modified to express increased numbers of G rich and C rich nucleotides. This is achieved by replacing selected A or T nucleotides with a G or C nucleotide, respectively. The resultant modified codon, however, preferably encodes the same amino acid as that encoded by the naturally occurring codon. With respect to the F gene, for example, the codon TTG commences at nucleotide 7 of the naturally occurring respiratory syncytial viral F protein encoding nucleic acid sequence (provided in <400>1). This codon encodes an L amino acid. In the codon optimised F protein encoding nucleic acid sequence, represented herein in Figure 2a, the codon TTG is modified to read CTG, which modified codon nevertheless encodes the L amino acid. The present invention does

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not, however, relate to the sequence as published by Kuhnle *et al* (1998) insofar as the sequence is used for codon optimisation.

The preferred embodiment of the present invention is to optimise the viral protein encoding nucleotide sequence such that the naturally occurring viral protein amino acid sequence or fragment thereof, is produced. However, it should be understood that it is nevertheless within the scope of the present invention to optimise a viral protein encoding nucleotide sequence in terms of expressing increased G plus C content, as required to achieve efficient mammalian host cell expression, despite the fact that an optimised codon may thereafter encode an amino acid different to that originally encoded by the codon which naturally existed at that position. This may occur, for example, where the newly substituted amino acid does not significantly alter the structural and/or functional properties which are required of the recombinantly produced protein. For example, certain conservative amino acid substitutions may not alter functional properties. Similarly, amino acid substitutions in regions outside the protein's functionally active regions may be acceptable in terms of the use to which the expressed protein is to be put.

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In terms of optimising the naturally occurring F protein encoding nucleotide sequence, the number of codons which are optimised in any given situation will depend on the object to be achieved. For example, optimisation of between 1 and 10 codons may be sufficient to enable production of a level of eukaryotic host cell expression sufficient for a particular purpose. However, in order to achieve still more efficient levels of expression and/or expression product functional activity, it may be desirable to optimise a larger number of codons. In this regard, in a most preferred embodiment, the optimised F, P, N and SH protein encoding nucleic acid sequences correspond to the sequences defined in <400>5, <400>556, <400>559, and <400>562, respectively. However, it should be understood that the present invention extends to the use of derivatives of these sequences.

By "nucleotide splice site deletion" optimisation is meant that the nucleotide sequence 30 encoding a subject viral protein has been altered to remove one or more potential RNA splice sites. Without limiting the present invention to any one theory or mode of action, it

is thought that inefficient expression of nucleotide sequences derived from negative sense single strand RNA viruses is due, in part, to the presence of RNA splice sites in the subject RNAs. These viruses replicate cytoplasmically in the naturally occurring host cell environment. Accordingly, there is a lack of selective pressure against RNA sequences which comprise one or more such splice sites since the enzymes which splice eukaryotic cell RNA are generally only present in the nucleus. However, since the recombinant expression system of the present invention is based, in one embodiment, on the introduction into a eukaryotic host cell of a DNA molecule encoding the viral protein of interest, the requisite synthesis of DNA complementary to the naturally occurring viral RNA gene would consequently also result in copying of any splice sites present in the RNA. Transcription of these DNAs will occur in the nucleus of the eukaryotic host cell thereby exposing RNA transcribed from the subject DNA to the nuclear RNA splicing enzymes of the host cell.

In terms of optimising the naturally occurring viral protein encoding nucleotide sequence, the number of splice sites which are deleted in any given situation would depend on the object to be achieved. For example, if it is desired to produce the full length viral protein, then all splice sites occurring within the protein coding region of the encoding nucleic acid molecule should be deleted. However, if it is desired to produce only a fragment of the subject protein (for example, the F_{sol} portion of the F protein which, as hereinbefore defined, does not comprise the transmembrane and cytoplasmic regions of the F protein) then only the splice sites within that region need be removed.

Deletion of the subject splice sites is preferably achieved by substituting one or more nucleotides which comprise a splice site recognition sequence such that this sequence is no longer recognised by the relevant RNA splicing enzyme. It should be understood, however, that any other suitable method of mutating the splice site may be utilised within the context of the present invention.

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30 The present invention is therefore preferably directed to a method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said

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method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation and/or nucleotide splice site deletion.

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Preferably, the subject protein is a fusion protein (more particularly the F protein), N, P or SH.

Preferably, the negative sense single stranded RNA virus is a virus of the family Paramyxoviridae. More preferably the virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae and still more preferably the subject virus is a virus of the genus Pneumovirus. Most preferably, the virus is respiratory syncytial virus.

It should be understood that the present invention extends to the use of derivatives of the optimised nucleic acid sequences.

Most preferably, said codon optimisation comprises modification of at least one A and/or T comprising codon to express G and C, respectively and said mammalian splice site deletion comprises deletion of at least one RNA splice site. To the extent that the nucleic acid molecule which is introduced into the host cell is a DNA molecule, the subject deletion would relate to the region of the DNA molecule which would encode the RNA splice site.

By "derivatives" is meant nucleic acid sequences derived from single or multiple nucleotide substitutions, deletions and/or additions including fusion with other nucleic acid molecules. In accordance with this definition, "derivative" therefore extends to sequences comprising any one or more of the optimised codons and/or optimised splice site regions of <400>5, <400>6, <400>556, <400>559 or <400>562.

30 Reference to a "derivative" of the subject nucleotide sequence should also be understood to extend to nucleotide sequences comprising nucleic acid substitutions, deletions or

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additions other than for the purpose of optimising codons. For example, an optimised viral protein encoding nucleotide sequence may additionally comprises endonuclease restriction sites which are not expressed by the naturally occurring counterpart of the subject sequence. These may be incorporated to facilitate the generation of protein mutants. In one preferred embodiment, for example, the subject nucleotide sequence derivative comprises one or more of the endonuclease restriction sites expressed in <400>3 or <400>4.

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In terms of a most preferred embodiment of the present invention, <400>1 defines the protein encoding region of the naturally occurring respiratory syncytial virus F protein. <400>3 defines the <400>1 sequence as modified to incorporate endonuclease restriction sites designed to facilitate the generation of protein recombinants. <400>5 defines the F protein encoding nucleotide sequence of <400>3 further modified to minimise the presence of regions which would encode RNA splice sites and to express optimised codons. The amino acid sequence encoded by these nucleotide sequences is provided in <400>7.

Expression of <400>5 in accordance with the method of the present invention will be sought where production of the full length F protein is required. This may occur, for example, where expression of a functional molecule is required for the performance of 20 function based screening assays designed to detect F protein modulatory agents. However, in another embodiment, production of a portion only of the F protein may be desired. For example, production of the F_{sol} portion is particularly desirable for the purpose of 3 dimensional structural analysis, by X-ray crystallography, of the F protein active regions. Furthermore, F_{sol} portion production facilitates the rational identification, modification and 25 design of F protein modulatory agents based on analysing the agent in terms of its physical interaction with the F2 and F1 portions. In this regard, <400>2 defines the protein encoding region of the naturally occurring respiratory syncytial viral F_{sol} portion of the F protein. <400>4 defines the <400>2 sequence as modified to incorporate endonuclease restriction sites designed to facilitate the generation of protein recombinants. <400>6 30 defines the F_{sol} protein encoding nucleotide sequence of <400>4 further modified to

minimise the presence of regions which would encode RNA splice sites and to express optimised codons. The amino acid sequence encoded by these nucleotide sequences is provided in <400>8.

According to this preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is nucleotide splice site deletion.

In another preferred embodiment the present invention is directed to a method of facilitating production of a F_{sol} portion of an F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F_{sol} portion or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is nucleotide splice site deletion.

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In still another preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

In yet another preferred embodiment the present invention is directed to a method of facilitating production of a F_{sol} portion of an F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F_{sol} portion or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

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In another preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is nucleotide splice site deletion and codon optimisation.

In still yet a more preferred embodiment, there is provided a method of facilitating the production of a F protein or derivative thereof from a respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>5 or derivative thereof.

Preferably said nucleotide sequence is substantially as set forth in <400>5.

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- In another preferred embodiment, there is provided a method of facilitating the production of a F_{sol} portion of an F protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>6 or derivative thereof.
- 20 Preferably said nucleotide sequence is substantially as set forth in <400>6.

In terms of another most preferred embodiment of the present invention, <400>555 defines the protein encoding region of the naturally occurring respiratory syncytial virus P protein. <400>556 defines the P protein encoding nucleotide sequence of <400>555 as modified to express optimised codons. The amino acid sequence encoded by this nucleotide sequences is provided in <400>554.

According to this preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of P protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said P protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is

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optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

In still a more preferred embodiment, there is provided a method of facilitating the production of a P protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>556 or derivative thereof.

Preferably said nucleotide sequence is substantially as set forth in <400>556.

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In terms of yet another most preferred embodiment of the present invention, <400>558 defines the protein encoding region of the naturally occurring respiratory syncytial virus N protein. <400>559 defines the N protein encoding nucleotide sequence of <400>558 as modified to express optimised codons. The amino acid sequence encoded by this nucleotide sequence is provided in <400>557.

According to this preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of N protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said N protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

In still a more preferred embodiment, there is provided a method of facilitating the production of a N protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>559 or derivative thereof.

Preferably said nucleotide sequence is substantially as set forth in <400>559.

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In terms of still yet another most preferred embodiment of the present invention, <400>561 defines the protein encoding region of the naturally occurring respiratory syncytial virus SH protein. <400>562 defines the N protein encoding nucleotide sequence of <400>561 as modified to express optimised codons. The amino acid sequence encoded by this nucleotide sequence is provided in <40>560.

According to this preferred embodiment there is provided a method of facilitating production of SH protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a mammalian host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said SH protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by said mammalian host cell wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation.

In still a more preferred embodiment, there is provided a method of facilitating the production of a SH protein or derivative thereof from respiratory syncytial virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell the nucleotide sequence set forth in <400>562 or derivative thereof.

Preferably said nucleotide sequence is substantially as set forth in <400>562.

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In terms of performing the present invention, methods of deriving and recombinantly expressing nucleic acid molecules will be well known to those of skill in the art as will methodology directed to adding, deleting and/or substituting nucleic acids in a given nucleotide sequence.

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In another aspect, the present invention should be understood to extend to the optimised nucleic acid molecules described herein and to the expression products derived therefrom.

In yet another aspect, the inventors have surprisingly determined that induction of F protein functional activity requires not one but two proteolytic cleavage events. The occurrence of these two cleavage events results in the excision of a peptide region from the

non-fully functional F protein. Prior to the advent of the present invention, it was thought that F protein activation was the result of a single cleavage event which occurred at the F2/F1 junction. Without limiting the invention to any one theory or mode of action, it is thought that the F2 portion of the non-fully functional F protein in fact comprises an intervening sequence of amino acids which spans the region between the newly identified cleavage site and the F2/F1 junction and which is excised in order to facilitate formation of a functional F glycoprotein. This intervening peptide sequence is thought to comprise excess amino acids and up to three glycosylation sites depending on the particular virus strain from which the F protein is derived. Down-regulation or other form of interference with cleavage at the newly identified cleavage site would therefore interfere with the induction of F protein functional activity.

Accordingly, another aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein up-regulates F protein functional activity.

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Reference to the subject F protein being in a "non-fully functional form" should be understood to mean that the subject F protein exhibits either no functional activity or a lesser degree of functional activity than the fully cleaved F protein, that is, the F protein which has undergone *both* cleavage events. Accordingly, "up-regulation" of F protein functional activity should be understood to refer to the induction of a degree or range of functional activities greater than that exhibited by the subject F protein in its non-fully cleaved form. In its natural environment, all F proteins are synthesised in a form which comprises a F2 portion located proximally to a F1 portion. The F1 portion region of the F protein comprises a transmembrane region and an intracellular domain (Collins *et al*, 1996). Reference to a "non-fully functional form" of the F protein should also be understood to extend to forms of the F protein which have undergone only partial cleavage.

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For example, the subject non-fully functional form of the F protein may only have undergone cleavage of the previously known cleavage site but not yet at the newly identified cleavage site.

Prior to the advent of the present invention, it was thought that activation of the F protein occurred following cleavage at the F protein site defined by the sequence KKRKRR (<400>563) thereby cleaving the F2 portion of the non-fully functional F protein from the F1 portion. The F1 portion of the F protein is defined, in Figure 1, as commencing at the F residue which follows the cleavage recognition site KKRKRR. However, the precise location at which this cleavage event occurs is not actually known. Accordingly, it should be understood that the cleavage event may occur either between two residues located proximally to the cleavage recognition site KKRKRR or it may occur between two residues within this site. The definitions of "F2 portion", "F1 portion" and "F2/F1 junction" as provided herein should therefore be interpreted in light of this understanding.

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As detailed above, the inventors have now determined that cleavage at this region alone will not fully activate the F protein. Rather, a second cleavage event must occur at an F protein site distinct from that of the known cleavage site (the known cleavage site being referred to as "site 1"). This second cleavage site is located in the amino terminus direction of the previously known cleavage site and is characterised by expression of the cleavage recognition sequence RARR (<400>564) (herein referred to as "site 2"). When considered in light of the structure of the F protein as it was previously understood (and as depicted in Figure 1) site 2 is located within the F2 portion of the F protein while the previously known cleavage site is located at the F2/F1 portion junction.

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For the purpose of the present invention, it should be understood that the F protein amino acid sequence located in the amino terminus direction of cleavage site 1 is herein referred to as the F2 portion while the amino acid sequence located in the carboxy terminus direction of the cleavage site 1 is herein referred to as the F1 portion. The newly identified cleavage site is therefore located within the F2 portion. The F protein amino acid sequence located between the site 1 and site 2 points of cleavage is herein referred to as the

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"intervening sequence". Accordingly, in light of the definition herein provided, the "intervening sequence" forms part of the F2 portion of the non-fully functional form of the F protein. Excision of "at least part of" said intervening sequence should be understood to mean that at least a portion of the sequence which is excised following the two cleavage events is derived from the intervening sequence region as herein defined. However, it should be understood that the excised sequence may also comprise part of the non-intervening sequence region of the F2 and/or F1 portion sequences as herein defined.

Without limiting the present invention to any one theory or mode of action, it is thought that cleavage of the intervening sequence at the two cleavage sites results in complete disassociation of the intervening sequence from the F protein. Accordingly, the term "excision" is intended to encompass complete disassociation of the intervening sequence from the non-fully functional form of the F protein in order to form the functionally active F protein. However this term should also be understood to extend to a cleavage event which does not necessarily result in complete disassociation of at least part of the intervening sequence but leads to a conformational change in the secondary or tertiary structure of the intervening sequence and/or the F2/F1 portions. For example, in some circumstances an appropriate conformational shift in the intervening sequence relative to the F2 and F1 portions may be sufficient to achieve some up-regulation of the functional activity of the F protein. It should also be understood that the two cleavage events may occur concurrently in order to effect excision. Alternatively, the cleavage events may occur consecutively. For example, cleavage at site 1 may occur initially, followed by cleavage at site 2 (and hence formation of the fully functional form of the F protein) at a subsequent point in time. The present invention should also be understood to extend to a sequence of cleavage events commencing with cleavage at site 2.

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The present invention is exemplified with respect to respiratory syncytial virus F protein. The respiratory syncytial virus F protein amino acid sequence is defined <400>7. In accordance with the amino acid sequence numbering provided in <400>7, the previously known cleavage site is located at the region of the F protein defined by the amino acid sequence KKRKRR, which sequence spans amino acid numbers 131 to 136 of <400>7.

The second cleavage point, which has been identified by the present inventors, is localised to the region of the F protein defined by the amino acid sequence RARR, which sequence spans amino acid numbers 106-109 of <400>7.

In a preferred embodiment the present invention is directed to a method of regulating the functional activity of a Paramyxoviridae derived F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein up-regulates F protein functional activity.

Still more preferably said F protein is derived from the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably said virus is respiratory syncytial virus.

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In a most preferred embodiment there is provided a method of regulating the functional activity of a respiratory syncytial virus F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence, wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein upregulates F protein functional activity and wherein said cleavage events occur at the cleavage sites defined by the peptide sequences RARR (<400>564) and KKRKRR (<400>563).

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That the subject cleavage events "occur at" a given cleavage site should be understood to mean that cleavage of the F protein amino acid sequence will involve cleavage of the bonding mechanism associated with anyone or more of the amino acids comprising the defined sites. Without limiting the invention in any way, the amino acids comprising the cleavage sites define the peptide sequence recognised by the proteolytic enzyme which cleaves the subject F protein (Steiner, 1998).

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In a related aspect, the present invention provides a method of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises the structure:

5 X_1, X_2, X_3

wherein:

X₁ comprises the non-intervening peptide sequence region of the F2 portion;

 X_2 comprises the intervening peptide sequence region of the F_2 portion; and

 X_3 comprises the F1 portion

said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully functional form of said F protein up-regulates F protein functional activity.

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The representation X_1 , X_2 , X_3 is not to be taken as imposing any sequential constraints on the subject F protein and the present invention encompasses any conformational secondary and/or tertiary structural arrangement of X_1 , X_2 , X_3 to the extent that X_1 and X_3 are both linked, bound or otherwise associated with X_2 in the subject F protein's non-fully

20 functional form.

Reference to the "non-intervening peptide sequence region" of F2 should be understood as a reference to that part of the F2 subunit which does not form part of the intervening sequence as herein defined.

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Preferably said virus is a virus from the family Paramyxoviridae and still more preferably is a virus of the Genus Pneumovirus. Most preferably said virus is respiratory syncytial virus.

In another preferred embodiment said cleavage events occur at the cleavage sites comprising X_2 and defined by the peptide sequences RARR (<400>564) and KKRKRR (<400>563).

- 5 Modulating cleavage of the intervening sequence can be achieved by any one of a number of methods including, but in no way limited to:
- (i) Contacting the F protein or F protein encoding nucleic acid molecule with a proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecule (herein referred to as an "agent") which up-regulates or down-regulates cleavage of either one or both of the cleavage sites comprising the intervening sequence. The proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecule may achieve this objective by functioning as either an agonist or antagonist of the cleavage event, for example. This molecule may act in any one of a number of ways including interacting with the subject F protein or interacting with the enzymes which recognise the cleavage sites comprising the F protein.
 - (ii) Mutating the amino acid sequence of the F protein cleavage site such that proteolytic cleavage cannot occur. This can be performed at either the amino acid sequence level (for example by adding, substituting or deleting an amino acid in the newly identified cleavage site) or at the nucleotide level such that the transcribed and translated F protein expression product does not express a functional form of the subject cleavage site.

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Said proteinaceous molecule may be derived from natural or recombinant sources including fusion proteins or following, for example, natural product screening. Said non-proteinaceous molecule may be, for example, a nucleic acid molecule or may be derived from natural sources, such as for example natural product screening or may be chemically synthesised. The present invention contemplates chemical analogues of the F protein capable of acting as agonists or antagonists of either the fully functional or non-fully functional F protein. Chemical agonists may not necessarily be derived from the F protein

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but may share certain conformational similarities. Alternatively, chemical agonists may be specifically designed to mimic certain physiochemical properties of the F protein. Antagonists may be any compound capable of blocking, inhibiting or otherwise preventing F protein from carrying out its normal biological function. Antagonists include monoclonal antibodies specific for the F protein, or parts of the F protein, and antisense nucleic acids which prevent transcription and/or translation of the F protein encoding nucleic acid molecule or mRNA in mammalian cells.

Although the preferred method is to inhibit, retard or otherwise down-regulate F protein functional activity by preventing cleavage of the non-fully functional F protein form and subsequent activation, up-regulation of F protein functional activity may be desired in certain circumstances. In this regard, use of agonistic agents which augment and/or induce the cleavage events herein described may be utilised. Reference to "down-regulating" F protein functional activity should be understood to encompass prevention of the functional activation of the non-fully functional F protein.

Accordingly, in a most preferred embodiment there is provided a method of inhibiting, retarding or otherwise down-regulating the functional activity of a Paramyxoviridae derived F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising inhibiting or otherwise down-regulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence.

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Preferably said F protein is derived from the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably said virus is respiratory syncytial virus. Most preferably said cleavage events occur at the cleavage sites defined by peptide sequences RARR (<400>564) and KKRKRR (<400>563).

In another most preferred embodiment the present invention provides a method of down-30 regulating the functional activity of a Paramyxoviradae derived F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises the structure:

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 $X_1X_2X_3$

wherein:

 X_1 comprises the non-intervening peptide sequence region of the F2 portion; X_2 comprises the intervening peptide sequence region of the F2 portion; and X_3 comprises the F1 portion

said method comprising inhibiting or otherwise down-regulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence.

Preferably said F protein is derived from the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably said virus is respiratory syncytial virus. Most preferably said cleavage events occur at the cleavage sites defined by peptide sequences RARR (<400>564) and KKRKRR (<400>563).

Without limiting the present invention to any one theory or mode of action, the F proteins of viruses of the family Paramyxoviridae are involved in facilitating fusion between the virus envelope and the host cell plasma membrane in order to effect infection. Further, it is thought that the F proteins are also inserted into the host plasma membrane where, during maturation, the virions bud through the region of the membrane containing these proteins. Accordingly, it is thought that down-regulating F protein functional activity will inhibit or otherwise reduce virion fusion with and infection of a potential host cell and/or virion budding. Accordingly, the development of a method for recombinantly expressing the F protein by eukaryotic cells, and in particular mammalian cells, now facilitates the development of screening assays, utilising the F protein produced in accordance with the method of the present invention, for the purpose of identifying agents capable of modulating F protein functional activity, and preferably, down-regulating F protein functional activity.

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Screening for agents which modulate F protein functional activity can be achieved by any one of a number of suitable methods, which would be known to those of skill in the art, including but not limited to:

5 (i) High throughput screening for agents which modulate F protein functional activities utilising assays based on the detection of changes in F protein functioning. Such changes may be detected directly or indirectly.

An example of indirect detection of modulation of F protein functioning includes the screening of agents on cultured cells which have been co-transfected with the F protein encoding nucleic acid molecule of the present invention and a virus which utilises the F protein in order to propagate. In this regard, either the full length F protein encoding nucleic acid sequence can be utilised or a partial sequence which encodes a functionally active F protein portion can be used. By assessing cell viability it can be determined whether the subject agent inhibits or down-regulates F protein functioning thereby preventing F protein mediated propagation of cell to cell fusion. This would be evident by continued cell viability. A typical assay of this type can be performed, for example, in 293 cells which have been transiently co-transfected with a plasmid encoding the adenoviral VA RNA genes.

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(ii) Antibody Recognition Assays

The use of antibodies which bind to conformational epitopes is a recognised method for assessing whether a protein's three dimensional structure differs from the natural state. Thus an assay can be conducted on protein exposed to agents that are expected to modulate function via perturbation of the native conformation or interference with a functional conformational transition. A number of suitable F-specific antibodies and their target sites have been identified by workers in the field (see for example Lopez et al., 1998 and references therein). For example, F protein exposed to agents intended to modulate F function is subsequently incubated with F specific monoclonal antibodies using an ELISA format. Reduction or increase in F binding relative to F which has not been exposed to agents is measured by addition

of polyclonal antibody to F followed by suitable detection reagents according to standard methods.

(iii) Immunisation leading to protection and/or virus neutralisation

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RSV is known to infect a wide range of animal species when inoculated experimentally into the respiratory tract and several small animal experimental models have been described (see for example Collins et al., 1996 and references therein). These models can be used to determine whether immunisation is protective and/or results in the production of a virus neutralising response.

An example of a suitable method is as follows: Cotton rats (average weight 100 g) are anesthetized with methoxyflurane and a sample of pre-immune blood harvested via standard procedures. While anesthetized, the cotton rats are administered a suitable quantity of agent (for example, purified F protein) via an appropriate route (for example, intramuscular injection or intranasal instillation). The cotton rats are housed for an appropriate period (generally several days to weeks depending on the agents under consideration and the objectives of the study) and then anesthetized as above. Anesthetized animals are bled to obtain a post-immunization sample and infected with 100,000 plaque forming units of a suitable RSV strain (for example, RSV Long). Four days later the animals are sacrificed and lungs harvested aseptically. Protective efficacy of the agent is measured by determination of the effect on whole lung virus titre. Briefly, lungs are homogenised in sterile saline (1:10 w/v) and virus concentration determined by standard methods (for example, plaque assay).

To determine whether the agent elicited a neutralising response, pre-immunization and post-immunization samples and control samples are examined using a virus neutralization test. An example of such a test is as follows. Sera are prepared from the blood samples according to standard methods. Serial dilutions of the sera are then prepared and mixed with a known concentration of RSV (for example, 100 plaque forming units of RSV Long). Mixtures are incubated for 1 hour at room temperature before being assayed for virus concentration by standard methods (for

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example, plaque assay). A neutralizing response is characterised by reduction in virus titre in comparison to control samples.

Accordingly, in another aspect there is provided a method for detecting an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein or derivative thereof said method comprising contacting a eukaryotic cell expressing an optimised nucleic acid molecule encoding said viral F protein or derivative thereof, as hereinbefore described, with a putative modulatory agent and detecting an altered expression phenotype and/or functional activity.

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It should be understood that the subject agent may act via any mechanism including, but not limited to, modulating the cleavage events hereinbefore described.

In yet another aspect there is provided a method for detecting an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein or derivative thereof said method comprising contacting a host cell, which host cell expresses a nucleic acid molecule encoding the non-fully functional form of said viral F protein or derivate thereof as hereinbefore described, with a putative modulatory agent and detecting an altered expression phenotype and/or altered functional activity wherein said agent modulates cleavage of the intervening peptide sequence.

To the extent that this aspect of the present invention is directed to screening for agents which modulate the site 2 cleavage event, it should be understood that this methodology is not limited to systems expressing an optimised nucleic acid sequence but extends to systems utilising any method of expressing the subject F protein.

Reference to a "modulatory agent" should be understood as a reference to an agent which down-regulates, up regulates or otherwise alters at least one functional activity of the subject F protein. For example, the agent may increase or decrease the level of activity of the F protein or it may entirely inhibit F protein functioning. Although the preferred method is to identify agents which inhibit F protein functional activity, for example by

preventing cleavage of the non-fully functional form of the F protein, thereby providing a potential antiviral therapy, the identification of agents which up regulate F protein functional activity may be desired in certain circumstances. For example, it is thought that an agent which causes the F protein to prematurely initiate the conformational changes required for fusion would be inactivating.

Still more preferably, said viral F protein is a Pneumovirus F protein and yet still more preferably a respiratory syncytial virus F protein. Most preferably, said codon optimised

nucleic acid molecule is the nucleic acid molecule defined in <400>5.

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Preferably, said regulation is inhibition, retardation or other form of down-regulation.

Reference to "functional activity" should be understood as a reference to any one or more of the functions which the F protein performs. Accordingly, an agent which modulates the functional activity of the F protein may modulate all or only some of the functions which the F protein performs. The phrase "functional activity" should be understood to include within its scope the cleavage events which the F protein undergoes.

In addition to screening for agents which modulate F protein functional activity utilising function based assays of the type described above, the development of methodology which facilitates production of the F protein or derivatives thereof also facilitates the screening, analysis, rational design and/or modification of agents for modulating F protein functional activity based on analysis of the physical interaction of a putative agent or lead compound with the subject F protein or derivative thereof.

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Specifically, *in vitro* production of the F protein or derivative thereof, which is now possible in light of the development of the present invention, now facilitates analysis of the tertiary structure of the F protein by techniques such as X-ray crystallography. Of particular value in this regard is the fact that the present invention permits production of useful quantities of the F protein F_{sol} portion.

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Accordingly, another aspect of the present invention is directed to a method for analysing, designing and/or modifying an agent capable of interacting with a viral F protein or derivative thereof and modulating at least one functional activity associated with said protein, which protein is produced in accordance with the method of the present invention said method comprising contacting said F protein or derivate thereof with a putative agent and assessing the degree of interactive complementarity of said agent with said protein.

Preferably said viral F protein is a Pneumovirus F protein and even more preferably the F_{sol} portion of said Pneumovirus F protein. Still more preferably, said F_{sol} portion is defined by the amino acid sequence of <400>8.

It should be understood that the F protein which is contacted with the putative agent for evaluation of interactive complementarity may be recombinantly produced. However, it should also be understood that the subject protein may take the form of an image based on the structure elucidated via analysis of the F protein produced in accordance with the method of the present invention, such as an electron density map, molecular models (including, but not limited to, stick, ball and stick, space filling or surface representation models) or other digital or non-digital surface representation models or image, which facilitates the analysis of F protein: agent interactions utilising techniques and software which would be known to those of skill in the art. For example, interaction analyses can be performed utilising techniques such as Biacore real-time analysis of on and off-rates and dissociation constants for binding of ligands (Gardsvoll *et al*, 1999; Hoyer-Hansen *et al*, 1997; Ploug, 1998; Ploug *et al*, 1994; 1995; 1998) and NMR perturbation studies (Stephens *et al*, 1992).

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Reference to "assessing the degree of interactive complementarity" of an agent with the subject F protein should be understood as a reference to elucidating any feature of interest including, but not limited to, the nature and/or degree of interaction between the subject F protein and an agent of interest. As detailed above, any suitable technique can be utilised. Such techniques would be known to the person of skill in the art and can be utilised in this regard. In terms of the nature of the subject interaction, it may be desirable to assess the

types of interactive mechanisms which occur between specific residues of any given agent and those of the F protein (for example, peptide bonding or formation of hydrogen bonds, ionic bonds, van der Waals forces, etc.) and/or their relative strengths. It may also be desirable to assess the degree of interaction which occurs between an agent of interest and the subject F protein. For example, by analysing the location of actual sites of interaction between the subject agent and F protein it is possible to determine the quality of fit of the agent into any region of the F protein and the relative strength and stability of that binding interaction. For example, if it is the object that F protein functioning be blocked, an agent which interacts with the F protein such that it blocks or otherwise hinders (for example, sterically hinders or chemically or electrostatically repels) F2/F1 cleavage will be sought. The form of association which is required in relation to modulating F protein functioning may not involve the formation of any interactive bonding mechanism, as this is traditionally understood, but may involve a non-bonding mechanism such as the proximal location of a region of the agent relative to the subject binding region of the F protein, for example, to effect steric hindrance with respect to the binding of an activating molecule. Where the interaction takes the form of hindrance or the creation of other repulsive forces, this should nevertheless be understood as a form of "interaction" despite the lack of formation of any of the traditional forms of bonding mechanisms.

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It should also be understood that the F protein which is utilised either in a physical form or as an image, as hereinbefore discussed, to assess the interactive complementarity of a putative agent may be a naturally occurring form of the F protein or it may be a derivative, homologue, analogue, mutant, fragment or equivalent thereof. The derivative, homologue, analogue, mutant, fragment or equivalent thereof may take either a physical or non-physical (such as an image) form.

The determination of F protein binding regions has been made possible only by development of the present invention which has permitted F protein production and thereby has facilitated determination of the three dimensional structure of the F protein and the identification and/or rational modification and design of agents which can be used to modulate F protein functioning.

Without limiting the application of the present invention in any way, the method of the present invention facilitates the analysis, design and/or modification of agents capable of interacting with the F protein. In this regard, reference to "analysis, design and/or modification" of an agent should be understood in its broadest sense to include:

Randomly screening (for example, utilising routine high-throughput screening

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(i)

technology) to identify agents which exhibit some modulatory capacity with respect to F protein functional activity and then analysing the precise nature and magnitude of the agent's modulatory capacity utilising the method of this aspect of the present invention. In this regard, existing crystals could be soaked with said agents or co-crystalisation could be performed. A combination of modelling and synthetic modification of the local compound together with mutagenesis of the F protein could then be performed for example. In screening for agents which may modulate activity, standard methods of phage display and also combinatorial chemistry may be utilised (Goodson et al., 1994; Terrett., 2000). Such interaction studies can also be furthered utilising techniques such as the Biacore analysis and NMR perturbation studies. Such agents are often commonly referred to as "lead" agents in terms of the random screening of proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecules for their capacity to function either agonistically or antagonistically. Further, for example, binding affinity and specificity could be enhanced by modifying lead agents to maximise interactions with the F protein. Such analyses would facilitate the selection of agents which are the most suitable for a given purpose. In this way, the selection step is based not only on in vitro data but also on a technical analysis of sites of agent: F protein interaction in terms of their frequency, stability and suitability for a given purpose. For example, such analysis may reveal that what appears to be an acceptable in vitro activity in respect of a randomly identified agent is in fact induced by a highly unstable interaction due to the presence of proximally located agent: F protein sites which exhibit significant repulsive forces thereby de-stabilising the overall interaction between the agent and the F protein. This would then facilitate the selection of another prospective lead compound, exhibiting an equivalent degree of in vitro activity, but which agent

does not, upon further analysis, involve the existence of such de-stabilising repulsive forces.

Screening for the modulatory agents herein defined can be achieved by any one of several suitable methods, including in silico methods, which would be well known to those of skill in the art and which are, for example, routinely used to randomly screen proteinaceous and non-proteinaceous molecules for the purpose of identifying lead compounds.

These methods provide a mechanism for performing high throughput screening of putative modulatory agents such as the proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous agents comprising synthetic, recombinant, chemical and natural libraries.

the methodology described in relation to point (i)) could be modified in order to maximise desired interactions (for example, binding affinity to specificity) with the F protein and to minimise undesirable interactions (such as repulsive or otherwise de-stabilising interactions). Such modification is only possible in light of knowledge of the three-dimensional structure of the F protein and the capacity therefore to identify regions of functional importance, thereby facilitating the structural modification of an agent to maximise an agonistic or antagonistic interaction. Such methodology is particularly applicable to rational drug design.

Methods of modification of a candidate or lead agent in accordance with the purpose as defined herein would be well known to those of skill in the art. For example, a molecular replacement program such as Amore (Navaza, 1994) may be utilised in this regard. The method of the present invention also facilitates the mutagenesis of known signal inducing agents in order to ablate or improve signalling activity.

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(iii) In addition to analysing fit and/or structurally modifying existing molecules, the method of the present invention also facilitates the rational design and synthesis of an agent, such as an agonistic or antagonistic agent, based on theoretically modelling an agent exhibiting the desired F protein interactive structural features followed by the synthesis and testing of the subject agent.

It should be understood that any one or more of applications (i) - (iii) above, may be utilised in identifying a particular agent.

In a related aspect, the present invention should be understood to extend to the agents identified utilising any of the methods hereinbefore defined. In this regard, reference to an agent should be understood as a reference to any proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecule which modulates at least one F protein functional activity. As hereinbefore discussed, to the extent that the present invention encompasses methods of screening for agents utilising F proteins produced in accordance with the expression system hereinbefore defined, this is not to be taken as a restriction on the methodology which is employed to screen for agents which modulate the newly identified cleavage event. In this regard, the present invention extends to agents identified utilising F protein molecules or derivatives thereof howsoever produced.

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Accordingly, the present invention is directed to an agent capable of interacting with a viral F protein and modulating at least one functional activity associated with said viral protein.

25 Preferably, said agent is identified in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined.

More preferably, said agent is an antagonist which interacts with a sequence selected from:

CFASGQNITE	<400>9	FASGQNITEE	<400>10
ASGQNITEEF	<400>11	SGQNITEEFY	<400>12
GQNITEEFYQ	<400>13	QNITEEFYQS	<400>14
NITEEFYQST	<400>15	ITEEFYQSTC	<400>16
TEEFYQSTCS	<400>17	EEFYQSTCSA	<400>18

FYQSTCSAVS <400>20 EFYQSTCSAV <400>19 QSTCSAVSKG <400>22 YQSTCSAVSK <400>21 STCSAVSKGY <400>23 TCSAVSKGYL <400>24 CSAVSKGYLS <400>25 SAVSKGYLSA <400>26 VSKGYLSALR <400>28 AVSKGYLSAL <400>27 KGYLSALRTG <400>30 SKGYLSALRT <400>29 GYLSALRTGW <400>31 YLSALRTGWY <400>32 LSALRTGWYT <400>33 SALRTGWYTS <400>34 ALRTGWYTSV <400>35 LRTGWYTSVI <400>36 RTGWYTSVIT <400>37 TGWYTSVITI <400>38 GWYTSVITIE <400>39 WYTSVITIEL <400>40 YTSVITIELS <400>41 TSVITIELSN <400>42 SVITIELSNI <400>43 VITIELSNIK <400>44 ITIELSNIKK <400>45 TIELSNIKKN <400>46 IELSNIKKNK <400>47 ELSNIKKNKC <400>48 LSNIKKNKCN <400>49 SNIKKNKCNG <400>50 NIKKNKCNGT <400>51 IKKNKCNGTD <400>52 KKNKCNGTDA <400>53 KNKCNGTDAK <400>54 KCNGTDAKVK <400>56 NKCNGTDAKV <400>55 NGTDAKVKLI <400>58 TDAKVKLIKQ <400>60 AKVKLIKQEL <400>62 VKLIKQELDK <400>64 LIKQELDKYK <400>66 CNGTDAKVKL <400>57 GTDAKVKLIK <400>59 DAKVKLIKQE <400>61 KVKLIKQELD <400>63 KLIKQELDKY <400>65 IKQELDKYKN <400>67 KOELDKYKNA <400>68 QELDKYKNAV <400>69 ELDKYKNAVT <400>70 LDKYKNAVTE <400>71 DKYKNAVTEL <400>72 KYKNAVTELQ <400>73 YKNAVTELQL <400>74 NAVTELQLLM <400>76 KNAVTELOLL <400>75 VTELQLLMQS <400>78 AVTELQLLMQ <400>77 TELOLLMOST <400>79 ELQLLMQSTQ <400>80 QLLMQSTQAT <400>82 LQLLMQSTQA <400>81 LLMQSTQATN <400>83 LMOSTOATNN <400>84 QSTQATNNRA <400>86 MQSTQATNNR <400>85 TQATNNRARR <400>88 STQATNNRAR <400>87 ATNNRARREL <400>90 QATNNRARRE <400>89 NNRARRELPR <400>92 TNNRARRELP <400>91 RARRELPRFM <400>94 NRARRELPRF <400>93 RRELPRFMNY <400>96 ARRELPRFMN <400>95 ELPRFMNYTL <400>98 RELPRFMNYT <400>97 PRFMNYTLNN <400>100 LPRFMNYTLN <400>99 RFMNYTLNNA <400>101 FMNYTLNNAK <400>102 NYTLNNAKKT <400>104 MNYTLNNAKK <400>103 TLNNAKKTNV <400>106 YTLNNAKKTN <400>105 LNNAKKTNVT <400>107 NNAKKTNVTL <400>108 NAKKTNVTLS <400>109 AKKTNVTLSK <400>110 KTNVTLSKKR <400>112 KKTNVTLSKK <400>111 NVTLSKKRKR <400>114 TNVTLSKKRK <400>113 VTLSKKRKRR <400>115 TLSKKRKRRF <400>116 SKKRKRRFLG <400>118 LSKKRKRRFL <400>117 KKRKRRFLGF <400>119 KRKRRFLGFL <400>120 KRRFLGFLLG <400>122 RKRRFLGFLL <400>121 RFLGFLLGVG <400>124 RRFLGFLLGV <400>123 LGFLLGVGSA <400>126 FLGFLLGVGS <400>125

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GFLLGVGSAI <400>127 FLLGVGSAIA <400>128 LLGVGSAIAS <400>129 LGVGSAIASG <400>130 GVGSAIASGV <400>131 VGSAIASGVA <400>132 GSAIASGVAV <400>133 SAIASGVAVS <400>134 IASGVAVSKV <400>136 AIASGVAVSK <400>135 SGVAVSKVLH <400>138 ASGVAVSKVL <400>137 VAVSKVLHLE <400>140 GVAVSKVLHL <400>139 AVSKVLHLEG <400>141 VSKVLHLEGE <400>142 SKVLHLEGEV <400>143 KVLHLEGEVN <400>144 VLHLEGEVNK <400>145 LHLEGEVNKI <400>146 LEGEVNKIKS <400>148 HLEGEVNKIK <400>147 EGEVNKIKSA <400>149 GEVNKIKSAL <400>150 EVNKIKSALL <400>151 VNKIKSALLS <400>152 NKIKSALLST <400>153 KIKSALLSTN <400>154 IKSALLSTNK <400>155 KSALLSTNKA <400>156 ALLSTNKAVV <400>158 SALLSTNKAV <400>157 LLSTNKAVVS <400>159 LSTNKAVVSL <400>160 STNKAVVSLS <400>161 TNKAVVSLSN <400>162 NKAVVSLSNG <400>163 KAVVSLSNGV <400>164 VVSLSNGVSV <400>166 AVVSLSNGVS <400>165 SLSNGVSVLT <400>168 VSLSNGVSVL <400>167 LSNGVSVLTS <400>169 SNGVSVLTSK <400>170 NGVSVLTSKV <400>171 GVSVLTSKVL <400>172 VSVLTSKVLD <400>173 SVLTSKVLDL <400>174 VLTSKVLDLK <400>175 LTSKVLDLKN <400>176 TSKVLDLKNY <400>177 SKVLDLKNYI <400>178 KVLDLKNYID <400>179 VLDLKNYIDK <400>180 LDLKNYIDKQ <400>181 DLKNYIDKQL <400>182 LKNYIDKOLL <400>183 KNYIDKOLLP <400>184 YIDKQLLPIV <400>186 NYIDKQLLPI <400>185 IDKQLLPIVN <400>187 DKQLLPIVNK <400>188 KQLLPIVNKQ <400>189 QLLPIVNKQS <400>190 LLPIVNKQSC <400>191 LPIVNKQSCS <400>192 PIVNKQSCSI <400>193 IVNKQSCSIS <400>194 VNKQSCSISN <400>195 NKQSCSISNI <400>196 KQSCSISNIE <400>197 QSCSISNIET <400>198 SCSISNIETV <400>199 CSISNIETVI <400>200 SISNIETVIE <400>201 ISNIETVIEF <400>202 SNIETVIEFQ <400>203 NIETVIEFQQ <400>204 IETVIEFQQK <400>205 ETVIEFQQKN <400>206 TVIEFQQKNN <400>207 VIEFQQKNNR <400>208 IEFQQKNNRL <400>209 EFQQKNNRLL <400>210 QQKNNRLLEI <400>212 FQQKNNRLLE <400>211 QKNNRLLEIT <400>213 KNNRLLEITR <400>214 NNRLLEITRE <400>215 NRLLEITREF <400>216 RLLEITREFS <400>217 LLEITREFSV <400>218 LEITREFSVN <400>219 EITREFSVNA <400>220 ITREFSVNAG <400>221 TREFSVNAGV <400>222 REFSVNAGVT <400>223 EFSVNAGVTT <400>224 SVNAGVTTPV <400>226 FSVNAGVTTP <400>225 NAGVTTPVST <400>228 VNAGVTTPVS <400>227 AGVTTPVSTY <400>229 GVTTPVSTYM <400>230 VTTPVSTYML <400>231 TTPVSTYMLT <400>232 TPVSTYMLTN <400>233 PVSTYMLTNS <400>234

VSTYMLTNSE	<400>235	STYMLTNSEL	<400>236
TYMLTNSELL	<400>237	YMLTNSELLS	<400>238
MLTNSELLSL	<400>239	LTNSELLSLI	<400>240
TNSELLSLIN	<400>241	NSELLSLIND	<400>242
SELLSLINDM	<400>243	ELLSLINDMP	<400>244
LLSLINDMPI	<400>245	LSLINDMPIT	<400>246
SLINDMPITN	<400>247	LINDMPITND	<400>248
INDMPITNDQ	<400>249	NDMPITNDQK	<400>250
DMPITNDQKK	<400>251	MPITNDQKKL	<400>252
PITNDQKKLM	<400>253	ITNDQKKLMS	<400>254
TNDQKKLMSN	<400>255	NDQKKLMSNN	<400>256
DQKKLMSNNV	<400>257	QKKLMSNNVQ	<400>258
KKLMSNNVQI	<400>259	KLMSNNVQIV	<400>260
LMSNNVQIVR	<400>261	MSNNVQIVRQ	<400>262
SNNVQIVRQQ	<400>263	NNVQIVRQQS	<400>264
NVQIVRQQSY	<400>265	VQIVRQQSYS	<400>266
QIVRQQSYSI	<400>267	IVRQQSYSIM	<400>268
VRQQSYSIMS	<400>269	RQQSYSIMSI	<400>270
QQSYSIMSII	<400>271	QSYSIMSIIK	<400>272
SYSIMSIIKE	<400>273	YSIMSIIKEE	<400>274
SIMSIIKEEV	<400>275	IMSIIKEEVL	<400>276
MSIIKEEVLA	<400>277	SIIKEEVLAY	<400>278
IIKEEVLAYV	<400>279	IKEEVLAYVV	<400>280
KEEVLAYVVQ	<400>281	EEVLAYVVOL	<400>282
EVLAYVVQLP	<400>283	VLAYVVQLPL	<400>284
LAYVVQLPLY	<400>285	AYVVQLPLYG	<400>286
YVVQLPLYGV	<400>287	VVQLPLYGVI	<400>288
VQLPLYGVID	<400>289	QLPLYGVIDT	<400>290
LPLYGVIDTP	<400>291	PLYGVIDTPC	<400>292
LYGVIDTPCW	<400>293	YGVIDTPCWK	<400>294
GVIDTPCWKL	<400>295	VIDTPCWKLH	<400>296
IDTPCWKLHT	<400>297	DTPCWKLHTS	<400>298
TPCWKLHTSP	<400>299	PCWKLHTSPL	<400>300
CWKLHTSPLC	<400>301	WKLHTSPLCT	<400>302
KLHTSPLCTT	<400>303	LHTSPLCTTN	<400>304
HTSPLCTTNT	<400>305	TSPLCTTNTK	<400>306
SPLCTTNTKE	<400>303	PLCTTNTKEG	<400>308
LCTTNTKEGS	<400>307	CTTNTKEGSN	<400>310
TTNTKEGSNI	<400>311	TNTKEGSNIC	<400>312
NTKEGSNICL	<400>311	TKEGSNICLT	<400>314
KEGSNICLTR	<400>315	EGSNICLTRT	<400>311
GSNICLTRTD	<400>317	SNICLTRTDR	<400>318
NICLTRIDEG	<400>317	ICLTRTDRGW	<400>320
CLTRTDRGWY	<400>313	LTRTDRGWYC	<400>320
TRTDRGWYCD	<400>321	RTDRGWYCDN	<400>322
TDRGWYCDNA	<400>325	DRGWYCDNAG	<400>324
RGWYCDNAGS	<400>323	GWYCDNAGSV	<400>328
WYCDNAGSVS	<400>327	YCDNAGSVSF	<400>328
CDNAGSVSFF	<400>329	DNAGSVSFFP	<400>330
NAGSVSFFPQ	<400>331	AGSVSFFPQA	<400>332
GSVSFFPQAE	<400>335	SVSFFPQAET	<400>334
VSFFPQAETC	<400>333	SFFPQAETCK	<400>338
FFPOAETCKV	<400>337	FPQAETCKVQ	<400>330
POAETCKVQS	<400>339	QAETCKVQSN	<400>340
LAWDICKAAD	<#UU>341	CHETCVADI	ヘモロロノコサム

AETCKVQSNR	<400>343	ETCKVQSNRV	<400>344
TCKVQSNRVF	<400>345	CKVQSNRVFC	<400>346
KVQSNRVFCD	<400>347	VQSNRVFCDT	<400>348
QSNRVFCDTM	<400>349	SNRVFCDTMN	<400>350
NRVFCDTMNS	<400>351	RVFCDTMNSL	<400>352
VFCDTMNSLT	<400>353	FCDTMNSLTL	<400>354
CDTMNSLTLP	<400>355	DTMNSLTLPS	<400>356
TMNSLTLPSE	<400>357	MNSLTLPSEV	<400>358
NSLTLPSEVN	<400>359	SLTLPSEVNL	<400>360
LTLPSEVNLC	<400>361	TLPSEVNLCN	<400>362
LPSEVNLCNV	<400>363	PSEVNLCNVD	<400>364
SEVNLCNVDI	<400>365	EVNLCNVDIF	<400>366
VNLCNVDIFN	<400>367	NLCNVDIFNP	<400>368
LCNVDIFNPK	<400>369	CNVDIFNPKY	<400>370
NVDIFNPKYD	<400>371	VDIFNPKYDC	<400>372
DIFNPKYDCK	<400>373	IFNPKYDCKI	<400>374
FNPKYDCKIM	<400>375	NPKYDCKIMT	<400>376
PKYDCKIMTS	<400>377	KYDCKIMTSK	<400>378
YDCKIMTSKT	<400>379	DCKIMTSKTD	<400>380
CKIMTSKTDV	<400>381	KIMTSKTDVS	<400>382
IMTSKTDVSS	<400>383	MTSKTDVSSS	<400>384
TSKTDVSSSV	<400>385	SKTDVSSSVI	<400>386
KTDVSSSVIT	<400>387	TDVSSSVITS	<400>388
DVSSSVITSL	<400>389	VSSSVITSLG	<400>390
SSSVITSLGA	<400>391	SSVITSLGAI	<400>392
SVITSLGAIV	<400>393	VITSLGAIVS	<400>394
ITSLGAIVSC	<400>395	TSLGAIVSCY	<400>396
SLGAIVSCYG	<400>397	LGAIVSCYGK	<400>398
GAIVSCYGKT	<400>399	AIVSCYGKTK	<400>400
IVSCYGKTKC	<400>401	VSCYGKTKCT	<400>402
SCYGKTKCTA	<400>403	CYGKTKCTAS	<400>404
YGKTKCTASN	<400>405	GKTKCTASNK	<400>406
KTKCTASNKN	<400>407	TKCTASNKNR	<400>408
KCTASNKNRG	<400>409	CTASNKNRGI	<400>410
TASNKNRGII	<400>411	ASNKNRGIIK	<400>412
SNKNRGIIKT	<400>413	NKNRGIIKTF	<400>414
KNRGIIKTFS	<400>415	NRGIIKTFSN	<400>416
RGIIKTFSNG	<400>417	GIIKTFSNGC	<400>418
IIKTFSNGCD	<400>419	IKTFSNGCDY	<400>420
KTFSNGCDYV	<400>421	TFSNGCDYVS	<400>422
FSNGCDYVSN	<400>423	SNGCDYVSNK	<400>424
NGCDYVSNKG	<400>425	GCDYVSNKGV	<400>426
CDYVSNKGVD	<400>427	DYVSNKGVDT	<400>428
YVSNKGVDTV	<400>429	VSNKGVDTVS	<400>430
SNKGVDTVSV	<400>431	NKGVDTVSVG	<400>432
KGVDTVSVGN	<400>433	GVDTVSVGNT	<400>434
VDTVSVGNTL	<400>435	DTVSVGNTLY	<400>436
TVSVGNTLYY	<400>437	VSVGNTLYYV	<400>438
SVGNTLYYVN	<400>439	VGNTLYYVNK	<400>440
GNTLYYVNKQ	<400>441	NTLYYVNKQE	<400>442
TLYYVNKQEG	<400>443	LYYVNKQEGK	<400>444
YYVNKQEGKS	<400>445	YVNKQEGKSL	<400>446
VNKQEGKSLY	<400>447	NKQEGKSLYV	<400>448
KQEGKSLYVK	<400>449	QEGKSLYVKG	<400>450
		x	1100/100

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EGKSLYVKGE <400>451 GKSLYVKGEP <400>452 SLYVKGEPII <400>454 KSLYVKGEPI <400>453 YVKGEPIINF <400>456 LYVKGEPIIN <400>455 VKGEPIINFY <400>457 KGEPIINFYD <400>458 GEPIINFYDP <400>459 EPIINFYDPL <400>460 PIINFYDPLV <400>461 IINFYDPLVF <400>462 INFYDPLVFP <400>463 NFYDPLVFPS <400>464 FYDPLVFPSD <400>465 YDPLVFPSDE <400>466 DPLVFPSDEF <400>467 PLVFPSDEFD <400>468 LVFPSDEFDA <400>469 VFPSDEFDAS <400>470 FPSDEFDASI <400>471 PSDEFDASIS <400>472 SDEFDASISQ <400>473 DEFDASISQV <400>474 EFDASISQVN <400>475 FDASISQVNE <400>476 DASISQVNEK <400>477 ASISQVNEKI <400>478 SISOVNEKIN <400>479 ISQVNEKINQ <400>480 SQVNEKINQS <400>481 QVNEKINQSL <400>482 VNEKINQSLA <400>483 NEKINQSLAF <400>484 EKINQSLAFI <400>485 KINQSLAFIR <400>486 INQSLAFIRK <400>487 NOSLAFIRKS <400>488 SLAFIRKSDE <400>490 QSLAFIRKSD <400>489 LAFIRKSDEL <400>491 AFIRKSDELL <400>492 FIRKSDELLH <400>493 IRKSDELLHN <400>494 RKSDELLHNV <400>495 KSDELLHNVN <400>496 SDELLHNVNA <400>497 DELLHNVNAG <400>498 ELLHNVNAGK <400>499 LLHNVNAGKS <400>500 LHNVNAGKST <400>501 HNVNAGKSTT <400>502 VNAGKSTTNI <400>504 NVNAGKSTTN <400>503 AGKSTTNIMI <400>506 NAGKSTTNIM <400>505 GKSTTNIMIT <400>507 KSTTNIMITT <400>508 STTNIMITTI <400>509 TTNIMITTII <400>510 TNIMITTIII <400>511 NIMITTIIIV <400>512 IMITTIIIVI <400>513 MITTIIIVII <400>514 ITTIIIVIIV <400>515 TTIIIVIIVI <400>516 TIIIVIIVIL <400>517 IIIVIIVILL <400>518 IVIIVILLSL <400>520 IIVIIVILLS <400>519 VIIVILLSLI <400>521 IIVILLSLIA <400>522 IVILLSLIAV <400>523 VILLSLIAVG <400>524 ILLSLIAVGL <400>525 LLSLIAVGLL <400>526 SLIAVGLLLY <400>528 LSLIAVGLLL <400>527 LIAVGLLLYC <400>529 IAVGLLLYCK <400>530 AVGLLLYCKA <400>531 VGLLLYCKAR <400>532 LLLYCKARST <400>534 GLLLYCKARS <400>533 LLYCKARSTP <400>535 LYCKARSTPV <400>536 YCKARSTPVT <400>537 CKARSTPVTL <400>538 KARSTPVTLS <400>539 ARSTPVTLSK <400>540 RSTPVTLSKD <400>541 STPVTLSKDQ <400>542 TPVTLSKDQL <400>543 PVTLSKDQLS <400>544 VTLSKDQLSG <400>545 TLSKDQLSGI <400>546 LSKDQLSGIN <400>547 SKDQLSGINN <400>548 KDQLSGINNI <400>549 DOLSGINNIA <400>550 OLSGINNIAF <400>551 LSGINNIAFS <400>552 SGINNIAFSN <400>553

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Even more preferably said antagonist interacts with a sequence selected from <400>88, <400>89, <400>90, <400>91, <400>92, <400>93 or <400>94.

Reference to "interacts" should be understood as a reference to any form of interaction including, but not limited to covalent bonds, hydrogen bonds, ionic bonds, van der Waals forces or any other interactive bonding mechanism.

Still without limiting the present invention to any one theory or mode of action the inventors have determined that inhibition or other form of interference with cleavage at the newly identified cleavage site disclosed herein interferes with F protein functioning. Further, it is thought that the intervening sequence exhibits relevance in relation to immune recognition. Specifically, it is thought that F proteins engineered to either retain the intervening sequence or which are engineered such that the intervening sequence is removed altogether exhibit altered but improved immunogenicity. Although not wishing to be constrained by theory, it is thought that in the normal physiological setting, the intervening sequence which is excised following formation of the fully functional F glycoprotein serves as an immune decoy thereby obstructing or otherwise inhibiting the induction of an immune response against the fully functional F protein.

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Accordingly, mutating the cleavage sites comprising the F protein (at either the amino acid or encoding nucleic acid level) provides a useful tool for producing molecules which are engineered to retain the intervening sequence and which cannot undergo the normal cleavage event in order to generate the fully functional F protein. These molecules are useful in a range of applications including, but not limited to, as an immunogen for use in a vaccination protocol. In addition to producing a F protein variant which cannot be cleaved, identification by the inventors of the second cleavage site now enables the synthesis of F protein molecules which lack the intervening sequence as herein defined. This is particularly useful since it is thought that the F protein which lacks the intervening sequence, but which intervening sequence was not released into the circulation of the subject, will exhibit better immunogenecity than the naturally occurring F protein.

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Accordingly, in another aspect there is provided a viral F protein variant comprising a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits modulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant.

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More particularly, there is provided a viral F protein variant comprising a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant.

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Reference to "intervening peptide sequence" should be understood to have the same meaning as hereinbefore defined.

Reference to "wild type" F protein is a reference to the forms of F protein which are predominantly expressed by negative sense single stranded RNA viruses. This should be understood to include reference to the uncleaved form of the F protein, the functional activity of which includes the capacity to undergo cleavage and excision of the intervening sequence, and the fully functional F protein in respect of which the intervening sequence has been excised. It should be understood that to the extent that the subject variant molecule comprises all or part of the intervening sequence, modulation of its functional activity should be assessed relative to the wild type F protein which still comprises the intervening sequence. Conversely, a variant F protein which does not comprise the intervening sequence should be assessed relative to the cleaved wild type F protein. In this regard, reference to "functional activity" should be understood as a reference to any one or more of the functional activities which the subject F protein can perform including, but not limited to, its capacity to undergo cleavage or its capacity to induce an immune response.

Reference to "mutation" should be understood as a reference to any change, alteration or other modification, whether occurring naturally or non-naturally, which results in the subject F protein exhibiting functional activity which is modulated relative to that of the corresponding wild type F protein.

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The change, alteration or other modification may take any form including, but not limited to, a structural modification (such as an alteration secondary, tertiary or quaternary structure of the F protein molecule), a molecular modification (such as an addition substitutional deletion of one or more amino acids from the F protein) or a chemical modification. The subject modification should also be understood to extend to the fusion, linking or binding of a proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecule to the F protein or to the nucleic acid molecule encoding the F protein thereby rendering the expression product functionally distinctive over the corresponding wild type F protein. It should also be understood that although it is necessary that the subject mutation is expressed by the F protein expression product, the creation of the mutation may be achieved by any suitable means including either mutating a wild type F protein, synthesising a F protein variant or modifying a nucleic acid molecule encoding a wild type F protein such that the expression product of said mutated nucleic acid molecule is a F protein variant. Preferably, said mutation is a single or multiple amino acid sequence substitution, addition and/or deletion. In this regard, in one preferred embodiment the subject mutation is deletion of all or part of the intervening sequence. In another preferred embodiment, the subject mutation is an amino acid substitution which renders the newly identified cleavage site inactive. By inactive is meant that the cleavage site cannot be cleaved by the enzymatic processes which normally function to activate an F protein in vivo.

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In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

In a most preferred embodiment there is provided a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant comprising a mutation in the cleavage site defined by amino acids RARR (<400>564) wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant.

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Preferably said mutation comprises one or more of the amino acid substitutions selected from the following list:

- (i) R106G
- 5 (ii) A107Q
 - (iii) R108G

Still more preferably said F protein variant comprises the sequence substantially as set forth in <400>565.

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In another preferred embodiment there is provided a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant comprising a multiple amino acid deletion from the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent of said variant.

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It is more preferably provided that said amino acid deletion is a partial deletion of the intervening peptide sequence and more preferably a deletion of the peptide sequence

RARRELPRFMNYTLNNAKKTNVTLS <400>569.

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Still more preferably said variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>567.

To the extent that the present invention relates to F protein variants comprising one or more amino acid additions, substitutions and/or deletions, it should also be understood to extend to nucleic acid molecules encoding said variants.

Accordingly, another aspect of the present invention is directed to an isolated nucleic acid molecule selected from the list consisting of:

30 (i) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F

protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits modulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.

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- (ii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- (iii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the cleavage site defined by amino acids RARR wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- 20 (iv) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises one or more of the amino acid substitutions selected from the following list:

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- (a) R106G
- (b) A107Q
- (c) R108G
- 30 (v) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F

protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a multiple amino acid deletion from the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.

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(vi) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a partial deletion of the intervening peptide sequence and more preferably a deletion of the peptide sequence

RARRELPRFMNYTLNNAKKTNVTLS <400>569.

(vii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>567.

20 (viii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>565.

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- (ix) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising the nucleotide substantially as set forth in <400>568.
- (x) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising the nucleotide substantially as set forth in <400>566.

In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

The nucleic acid molecule of the subject invention may be ligated to an expression vector capable of expression in a prokaryotic cell (eg. *E.Coli*) or a eukaryotic cell (eg. yeast cells, fungal cells, insect cells, mammalian cells or plant cells). The nucleic acid molecule may be ligated or fused or otherwise associated with a nucleic acid molecule encoding another entity such as, for example, a signal peptide. It may also comprise additional nucleotide sequence information fused, linked or otherwise associated with it either at the 3' or 5' terminal portions or at both the 3' and 5' terminal portions. The nucleic acid molecule may also be part of a vector, such as an expression vector. The latter embodiment facilitates production of recombinant forms of the variant F protein encompassed by the present invention.

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The variant F protein molecule of the present invention may be derived from natural or recombinant sources or may be chemically synthesised. Methods for producing these molecules would be well known to those skilled in the art.

As hereinbefore provided, "derivatives" include fragments, parts, portions, variants and mimetics from natural, synthetic or recombinant sources including fusion proteins. Parts or fragments include, for example, active regions of F protein. Derivatives may be derived from insertion, deletion or substitution of amino acids. Amino acid insertional derivatives include amino and/or carboxylic terminal fusions as well as intrasequence insertions of single or multiple amino acids. Insertional amino acid sequence variants are those in which one or more amino acid residues are introduced into a predetermined site in the protein although random insertion is also possible with suitable screening of the resulting product. Deletional variants are characterised by the removal of one or more amino acids from the sequence. Substitutional amino acid variants are those in which at least one residue in the sequence has been removed and a different residue inserted in its place. An example of substitutional amino acid variants are conservative amino acid substitutions.

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Conservative amino acid substitutions typically include substitutions within the following groups: glycine and alanine; valine, isoleucine and leucine; aspartic acid and glutamic acid; asparagine and glutamine; serine and threonine; lysine and arginine; and phenylalanine and tyrosine. Additions to amino acid sequences include fusions with other peptides,

5 polypeptides or proteins.

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Reference to "homologues" should be understood as a reference to F protein nucleic acid molecules or proteins derived from viral strains other than the species of origin.

- 10 Chemical and functional equivalents of F protein nucleic acid or protein molecules should be understood as molecules exhibiting any one or more of the functional activities of these molecules and may be derived from any source such as being chemically synthesized or identified via screening processes such as natural product screening.
- 15 The derivatives include fragments having particular epitopes or parts of the entire protein fused to peptides, polypeptides or other proteinaceous or non-proteinaceous molecules.

Analogues contemplated herein include, but are not limited to, modification to side chains, incorporating of unnatural amino acids and/or their derivatives during peptide, polypeptide or protein synthesis and the use of crosslinkers and other methods which impose conformational constraints on the proteinaceous molecules or their analogues.

Derivatives of nucleic acid sequences may similarly be derived from single or multiple nucleotide substitutions, deletions and/or additions including fusion with other nucleic acid molecules. The derivatives of the nucleic acid molecules of the present invention include oligonucleotides, PCR primers, antisense molecules, molecules suitable for use in cosuppression and fusion of nucleic acid molecules. Derivatives of nucleic acid sequences also include degenerate variants.

Examples of side chain modifications contemplated by the present invention include modifications of amino groups such as by reductive alkylation by reaction with an aldehyde followed by reduction with NaBH₄; amidination with methylacetimidate; acylation with acetic anhydride; carbamoylation of amino groups with cyanate;

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trinitrobenzylation of amino groups with 2, 4, 6-trinitrobenzene sulphonic acid (TNBS); acylation of amino groups with succinic anhydride and tetrahydrophthalic anhydride; and pyridoxylation of lysine with pyridoxal-5-phosphate followed by reduction with NaBH₄.

- 5 The guanidine group of arginine residues may be modified by the formation of heterocyclic condensation products with reagents such as 2,3-butanedione, phenylglyoxal and glyoxal.
- The carboxyl group may be modified by carbodiimide activation *via* O-acylisourea formation followed by subsequent derivitisation, for example, to a corresponding amide.
- Sulphydryl groups may be modified by methods such as carboxymethylation with iodoacetic acid or iodoacetamide; performic acid oxidation to cysteic acid; formation of a mixed disulphides with other thiol compounds; reaction with maleimide, maleic anhydride or other substituted maleimide; formation of mercurial derivatives using 4-chloromercuribenzoate, 4-chloromercuriphenylsulphonic acid, phenylmercury chloride, 2-chloromercuri-4-nitrophenol and other mercurials; carbamoylation with cyanate at alkaline pH.
- 20 Tryptophan residues may be modified by, for example, oxidation with N-bromosuccinimide or alkylation of the indole ring with 2-hydroxy-5-nitrobenzyl bromide or sulphenyl halides. Tyrosine residues on the other hand, may be altered by nitration with tetranitromethane to form a 3-nitrotyrosine derivative.
- 25 Modification of the imidazole ring of a histidine residue may be accomplished by alkylation with iodoacetic acid derivatives or N-carboethoxylation with diethylpyrocarbonate.
- Examples of incorporating unnatural amino acids and derivatives during protein synthesis include, but are not limited to, use of norleucine, 4-amino butyric acid, 4-amino-3-hydroxy-5-phenylpentanoic acid, 6-aminohexanoic acid, t-butylglycine, norvaline, phenylglycine, ornithine, sarcosine, 4-amino-3-hydroxy-6-methylheptanoic acid, 2-thienyl

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alanine and/or D-isomers of amino acids. A list of unnatural amino acids contemplated herein is shown in Table 3.

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TABLE 3

	Non-conventional	Code	Non-conventional	Code	
5	amino acid		amino acid	amino acid	
	α-aminobutyric acid	Abu	L-N-methylalanine	Nmala	
	α -amino- α -methylbutyrate	Mgabu	L-N-methylarginine	Nmarg	
	aminocyclopropane-	Cpro	L-N-methylasparagine	Nmasn	
	carboxylate		L-N-methylaspartic acid	Nmasp	
10	aminoisobutyric acid	Aib	L-N-methylcysteine	Nmcys	
	aminonorbornyl-	Norb	L-N-methylglutamine	Nmgln	
	carboxylate		L-N-methylglutamic acid	Nmglu	
	cyclohexylalanine	Chexa	L-N-methylhistidine	Nmhis	
	cyclopentylalanine	Cpen	L-N-methylisolleucine	Nmile	
15	D-alanine	Dal	L-N-methylleucine	Nmleu	
	D-arginine	Darg	L-N-methyllysine	Nmlys	
	D-aspartic acid	Dasp	L-N-methylmethionine	Nmmet	
	D-cysteine	Dcys	L-N-methylnorleucine	Nmnle	
	D-glutamine	Dgln	L-N-methylnorvaline	Nmnva	
20	D-glutamic acid	Dglu	L-N-methylornithine	Nmorn	
	D-histidine	Dhis	L-N-methylphenylalanine	Nmphe	
	D-isoleucine	Dile	L-N-methylproline	Nmpro	
	D-leucine	Dleu	L-N-methylserine	Nmser	
	D-lysine	Dlys	L-N-methylthreonine	Nmthr	
25	D-methionine	Dmet	L-N-methyltryptophan	Nmtrp	
	D-ornithine	Dorn	L-N-methyltyrosine	Nmtyr	
	D-phenylalanine	Dphe	L-N-methylvaline	Nmval	
	D-proline	Dpro	L-N-methylethylglycine	Nmetg	
	D-serine	Dser	L-N-methyl-t-butylglycine	Nmtbug	
30	D-threonine	Dthr	L-norleucine	Nle	
	D-tryptophan	Dtrp	L-norvaline	Nva	
	D-tyrosine	Dtyr	α -methyl-aminoisobutyrate	Maib	
	D-valine	Dval	α-methylaminobutyrate	Mgabu	

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	D-α-methylalanine	Dmala	α-methylcyclohexylalanine	Mchexa
	D-α-methylarginine	Dmarg	α-methylcylcopentylalanine	Mcpen
	D-α-methylasparagine	Dmasn	α-methyl-α-napthylalanine	Manap
	D-α-methylaspartate	Dmasp	α-methylpenicillamine	Mpen
5	D-α-methylcysteine	Dmcys	N-(4-aminobutyl)glycine	Nglu
	D-α-methylglutamine	Dmgln	N-(2-aminoethyl)glycine	Naeg
	D-α-methylhistidine	Dmhis	N-(3-aminopropyl)glycine	Norn
	D-α-methylisoleucine	Dmile	N-amino-α-methylbutyrate	Nmaabu
	D-α-methylleucine	Dmleu	α-napthylalanine	Anap
10	D-α-methyllysine	Dmlys	N-benzylglycine	Nphe
	D-α-methylmethionine	Dmmet	N-(2-carbamylethyl)glycine	Ngln
	D-α-methylornithine	Dmorn	N-(carbamylmethyl)glycine	Nasn
	D-α-methylphenylalanine	Dmphe	N-(2-carboxyethyl)glycine	Nglu
	D-α-methylproline	Dmpro	N-(carboxymethyl)glycine	Nasp
15	D-α-methylserine	Dmser	N-cyclobutylglycine	Nebut
	D-α-methylthreonine	Dmthr	N-cycloheptylglycine	Nchep
	D-α-methyltryptophan	Dmtrp	N-cyclohexylglycine	Nchex
	D-α-methyltyrosine	Dmty	N-cyclodecylglycine	Ncdec
	D-α-methylvaline	Dmval	N-cylcododecylglycine	Nedod
20	D-N-methylalanine	Dnmala	N-cyclooctylglycine	Ncoct
	D-N-methylarginine	Dnmarg	N-cyclopropylglycine	Nepro
	D-N-methylasparagine	Dnmasn	N-cycloundecylglycine	Neund
	D-N-methylaspartate	Dnmasp	N-(2,2-diphenylethyl)glycine	Nbhm
	D-N-methylcysteine	Dnmcys	N-(3,3-diphenylpropyl)glycine	Nbhe
25	D-N-methylglutamine	Dnmgln	N-(3-guanidinopropyl)glycine	Narg
	D-N-methylglutamate	Dnmglu	N-(1-hydroxyethyl)glycine	Nthr
	D-N-methylhistidine	Dnmhis	N-(hydroxyethyl))glycine	Nser
	D-N-methylisoleucine	Dnmile	N-(imidazolylethyl))glycine	Nhis
	D-N-methylleucine	Dnmleu	N-(3-indolylyethyl)glycine	Nhtrp
30	D-N-methyllysine	Dnmlys	N-methyl-γ-aminobutyrate	Nmgabu
	N-methylcyclohexylalanine	Nmchexa	D-N-methylmethionine	Dnmmet
	D-N-methylornithine	Dnmorn	N-methylcyclopentylalanine	Nmcpen
	N-methylglycine	Nala	D-N-methylphenylalanine	Dnmphe

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	N-methylaminoisobutyrate	Nmaib	D-N-methylproline	Dnmpro
	N-(1-methylpropyl)glycine	Nile	D-N-methylserine	Dnmser
	N-(2-methylpropyl)glycine	Nleu	D-N-methylthreonine	Dnmthr
	D-N-methyltryptophan	Dnmtrp	N-(1-methylethyl)glycine	Nval
5	D-N-methyltyrosine	Dnmtyr	N-methyla-napthylalanine	Nmanap
	D-N-methylvaline	Dnmval	N-methylpenicillamine	Nmpen
	γ-aminobutyric acid	Gabu	N-(p-hydroxyphenyl)glycine	Nhtyr
	L-t-butylglycine	Tbug	N-(thiomethyl)glycine	Ncys
	L-ethylglycine	Etg	penicillamine	Pen
10	L-homophenylalanine	Hphe	L-α-methylalanine	Mala
	L-α-methylarginine	Marg	L-α-methylasparagine	Masn
	L-α-methylaspartate	Masp	L-α-methyl- <i>t</i> -butylglycine	Mtbug
	L-α-methylcysteine	Mcys	L-methylethylglycine	Metg
	L-α-methylglutamine	Mgln	L-α-methylglutamate	Mglu
15	L-α-methylhistidine	Mhis	L-α-methylhomophenylalanine	Mhphe
	L-α-methylisoleucine	Mile	N-(2-methylthioethyl)glycine	Nmet
	L-α-methylleucine	Mleu	L-α-methyllysine	Mlys
	L-α-methylmethionine	Mmet	L-α-methylnorleucine	Mnle
	L-α-methylnorvaline	Mnva	L-α-methylornithine	Morn
20	L-α-methylphenylalanine	Mphe	L-α-methylproline	Mpro
	L-α-methylserine	Mser	L-α-methylthreonine	Mthr
	L-α-methyltryptophan	Mtrp	L-α-methyltyrosine	Mtyr
	L-α-methylvaline	Mval	L-N-methylhomophenylalanine	Nmhphe
	N-(N-(2,2-diphenylethyl)	Nnbhm	N-(N-(3,3-diphenylpropyl)	Nnbhe
25	carbamylmethyl)glycine		carbamylmethyl)glycine	
	1-carboxy-1-(2,2-diphenyl-N	mbc		
	ethylamino)cyclopropane			

30 Crosslinkers can be used, for example, to stabilise 3D conformations, using homobifunctional crosslinkers such as the bifunctional imido esters having (CH₂)_n spacer groups with n=1 to n=6, glutaraldehyde, N-hydroxysuccinimide esters and hetero-bifunctional

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reagents which usually contain an amino-reactive moiety such as N-hydroxysuccinimide and another group specific-reactive moiety.

In addition to screening for agents which modulate F protein functional activity, the

development of a method of producing a viral F protein or derivative thereof in a
eukaryotic cell and identification of the novel F protein cleavage site has now facilitated
the development of *in vivo* methodology directed to administering to a subject a vaccine
comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a viral F protein or derivative thereof.
Reference to "derivative" should be understood to encompass variants thereof, such as the
variants hereinbefore defined. Without limiting the present invention to any one theory or
mode of action, the operation of such a vaccine is based on the generation of an immune
response, in particular antibody synthesis, directed to the subject F protein or derivative
thereof. The antibodies generated therein bind to virally produced F proteins thereby
inhibiting their fusion related functional activity and consequently reducing and/or
inhibiting further viral propagation. Such a vaccine is useful in either the prophylactic
and/or therapeutic sense.

Accordingly, another aspect of the present invention provides a recombinant viral construct comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a viral F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule comprises codons optimised for expression in a eukaryotic cell, wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein.

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25 Still another aspect of the present invention provides a recombinant viral construct comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative thereof wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein variant.

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In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

Reference to "inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating" an immune response to an F protein should be understood to mean stimulating or facilitating the stimulation of a specific immune response. The specific immune response is preferably a humoral response which is directed to any one or more regions of the F protein. In this regard, it should be understood that the subject immune response will down-regulate and/or inhibit at least one functional activity of the subject F protein.

Yet another aspect of the present invention relates to a vaccine comprising a recombinant viral construct which construct comprises a nucleic acid molecule encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression in a eukaryotic cell wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein.

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Still another aspect of the present invention relates to a vaccine comprising a recombinant viral construct which construct comprises a nucleic acid molecule encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant or derivative thereof, wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein variant.

In accordance with these aspects of the present invention, the nucleotide sequence of the subject nucleic acid molecule is preferably the nucleotide sequence defined in <400>5, <400>6, <400>566 or <400>568.

A further aspect of the present invention relates to use of the agents hereinbefore defined to 30 modulate F protein functional activity and, in particular, the use of these agents in the therapeutic and/or prophylactic treatment of conditions characterised by infection with a WO 02/42326

negative sense single stranded RNA virus, and more particularly respiratory syncytial virus. Conditions envisaged herein include Parainfluenza induced croup and bronchiolitis. It should be understood that reference to "agent" hereinafter includes reference to agents identified or generated by the screening assays described above, including the modulatory agents (for example, antibodies) which are generated *in vivo* via use of a DNA vaccine. This aspect of the present invention is also directed to use of the F protein or derivatives thereof or encoding nucleic acid molecules, including the F protein variants, as hereinbefore described in the therapeutic and/or prophylactic treatment of conditions characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.

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Accordingly, another aspect of the present invention provides the method of modulating at least one functional activity associated with a viral F protein in a subject, said method comprising introducing into said subject and effective amount of an F protein modulatory agent for a time and under condition sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.

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Preferably, said functional activity is F protein mediated host cell-virion fusion and/or virion budding and said modulation is down-regulation.

In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

The term "subject" includes humans primates, livestock animals (eg, horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, donkeys), laboratory test animals (eg, mice, rats, rabbits, guinea pigs), companion animals (eg, dogs, cats), captive wild animals (eg, kangaroos, deer, foxes), birds (eg, chickens, ducks, bantams, pheasants). Preferably the subject is a human or laboratory test animal. Even more preferably the subject is a human.

In another aspect, the present invention provides a method of modulating at least one functional activity associated with a viral F protein, said method comprising contacting

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said viral F protein with an effective amount of an F protein modulatory agent for a time and under conditions sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.

Preferably said viral F protein is a Pneumovirus F protein and even more preferably a respiratory syncytial virus F protein. Still more preferably said modulation is down-regulation of F protein functional activity.

This aspect of the present invention should be understood to extend to the modulation of F protein associated functional activities in *in vitro* culture systems. This may be of benefit, for example, when applied to *in vitro* procedures designed to virally infect a prospective host cell. This may be of particular use, for example, where it is desired to create a cell line or to otherwise create a virally transformed cell. In this regard, the subject modulation would preferably be up-regulation of F protein functional activity.

In yet another aspect, the present invention relates to a method for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus in a subject, said method comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of an agent, which agent is capable of down-regulating at least one functional activity of the F protein expressed by said virus, for a time and under conditions sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.

In still yet another aspect, the present invention relates to a method for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus in a subject, said method comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof and/or a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant as hereinbefore defined or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent a mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule for a time and under conditions sufficient for said composition to down-regulate said viral F protein functional activity.

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In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

5 Reference to "administering" an agent should be understood to extend to the administration of a DNA vaccine for the purpose of *in vivo* generation of anti – F protein antibodies.

Reference to a condition "characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus" should be understood as a reference to a condition, one or more symptoms of which are directly or indirectly induced due to infection of the subject with the subject virus. Preferably, said virus is a Pneumovirus and even more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

The molecule which may be administered to a subject in accordance with the present invention may also be linked to a targeting means such as a monoclonal antibody, which provides specific delivery of the molecule to the target cells.

In a preferred embodiment the subject of the prophylactic or therapeutic treatment is a mammal and still more preferably a human.

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Administration of the subject modulatory agent or the subject F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof, nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant as hereinbefore defined or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule (hereinafter said modulatory agents, proteins and/or nucleic acid molecules are collectively referred to as the "active ingredients"), in the form of a pharmaceutical composition, may be performed by any convenient means. The active ingredients of the pharmaceutical composition are contemplated to exhibit therapeutic activity when administered in an amount which depends on the particular case. The variation depends, for example, on the human or animal and the active ingredient chosen. A broad range of doses may be applicable. Considering a patient, for example, from about 0.1 mg to about 1 mg of active ingredient

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may be administered per kilogram of body weight per day. Dosage regimes may be adjusted to provide the optimum therapeutic response. For example, several divided doses may be administered daily, weekly, monthly or other suitable time intervals or the dose may be proportionally reduced as indicated by the exigencies of the situation. The active ingredient may be administered in the form of pharmaceutically acceptable nontoxic salts, such as acid addition salts or metal complexes, e.g. with zinc, iron or the like (which are considered as salts for purposes of this application). Illustrative of such acid addition salts are hydrochloride, hydrobromide, sulphate, phosphate, maleate, acetate, citrate, benzoate, succinate, malate, ascorbate, tartrate and the like. If the active ingredient is to be administered in tablet form, the tablet may contain a binder such as tragacanth, corn starch or gelatin; a disintegrating agent, such as alginic acid; and a lubricant, such as magnesium stearate.

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Routes of administration include, but are not limited to, respiratorally, intratracheally, nasopharyngeally, intravenously, intraperitoneally, subcutaneously, intracranially, intradermally, intramuscularly, intraoccularly, intrathecally, intracereberally, intranasally, infusion, orally, rectally, *via* IV drip patch and implant. Preferably, the route of administration is a route which permits directed delivery of the modulatory agent. For example, aerosol administration (such as by nebulisation) into the airways permits directed delivery to the airways region, in contrast to systemic delivery which results in delivery to the whole body.

Where the disorder which is the subject of treatment or prophylaxis is a respiratory distress syndrome, delivery of the active ingredient to the airway, for example as an aerosol *via* nebulisation, is an ideal approach since this maximises delivery to the airway where the infection has occurred and minimises systemic delivery which may be associated with side effects.

The term "aerosol" is used in its most general sense to include any formulation capable of administration *via* nasal, pharyngeal, tracheal, bronchial or oral passages. Aerosols generally comprise particles of liquid or solid suspended in a gas or vapour. Conveniently,

the aerosol is a colloidal system such as a mist in which the dispersion medium is a gas. The method of administering the aerosol formulation is not critical and may be achieved using a nasal spray hand pump, electric pump, pressurised dispenser, nasal drip or other convenient means. Alternatively, the formulation may be administered in a dry powder delivery system. It should be understood that the method of the present invention extends to direct application of said formulations to intra nasal surfaces. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the aerosol is delivered at a rate of from about 1 to about 20 litres/min. and preferably from about 2 to about 15 litres/min. at a droplet size of from about 0.1 to about 10 μ m and more preferably from about 0.1 to about 6 μ m. Conveniently, a stock solution of material is prepared at a concentration of from about 0.5 to about 20 mg/ml or more preferably from about 1.0 to about 10 mg/ml of carrier solution.

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The formulation is administered in a therapeutically effective amount. A therapeutically effective amount means that amount necessary at least partly to attain the desired effect, or to delay the onset of, inhibit the progression of, or halt altogether, the onset or progression of the particular condition being treated. Such amounts will depend, of course, on the particular conditions being treated, the severity of the condition and individual patient parameters including age, physical conditions, size, weight and concurrent treatment. These factors are well known to those of ordinary skill in the art and can be addressed with no more than routine experimentation. It is preferred generally that a maximum dose be used, that is, the highest safe dose according to sound medical judgement. It will be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art, however, that a lower dose or tolerable dose may be administered for medical reasons, psychological reasons or for virtually any other reasons.

Generally, daily doses of formulation will be from about 0.01 µg/kg per day to 1000 mg/kg per day. Small doses (0.01-1 mg) may be administered initially, followed by increasing doses up to about 1000 mg/kg per day. In the event that the response in a subject is insufficient at such doses, even higher doses (or effective higher doses by a different, more localised delivery route) may be employed to the extent patient tolerance permits. A single dose may be administered or multiple doses may be required on an hourly, daily, weekly or

monthly basis. Effective amounts of formulation vary depending on the individual but may range from about $0.1~\mu g$ to about 20~mg, alternatively from about $1~\mu g$ to about 10~mg and more preferably from about $1~\mu g$ to 5~mg per dose.

In another aspect the present invention relates to the use of an agent capable of modulating at least one functional activity of a viral F protein, which agent is identified and/or generated in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.

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In still another aspect the present invention relates to the use of a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof, nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant as hereinbefore defined or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.

In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

In another aspect the present invention relates to the use of an agent, which agent is identified in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined, in the manufacture of a medicament for the modulation of at least one viral F protein associated functional activity.

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In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

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Yet another aspect relates to agents for use in modulating the functional activity of a viral F protein wherein said agent is identified in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined.

5 Still yet another aspect relates to agents for use in the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus wherein said agent is identified in accordance with the methods hereinbefore defined.

Yet still another aspect relates to a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof, a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant as hereinbefore defined or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule for use in the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.

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In a preferred embodiment the viral F protein is a Paramyxoviridae F protein and still more preferably the subject viral F protein is of the Genus Pneumovirus and still more preferably respiratory syncytial virus.

Reference herein to "treatment" and "prophylaxis" is to be considered in its broadest context. The term "treatment" does not necessarily imply that a mammal is treated until total recovery. Similarly, "prophylaxis" does not necessarily mean that the subject will not eventually contract a disease condition. Accordingly, treatment and prophylaxis include amelioration of the symptoms of a particular condition or preventing or otherwise reducing the risk of developing a particular condition. The term "prophylaxis" may be considered as reducing the severity of onset of a particular condition. "Treatment" may also reduce the severity of an existing condition or the frequency of acute attacks.

In accordance with these methods, the active ingredients defined in accordance with the present invention may be coadministered with one or more other compounds or molecules. By "coadministered" is meant simultaneous administration in the same formulation or in

two different formulations via the same or different routes or sequential administration by the same or different routes. By "sequential" administration is meant a time difference of from seconds, minutes, hours or days between the administration of the two types of molecules. These molecules may be administered in any order.

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In yet another aspect the present invention relates to a pharmaceutical composition comprising an active ingredient, as hereinbefore defined, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents.

10 The pharmaceutical forms suitable for injectable use include sterile aqueous solutions (where water soluble) or dispersions and sterile powders for the extemporaneous preparation of sterile injectable solutions or dispersion or may be in the form of a cream or other form suitable for topical application. It must be stable under the conditions of manufacture and storage and must be preserved against the contaminating action of microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi. The carrier can be a solvent or dispersion 15 medium containing, for example, water, ethanol, polyol (for example, glycerol, propylene glycol and liquid polyethylene glycol, and the like), suitable mixtures thereof, and vegetable oils. The proper fluidity can be maintained, for example, by the use of a coating such as lecithin, by the maintenance of the required particle size in the case of dispersion and by the use of superfactants. The preventions of the action of microorganisms can be 20 brought about by various antibacterial and antifungal agents, for example, parabens, chlorobutanol, phenol, sorbic acid, thimerosal and the like. In many cases, it will be preferable to include isotonic agents, for example, sugars or sodium chloride. Prolonged absorption of the injectable compositions can be brought about by the use in the 25 compositions of agents delaying absorption, for example, aluminum monostearate and gelatin.

Sterile injectable solutions are prepared by incorporating the active compounds in the required amount in the appropriate solvent with various of the other ingredients enumerated above, as required, followed by filtered sterilisation. Generally, dispersions are prepared by incorporating the various sterilised active ingredient into a sterile vehicle which contains the basic dispersion medium and the required other ingredients from those

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enumerated above. In the case of sterile powders for the preparation of sterile injectable solutions, the preferred methods of preparation are vacuum drying and the freeze-drying technique which yield a powder of the active ingredient plus any additional desired ingredient from previously sterile-filtered solution thereof.

When the active ingredients are suitably protected they may be orally administered, for example, with an inert diluent or with an assimilable edible carrier, or it may be enclosed in hard or soft shell gelatin capsule, or it may be compressed into tablets, or it may be incorporated directly with the food of the diet. For oral therapeutic administration, the active compound may be incorporated with excipients and used in the form of ingestible tablets, buccal tablets, troches, capsules, elixirs, suspensions, syrups, wafers, and the like. Such compositions and preparations should contain at least 1% by weight of active

amount of active compound in such therapeutically useful compositions in such that a suitable dosage will be obtained. Preferred compositions or preparations according to the

present invention are prepared so that an oral dosage unit form contains between about 0.1

compound. The percentage of the compositions and preparations may, of course, be varied

and may conveniently be between about 5 to about 80% of the weight of the unit. The

μg and 2000 mg of active compound.

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The tablets, troches, pills, capsules and the like may also contain the components as listed hereafter: a binder such as gum, acacia, corn starch or gelatin; excipients such as dicalcium phosphate; a disintegrating agent such as corn starch, potato starch, alginic acid and the like; a lubricant such as magnesium stearate; and a sweetening agent such as sucrose, lactose or saccharin may be added or a flavouring agent such as peppermint, oil of wintergreen, or cherry flavouring. When the dosage unit form is a capsule, it may contain, in addition to materials of the above type, a liquid carrier. Various other materials may be present as coatings or to otherwise modify the physical form of the dosage unit. For instance, tablets, pills, or capsules may be coated with shellac, sugar or both. A syrup or elixir may contain the active compound, sucrose as a sweetening agent, methyl and propylparabens as preservatives, a dye and flavouring such as cherry or orange flavour. Of course, any material used in preparing any dosage unit form should be pharmaceutically

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pure and substantially non-toxic in the amounts employed. In addition, the active compound(s) may be incorporated into sustained-release preparations and formulations.

Pharmaceutical compositions suitable for aerosol administration have been hereinbefore described.

The pharmaceutical composition may also comprise genetic molecules such as a vector capable of transfecting target cells where the vector carries a nucleic acid molecule encoding an active ingredient. The vector may, for example, be a viral vector.

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The present invention is further described by the following non-limiting examples.

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TABLE 1

	Sequence ID Number	Description
	<400>1	Natural F protein nucleic acid sequence
	<400>2	Natural F _{sol} portion nucleic acid sequence
5	<400>3	Restriction site modified F protein nucleic acid sequence
	<400>4	Restriction site modified F _{sol} portion nucleic acid sequence
	<400>5	Splice site and codon optimised F protein nucleic acid
		sequence
	<400>6	Splice site and codon optimised Fsol portion nucleic acid
10		sequence
	<400>7	F protein amino acid sequence
	<400>8	F _{sol} portion amino acid sequence
	<400>9 - <400>553	F protein amino acid decapeptides
	<400>554	P protein amino acid sequence
15	<400>555	Natural P protein nucleic acid sequence
	<400>556	Optimised P protein nucleic acid sequence
	<400>557	N protein amino acid sequence
	<400>558	Natural N protein nucleic acid sequence
	<400>559	Optimised N protein nucleic acid sequence
20	<400>560	SH protein amino acid sequence
	<400>561	Natural SH protein nucleic acid sequence
	<400>562	Optimised SH protein nucleic acid sequence
	<400>563	F protein cleavage site 1 aa sequence
	<400>564	F protein cleavage site 2 aa sequence
25	<400>565	F protein variant
	<400>566	F protein variant nucleic acid sequence
	<400>567	F protein variant
	<400>568	F protein variant nucleic acid sequence
	<400>569	F protein intervening aa sequence
30	<400>570	Poly (a) adenylation site

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EXAMPLE 1

DESIGN OF SYNTHETIC GENE FOR RSV F EXPRESSION

Initial attempts to express the RSV F gene sequence in a soluble form (truncated at the transmembrane domain) proved unsuccessful in achieving high levels of expression. The sequence used in the expression vectors was called F.sol. (this differed from the viral sequence in 24/1575 nucleotides where restriction sites had been inserted to allow for easy mutagenesis – see Fig. 2b). The F viral sequence (F.sol.viral Fig 2b) contained suboptimal codon usage for expression in mammalian cells. In addition, a possible eight 3' splice sites were identified, including preceding lariat sequences at four positions. Poly (A) adenylation sites (AATAAA <400>570) were also identified at 4 positions. In addition, the F natural sequence like the viral sequence is approximately 65% AT rich. Most mammalian expressed genes are less than 50% AT rich. The DNA sequence encoding the transmembrane form of RSV F is also shown in Fig 2a.

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In an attempt to overcome poor expression levels in mammalian cells, a new F sequence was designed that:

- (a) retained the same encoded amino acid sequence
- 20 (b) used whereever possible optimum codon usage
 - (c) removed all potential splice sites and poly A sites
 - (d) removed as many CG doublets as these may be methylation sites
 - (e) designed unique restriction sites to allow cassette mutagenesis
- (f) sequence was checked by secondary structure and any large hairpin loops were destabilised by changing the sequence

Sequences encoding a transmembrane version of F and the F_{sol} protein are shown in Fig.3a and 3b respectively.

30 Both of these optimised sequences F.opt and F.sol.opt are compared to the viral sequence in Figs 2a and 2b.

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The synthetic DNA sequence Fopt (also referred to as F.sol.opt) was assembled and cloned as outlined in Fig. 4a and 4b. In brief, single stranded synthetic DNA fragments of average length 60 bases were annealed and ligated together to produce three fragments

- 5 (1) a 631bp Pst 1-Mfe I fragment
 - (2) a 606bp Mfe I-Xho I fragment
 - (3) a 379bp Xho I-Bam HI fragment.

These gel purified fragments were cloned in pLitmus 38 or a derivative of pLITMUS (pLITMUS 273/279). Clones containing the correct sequence were used as a DNA source to assemble the full length gene as outlined in Fig. 4b. In brief the respective fragment Pst-Mfe I, Xho I-Bam HI and Mfe-Xho I were sequentially cloned into the CMV expression vector pCICO or its derivatives. [pCICO is a derivative of pJW4304 which contains a full length CMV promoter and the CMV authentic intron sequence preceding the Pst I site.

The 3' terminator used is derived from SV40 early region and this vector also contains the SV40 origin of replication. The plasmid is from the pUC series and contains an ampicillin resistance gene. (pJW4304 was obtained from J. Mullins Dept. of Microbiology, University of Washington, Chapman *et al.*, NAR, 19:3979-3980, 1991)]. This produced the final clone pCICO.Fopt.

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pCICO.Fopt was further modified by cloning in a 270bp EcoRI-Xba I fragment (see Fig. 4b) which encodes the transmembrane and cytoplasmic domains of the RSV F protein. Again, the DNA sequence was optimised as for the soluble version See Fig. 2b for comparison of F.opt (Fopt FL sequence) and F (viral with a few additional restriction site changes) and F.viral (viral sequence). The resulting CMV expression plasmid is called pCICO.F.FL.opt. Note FL stands for the term full length and refers to a form of F that includes the transmembrane region and the cytoplasmic tail.

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EXAMPLE 2 IN VITRO EXPRESSION OF RSV F EXPRESSION

Vectors pCICO containing the F._{sol}.opt sequence (pCICO.Fopt) and the F._{sol} sequence (pCICO.FS3) were tested for expression by CaPO₄ precipitation in 293 cells. Cells in a 60ml dish were transfected with 5μg of plasmid and 0.5μg of pVARNA. Cells were radioactively labelled with ³⁵S methionine and ³⁵S cystene 24 hours post transfection and the supernatants collected 5 hours after labelling. Supernatants were immunoprecipitated with a RSV F specific monoclonal antibody and the precipitates were analysed by polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. Gels were subjected to fluorography, dried and exposed to X-ray film. Fig. 5 shows an autoradiograph comparing the amount of F in pCICO.FS3, pCICO.Fopt and control (mock-transfected) cells. Expression is much improved in the pCICO.Fopt transfected cells by at least 20 fold.

15 EXAMPLE 3 RSV FUSION ASSAY

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293 cells were also transfected with the plasmid pCICO.F.FL.opt which contains the transmembrane spanning version of F. Cells transfected with this plasmid were observed 24-48 hours post transfection to contain many large synetia and dying cells. Control cells were confluent. The F transfected cells look indistinguishable from RSV infected cells. Thus high level expression of F is all that is necessary for cell fusion to occur. This is markedly different to what is reported in the literature (Collins et al, Fields, and references within). This assay forms a useful screen for detecting F specific inhibitors of RSV fusion. Agents found by this assay are also useful for inhibiting RSV replication.

EXAMPLE 4 RSV SECOND CLEAVAGE SITE MUTANTS

30 The RSV F protein sequence at amino acid singular numbers 106-109, contains the sequence RARR. As shown in Figure 1c, this potential cleavage site is contained within

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the F2 sub-unit of the F protein. When the F protein is expressed in mammalian cells, proteolytic cleavage occurs at two sites being site 1 (KKRKRR amino acids 131-136) which was previously identified and the previously unknown site 2 (RARR amino acids 106-109).

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The site RARR was mutated to GQGR in the expression plasmid pCICO.FL.Fopt to give rise to the plasmid pCICO.F.FL.S2-2. Transfection of this plasmid into 293 cells revealed cleavage at site 1 but not at site 2 as expected. This was detected by a larger size F2 subunit (\sim 30K versus 18K) in the S2-2 mutant than in the wild type. The size of the protein between site 2 and site 1 would be expected to be 10-12K (25 amino acids plus two NH₂ – linked glycosylation sites). It was surprisingly noted that no evidence of fusion was seen in the 293 cells transfected with the S2-2 mutant plasmid of wild type. This evidence would suggest that cleavage at both site 1 and site 2 is necessary for cleavage. Note that in additional experiments, mutation of site 1 (KKRKRR) to GGKQGR, produced a mutant showing no fusion activity.

In the next experiments the issue of whether the sequence between sites 1 and 2 were necessary for fusion was addressed. A mutant was constructed by standard techniques (cassette mutagenesis) in which amino acids 106-130 were deleted. This mutant is designated delta 106-130. Transfection of 293 cells with an expression plasmid containing this mutant (pCICO.FLFΔ106-130) showed that fusion did occur. This fusion was phenotypically different from wild type in that only small syncytia were visible, suggesting that the ability of the RSV F protein to initiate or perform fusion had been attenuated.

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EXAMPLE 5

EXPRESSION OF NATURAL F-V-F OPTIMISED SEQUENCE

5 Cloning of RSVA2 F cDNA

RNA prepared from RSVA2 infected Hep-2 cells was used as a source of RSV A2 F mRNA. RT-PCR (reverse transcriptase PCR) using 5'- and 3'- end primers was used to prepare cDNA encoding RSV A2 F according to standard methods. PCR products were subcloned into standard vectors. Sequencing of many clones revealed a consensus 10 sequence for the F gene of RSV A2. This sequence is shown in Figure 6 as F.nat and compared to F. viral. The F.nat sequence differs at nt 174 and 222. Both of these T to C changes do not result in amino acid changes. A pCICO vector containing the F.nat sequence (called pCICO.F.nat) was assembled from a synthetic Pst1 to Acc1 157 bp 15 fragment ligated to a 445 bp Acc1 to Mfe 1 fragment and a 1125 bp Mfe 1 to Xba 1 fragment derived from independent RT-PCR RSVA2 F cDNA clones. The synthetic fragment was used to make the addition of extra 5 '-untranslated sequences not present in the PCR products. The 5'-untranslated sequence is 5'- CTGCAGTCACCGTCCTTGA-CACC -3' (<400>571) and includes a Pst 1 site. This sequence is added just 5' to the 20 initiator ATG in the following constructions pCICO.F.nat and the previously described pCICO.F.FL.opt. The Acc1 to Mfe 1 and Mfe 1 to Xba1 fragments were derived from independent RT-PCR RSVA2 F cDNA clones. The sequnce F.nat encodes the same 574 amino acid sequence as shown in Fig 1.

25 Expression of pCICO.F.FL.opt versus pCICO.F.nat

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293 cells were transfected with plasmids pCICO.F.FL.opt, pCICO.F.nat and a control as described in example 2. Cells were harvested at 24, 48 and 72 hours post transfection in cell lysis buffer. The amount of F protein in these samples was measured by Western blot analysis using standard techniques. The primary antibody called 18B2, is a mouse monoclonal antibody that recognizes the F1 protein. A proteolytic breakdown product of

F1 called F1' is also recognized by this antibody. The western blots were developed using a secondary anti – mouse horseradish peroxidase antibody and a light emitting substrate according to standard procedures.

5 The results of these experiments are shown in fig 7. Lanes labelled WT refer to samples from cells transfected with pCICO.F.FL.opt: A2 lanes refer to samples from cells transfected with pCICO.F.nat and Ctrl lanes are from cells transfected with control plasmids lacking either F sequence. F protein (F1 and F1') is only observed in WT lanes indicating that the F expression level in cells transfected with pCICO.F.Fl.opt is far superior to those transfected with pCICO.F.nat.

In parallel to the above experiments 293 cells were transfected with the same three plasmids and observed microscopically for signs of cell to cell fusion (syncytia formation). In three parallel experiments only cells transfected with pCICO.F.FL.opt show any cell to cell fusion. At 72 hours post transfection between 75 to 100 % of cells were involved in syncytia in pCICO.FL.opt transfected cells. No fusion is observed in either the pCICO.F.nat or Ctrl transfected cells (see Fig 8).

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Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention described herein is susceptible to variations and modifications other than those specifically described. It is to be understood that the invention includes all such variations and modifications. The invention also includes all of the steps, features, compositions and compounds referred to or indicated in this specification, individually or collectively, and any and all combinations of any two or more of said steps or features.

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CLAIMS:

- 1. A method of facilitating production of a protein or derivative thereof from a negative sense single stranded RNA virus, said method comprising expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.
- 2. The method according to claim 1 wherein said virus is a virus from the family Paramyxoviridae.
- 3. The method according to claim 2 wherein said virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae.
- 4. The method according to claim 3 wherein said virus is respiratory syncytial virus.
- 5. The method according to any one of claims 1-4 wherein said protein directly or indirectly facilitates fusion of any one or more viral components with any one or more host cells components.
- 6. The method according to claim 5 wherein said protein is a F protein or derivative thereof.
- 7. The method according to claim 6 wherein said derivative is the F_{sol} fragment.
- 8. The method according to claim 5 wherein said protein is an N protein or derivative thereof.
- 9. The method according to claim 5 wherein said protein is a P protein or derivative thereof.

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- 10. The method according to claim 5 wherein said protein is a SH protein or derivative thereof.
- 11. The method according to any one of claims 1-10 wherein said eukaryotic host cell is a mammalian cell.
- 12. The method according to claim 11 wherein said mammalian cell is a 293 cell.
- 13. The method according to claim 11 wherein said mammalian cell is a Chinese Hamster Ovary Cell.
- 14. The method according to any one of claims 11-13 wherein said optimisation is codon optimisation and/or nucleotide splice site deletion.
- 15. The method according to claim 14, wherein said codon optimisation comprises modification of at least one A and/or T comprising codon to express G and C, respectively and said splice site deletion comprises deletion of at least one RNA splice site.
- 16. The method according to claim 14 or 15 wherein said optimised protein encoding nucleic acid molecule further comprises one or more endonuclease restriction sites.
- 17. The method according to any one of claims 14-16 wherein said optimised F protein encoding nucleic acid sequence corresponds to the sequence defined by <400>3 or derivative thereof.
- 18. The method according to any one of claims 14-16 wherein said optimised F protein encoding nucleic acid sequence corresponds to the sequence defined by <400>5 or derivative thereof.

- 19. The method according to any one of claims 14-16 wherein said optimised F_{SOL} protein encoding nucleic acid sequence corresponds to the sequence defined by <400>4 or derivative thereof.
- 20. The method according to any one of claims 14-16 wherein said optimised F_{SOL} protein encoding nucleic acid sequence corresponds to the sequence defined by <400>6 or derivative thereof.
- 21. The method according to any one of claims 14-16 wherein said optimised P protein encoding nucleic acid sequence corresponds to the sequence defined by <400>556 or derivative thereof.
- 22. The method according to any one of claims 14-16 wherein said optimised N protein encoding nucleic acid sequence correspond to the sequence defined by <400>559 or derivative thereof.
- 23. The method according to any one of claims 14-16 wherein said SH protein encoding nucleic acid sequence corresponds to the sequence defined by <400>562 or derivative thereof.
- 24. An optimised nucleic acid molecule or derivative thereof as described in any one of claims 1-23.
- 25. A protein molecule encoded by the optimised nucleic acid molecule of claim 24 or derivative, equivalent, analogue or mimetic thereof.
- 26. A method of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein, which protein in its non-fully functional form comprises an F2 portion linked, bound or otherwise associated with an F1 portion, which F2 portion comprises an intervening peptide sequence, said method comprising modulating cleavage of said intervening peptide sequence wherein excision of at least part of said intervening sequence from said non-fully

functional form of said protein up-regulates F protein functional activity.

- 27. The method according to claim 26 wherein said method comprises expressing in a host cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding said protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression by a eukaryotic cell.
- 28. The method according to claim 27 wherein said virus is a virus from the family Paramyxoviridae.
- 29. The method according to claim 28 wherein said virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae.
- 30. The method according to any one of claims 26-29 wherein said cleavage events occur at the cleavage sites defined by the peptide sequence RARR (<400>564) and KKRKRR (<400>563).
- 31. The method according to any one of claims 26-29 wherein said F protein, in its non-fully functional form, comprises the structure:

$$X_1 X_2 X_3$$

wherein:

 X_1 comprises the non-intervening peptide sequence region of the F2 portion; X_2 comprises the intervening peptide sequence region of the F_2 portion; and X_3 comprises the F1 portion

32. The method according to claim 31 wherein said cleavage events occur at the cleavage sites defined by the peptide sequence RARR (<400>564) and KKRKRR (<400>563).

- 33. The method according to any one of claims 26-32 wherein said regulation is down-regulation.
- 34. A method for detecting an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein or derivative thereof said method comprising contacting a eukaryotic cell expressing an optimised nucleic acid molecule in accordance with the method of any one of claims 1-23 with a putative modulatory agent and detecting an altered expression phenotype and/or functional activity.
- 35. The method of claim 34 wherein said viral F protein is a non-fully functional form of said protein and wherein said agent modulates cleavage of the intervening peptide sequence.
- 36. A method for detecting an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of a viral F protein or derivative thereof said method comprising contacting a host cell, which host cell expresses a nucleic acid molecule encoding the non-fully functional form of said viral F protein derivative thereof, with a putative modulatory agent and detecting an altered expression phenotype and/or altered functional activity wherein said agent modulates the site 2 cleavage event.
- 37. A method for analysing, designing and/or modifying an agent capable of interacting with a viral F protein or derivative thereof and modulating at least one functional activity associated with said protein, which protein is produced in accordance with the method of any one of claims 1-23, said method comprising contacting said F protein or derivative thereof with a putative agent and assessing the degree of interactive complementarity of said agent with said protein.
- 38. The method of claim 37 wherein said virus is a virus from the family Paramyxoviridae.

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- 39. The method according to claim 38 wherein said virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae.
- 40. The method according to claim 39 wherein said virus is respiratory syncytial virus.
- 41. An agent capable of interacting with a viral F protein and modulating at least one functional activity associated with said viral protein.
- 42. The agent according to claim 41 wherein said agent is an antagonist which interacts with a sequence selected from:

FASGQNITEE <400>10

SGQNITEFY <400>12

QNITEFYQS <400>14

TEEFYQST <400>15

TEEFYQSTCS <400>17

EFYQSTCSAV <400>19

YQSTCSAVSK <400>21

STCSAVSKGY <400>23

CSAVSKGYLS <400>25

AVSKGYLSAL <400>27

SKGYLSALRT <400>29

SKGYLSALRT <400>29

GYLSALRTGWYT <400>31

LRTGWYTSVIT <400>37

WYTSVITIELS <400>400>41

VITIELSNIKY

T.GTT

FASGQNITEE <400>10

SGQNITEEFYQSTC <400>12

QNITEEFYQSTC <400>16

TEEFYQSTCSAV <400>18

FYQSTCSAVS <400>20

YQSTCSAVSKG <400>20

QSTCSAVSKGYL <400>22

SAVSKGYLSA <400>24

CSAVSKGYLS <400>25

SAVSKGYLSALR <400>26

VSKGYLSALRTG <400>30

YLSALRTGWYT <400>31

YLSALRTGWYTS <400>32

SALRTGWYTSVIT <400>37

TGWYTSVITIE <400>39

TSVITIELS <400>41

VITIELSNIKY

TIELSNIKY TGWYTSVITI <400>38
WYTSVITIEL <400>40
TSVITIELSN <400>42
VITIELSNIK <400>44
TIELSNIKKN <400>46
ELSNIKKNKC <400>48
SNIKKNKCNG <400>50
IKKNKCNGTD <400>52
KNKCNGTDAK <400>54
KCNGTDAKVK <400>56
NGTDAKVKLI <400>58
TDAKVKLIKQ <400>60
AKVKLIKOEL <400>62 IELSNIKKNK <400>47 LSNIKKNKCN <400>49 NIKKNKCNGT <400>51 KKNKCNGTDA <400>53 NKCNGTDAKV <400>55 CNGTDAKVKL <400>57 GTDAKVKLIK <400>59 AKVKLIKQEL <400>62 VKLIKQELDK <400>64 DAKVKLIKQE <400>61 KVKLIKQELD <400>63 KLIKQELDKY <400>65 LIKQELDKYK <400>66 IKQELDKYKN <400>67 KQELDKYKNA <400>68 ELDKYKNAVT <400>70 DKYKNAVTEL <400>72 YKNAVTELQL <400>74 NAVTELQLLM <400>76 VTELQLLMQS <400>78 QELDKYKNAV <400>69 ELDKYKNAVT <400>70 LDKYKNAVTE <400>71 KYKNAVTELQ <400>73 KNAVTELQLL <400>75 AVTELQLLMQ <400>77

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TELQLLMQST	<400>79	ELQLLMQSTQ	<400>80
LQLLMQSTQA	<400>81	QLLMQSTQAT	<400>82
LLMQSTQATN	<400>83	LMQSTQATNN	<400>84
MQSTQATNNR	<400>85	QSTQATNNRA	<400>86
STOATNNRAR	<400>87	TQATNNRARR	<400>88
QATNNRARRE	<400>89	ATNNRARREL	<400>90
TNNRARRELP	<400>91	NNRARRELPR	<400>92
NRARRELPRF	<400>93	RARRELPRFM	<400>94
ARRELPRFMN	<400>95	RRELPRFMNY	<400>96
RELPRFMNYT	<400>97	ELPRFMNYTL	<400>98
LPRFMNYTLN	<400>99	PRFMNYTLNN	<400>100
RFMNYTLNNA	<400>101	FMNYTLNNAK	<400>102
MNYTLNNAKK	<400>103	NYTLNNAKKT	<400>104
YTLNNAKKTN	<400>105	TLNNAKKTNV	<400>106
LNNAKKTNVT	<400>107	NNAKKTNVTL	<400>108
NAKKTNVTLS	<400>109	AKKTNVTLSK	<400>110
KKTNVTLSKK	<400>103	KTNVTLSKKR	<400>112
TNVTLSKKRK	<400>111	NVTLSKKRKR	<400>114
VTLSKKRKRR	<400>115	TLSKKRKRRF	<400>114
LSKKRKRRFL	<400>113	SKKRKRRFLG	<400>118
KKRKRRFLGF	<400>117	KRKRRFLGFL	<400>110
RKRRFLGFLL	<400>113	KRRFLGFLLG	<400>120
RRFLGFLLGV	<400>121	RFLGFLLGVG	<400>122
FLGFLLGVGS	<400>125 <400>125	LGFLLGVGSA	<400>124
		FLLGVGSAIA	<400>128
GFLLGVGSAI	<400>127	LGVGSAIASG	<400>120
LLGVGSAIAS	<400>129	VGSAIASGVA	<400>130
GVGSAIASGV	<400>131		
GSAIASGVAV	<400>133	SAIASGVAVS IASGVAVSKV	<400>134
AIASGVAVSK	<400>135		<400>136
ASGVAVSKVL	<400>137	SGVAVSKVLH	<400>138
GVAVSKVLHL	<400>139	VAVSKVLHLE	<400>140
AVSKVLHLEG	<400>141	VSKVLHLEGĘ	<400>142
SKVLHLEGEV	<400>143	KVLHLEGEVN	<400>144
VLHLEGEVNK	<400>145	LHLEGEVNKI	<400>146
HLEGEVNKIK	<400>147	LEGEVNKIKS	<400>148
EGEVNKIKSA	<400>149	GEVNKIKSAL	<400>150
EVNKIKSALL	<400>151	VNKIKSALLS	<400>152
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VSLSNGVSVL	<400>167	SLSNGVSVLT	<400>168
LSNGVSVLTS	<400>169	SNGVSVLTSK	<400>170
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VSVLTSKVLD	<400>173	SVLTSKVLDL	<400>174
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~		~	

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FFPOAETCKV	<400>339	FPOAETCKVO	<400>340
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IVSCYGKTKC	<400>401	VSCYGKTKCT	<400>400
T 12010101110	~ 100 \ T U T	ADCIGITICI	\ 100/±02

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SGINNIAFSN <400>553
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- 43. The agent according to claim 42 wherein said antagonist interacts with a sequence selected from <400>88, <400>89, <400>90, <400>91, <400>92, <400>93 or <400>94.
- 44. A viral F protein variant comprising a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits modulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant.
- 45. The variant according to claim 44 wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- 46. The variant according to claim 44 or claim 45 wherein said virus is a virus from the family Paramyxoviridae.
- 47. The variant according to claim 46 wherein said virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae.
- 48. The variant according to claim 47 wherein said virus is respiratory syncytial virus.

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- 49. The variant according to claim 48 wherein said variant comprises a mutation in the cleavage site defined by amino acids RARR (<400>564).
- 50. The variant according to claim 49 wherein said mutation comprises one or more of the amino acid substitutions selected from the following list:
 - (i) R106G
 - (ii) A107Q
 - (iii) R108G.
- 51. The variant according to claim 50 wherein said variant comprises the sequence substantially as set forth in <400>565.
- 52. The variant according to any one of claims 44-48 wherein said variant comprises a multiple amino acid deletion from the intervening peptide sequence.
- 53. The variant according to claim 52 wherein said amino acid deletion is a partial deletion of the intervening peptide sequence.
- 54. The variant according to claim 53 wherein said deletion is a deletion of the peptide sequence

RARRELPRFMNYTLNNAKKTNVTLS <400>569

- 55. The variant according to claim 54 wherein said variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>567.
- 56. An isolated nucleic acid molecule selected from the list consisting of:

- (i) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits modulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- (ii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- (iii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a mutation in the cleavage site defined by amino acids RARR wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- (iv) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or equivalent thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises one or more of the amino acid substitutions selected from the following list:

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- (a) R106G
- (b) A107Q
- (c) R108G
- (v) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a multiple amino acid deletion from the intervening peptide sequence wherein said variant exhibits down-regulated functional activity relative to wild-type F protein.
- (vi) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises a partial deletion of the intervening peptide sequence and more preferably a deletion of the peptide sequence

RARRELPRFMNYTLNNAKKTNVTLS <400>569.

- (vii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>567.
- (viii) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative, homologue,

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- analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said variant, which variant comprises the amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in <400>565.
- (ix) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising the nucleotide substantially as set forth in <400>568.
- (x) An isolated nucleic acid molecule or derivative or analogue thereof comprising the nucleotide substantially as set forth in <400>566.
- 57. The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 56 wherein said virus is a virus from the family Paramyxoviridae.
- 58. The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 57 wherein said virus is of the sub-family Pneumovirinae.
- 59. The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 58 wherein said virus is respiratory syncytial virus.
- 60. A recombinant viral construct comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a viral F protein or derivative thereof, the nucleotide sequence of which nucleic acid molecule comprises codons optimised for expression in a eukaryotic cell, wherein said recombinant viral construct is a effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein.
- 61. A recombinant viral construct comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a viral F protein variant or derivative thereof wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein variant.
- 62. A vaccine comprising a recombinant viral construct which construct comprises a nucleic acid molecule encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein or derivative thereof,

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the nucleic sequence of which nucleic acid molecule is optimised for expression in a eukaryotic cell wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein.

- 63. A vaccine comprising a recombinant viral construct which construct comprises a nucleic acid molecule encoding a respiratory syncytial virus F protein variant or derivative thereof, wherein said recombinant viral construct is effective in inducing, enhancing or otherwise stimulating an immune response to said F protein variant.
- 64. A vaccine according to claim 62 or claim 63 wherein said nucleotide sequence is defined in one of <400>5, <400>6, <400>566 or <400>568.
- 65. Use of the agent according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 to modulate F protein functional activity.
- 66. Use of the agent according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 in the therapeutic and/or prophylactic treatment of conditions characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.
- 67. A method of modulating at least one functional activity associated with a viral F protein in a subject, said method comprising introducing into said subject an effective amount of a F protein modulatory agent according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 for a time and under conditions sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.
- 68. The method according to claim 68 wherein said functional activity is F protein mediated host cell virion fusion and/or virion budding and said modulating is down-regulation.

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- 69. A method of modulating at least one functional activity associated with a viral F protein, said method comprising contacting said viral F protein with an effective amount of a F protein modulatory agent according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 for a time and under conditions sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.
- 70. A method for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus in a subject, said method comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of an agent according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 which agent is capable of down-regulating at least one functional activity of the F protein expressed by said virus, for a time and under conditions sufficient for said agent to interact with said F protein.
- 71. A method for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded virus in a subject, said method comprising administering to said subject an effective amount of a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof and/or a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule for a time and under conditions sufficient for said composition to down regulate said viral F protein functional activity.
- 72. The method according to claim 71 wherein said subject is a mammal.
- 73. The method according to claim 72 wherein said mammal is a human.
- 74. Use of an agent capable of modulating at least one functional activity of a viral F protein which agent according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with negative sense

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single stranded RNA virus.

- 75. Use of a composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof, nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.
- 76. Use of an agent, which agent, according to any one of claims 41-43 or identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40 in the manufacture of a medicament for the modulation of at least one viral F protein associated functional activity.
- 77. Agents for use in modulating the functional activity of a viral F protein wherein said agent is identified in accordance with the method of any one of claims 34-40.
- 78. Agents for use in the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus wherein said agent is identified in accordance with the methods of any one of claims 34-40.
- 79. A composition comprising an F protein or derivative thereof, F protein variant or derivative thereof, a nucleic acid molecule encoding said F protein or F protein variant or a derivative, homologue, analogue, chemical equivalent or mimetic of said protein or nucleic acid molecule for use in the treatment and/or prophylaxis of a condition characterised by infection with a negative sense single stranded RNA virus.

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KDQLSGINNIAFSN*

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Figure 1b

F and F_{sol} forms of the RSV fusion Protein

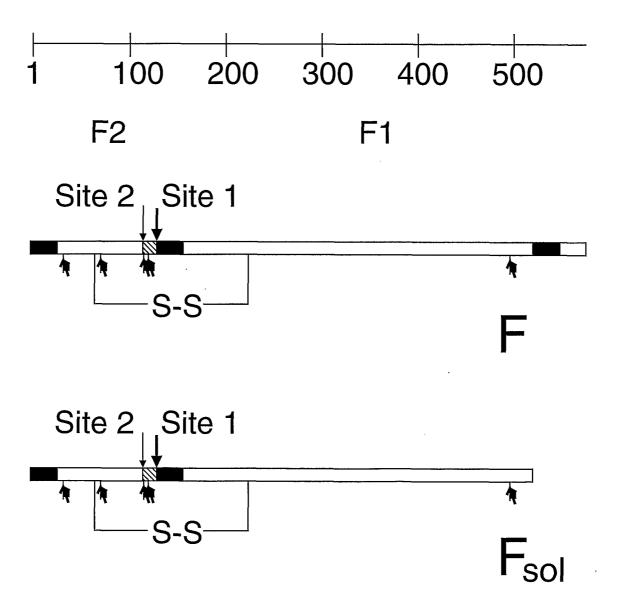


Figure 1c substitute sheet (Rule 26)

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(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v) ·

(vi)

(vii)

Figure 2a SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

ClustalW Formatted Alignments

F.viral F F.opt	10 20 30 ATGGAGTTGCTAATCCTCAAAGCAAATGCAATGGAGTTGCTAATCCTCAAAGCAAATGCAATGGATGG
F.viral F F.opt	40 50 60 ATTACCACAATCCTCACTGCAGTCACATTTATTACCACACAATCCTCACTGCGGTCACCTTTATCACCACCACCATCCTGACCGCGGTGACCTTCATTACCACACATCCTCACTGCGGTCACCTTT
F.viral F F.opt	70 80 90 T.G.T.T.T.G.C.T.T.C.T.G.G.T.C.A.A.A.C.A.T.C.A.C.T.G.A.A.T.G.T.T.T.C.T.G.G.T.C.A.A.A.C.A.T.C.A.C.T.G.A.A.T.G.C.T.T.C.T.G.G.C.C.A.G.A.A.C.A.T.C.A.C.T.G.A.G.T.G.T.T.T.T.G.C.T.T.C.T.G.G.T.C.A.A.A.C.A.T.C.A.C.T.G.A.A.C.A.T.C.A.C.T.G.T.G.T.T.C.T.G.T.G.T.T.T.T.T.T.T.T
F.viral F F.opt	100 110 120 GAATTTTATCAATCAACATGCAGTGCAGTT GAATTTTATCAATCAACATGCAGTGCAG
F.viral F F.opt	130 140 150 A G C A A A G G C T A T C T T A G T G C T C T G A G A A C T A G C A A A G G A T A T C T T A G T G C T C T G A G A A C C A G C A A G G G C T A C C T G A G C G C C C T G A G G A C C A G C A A A G G C T A T C T T A G T G C T C T G A G A A C C
F.viral F F.opt	160 170 180 GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAACTATAGAA GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAACTATAGAA GGTTGGTACACCAGCGTGATCACCATCGAG
F.viral F F.opt	190 200 210 T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A T A A G T G T A A T T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A T A A G T G T A A T C T G A G C A A C A T C A A G A A G A A C A A G T G C A A C T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A T A A G T G T A A T
F.viral F F.opt	220 230 240 GGAACAGATGCTAAGGTAAAATTGATAAAA GGTACCGATGCTAAGGTAAAATTGATAAAA GGCACCGACGCCAAGGTGAAGCTGATCAAG GG ACCGATGCTAAGGTAAAATTGATAAAA Figure 2a(i) SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

F.viral F F.opt	250 260 270 C A A G A A T T A G A T A A A A T A T A A A A	
F.viral F F.opt	280 A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A A A G C A C A A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A G T C G A C A A C C G A G C T G C A G T C G A C T A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A G T C G A C T A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A G T C G A C A	4
F.viral F F.opt	310 CAAGCAACAAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAAACAACAACAGAGCCCGCAGAAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAGAAAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAAAA	!
F.viral F F.opt	340 C T A C C A A G G T T T A T G A A T T A T A C A C T C A A C C T A C C T A G G T T T A T G A A T T A T A C A C T C A A C C T G C C C G C T T C A T G A A C T A C A C C C T G A A C C T A C C A G G T T T A T G A A T T A T A C A C T C A A C	4 4 44
F.viral F F.opt	370 380 390 A A T G C C A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A T T A A G C A A T G C C A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A C T T T C G A A C G C C A A G A A G A C C A A C G T G A C C C T G T C C A A T G C C A A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A C T T C C	Table 1
F.viral F F.opt	400 410 420 A A G A A A A G G A A A A G A A G A T T T C T T G G T T T T A A G A A A A G G A A A A G A A G A T T T C T T G G T T T T A A G A A G A G G G A A G C G C C T T C C T G G G C T T C A A G A A A A G G A A A A G A A G A T T T C T T G G T T T T	i
F.viral F F.opt	430 T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C T G C A A T C G C C A G T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C C G C A A T C G C C A G T C T G C T G G G C T C C G C C A T T G C C A G T T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C C G C A A T C G C C A G T	-
F.viral F F.opt	460 470 480 G G C G T T G C T G T A T C T A A G G T C C T G C A C C T A G G C G T T G C T G T A T C T A A G G T C C T G C A T C T A G G C G T G G C C G T G T C C A A G G T G C T G C A C C T G G G C G T T G C T G T A T C T A A G G T C C T G C A C C T A	+
F.viral F F.opt	490 500 510 GAAGGGAAGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGTGCT GAGGGGAAGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGTGCT GAGGGCGAGGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGTGCC GAGGGGAAGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGTGCC	1

Figure 2a(ii) substitute sheet (RULE 26)

F.viral F F.opt	520 C T A C T A T C C A C A A A C A A G G C T G T A G T C A G C C T A C T A T C C A C A A A C A A G G C T G T A G T C A G C C T G C T G T C C A C C C T G C T G T G T G A G C C C T A C T A T C C A C A A A C A A G G C T G T A G T C A G C
F.viral F F.opt	550 570 T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C A G C T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C A G C C T G A G C A G C G T G A G T G T G T G T G A C T A G C T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C A G C
F.viral F F.opt	580 590 600 AAAGTGTTAGACCTCAAAAACTATATAGAT AAAGTGTTAGACCTCAAAAACTATATAGAT AAGGTGCTGGACCTGAAAACTATATAGAT
F.viral F F.opt	610 620 630 A A A C A A T T G T T A C C T A T T G T G A A C A A G C A A A A C A A T T G T T A C C T A T T G T G A A C A A G C A A A A G C A A T T G C T G C C C A T C G T G A A C A A G C A G A A A C A A T T G T T A C C T A T T G T G A A C A A G C A A
F.viral F F.opt	640 A G C T G C A G C A T A T C A A A T A T A G A A A C T G T G A G C T G C A G C A T A T C A A A T A T A G A A A C T G T G T C C T G T A G C A T C T C C A A C A T C G A G A C T G T G A G C T G C A G C A T A T C A A A T A T A G A A A C T G T G A G C T G T G G C A T A T C A A A T A T A G A A A C T G T G
F.viral F F.opt	670 680 690 A T A G A G T T C C A A C A A A A G A A C A A C A G A C T A A T A G A G T T C C A A C A A A A G A A C A A C A G A C T A A T C G A G T T C C A G C A G A A G A A C A A C C G C C T G A T A G A G T T C C A A C A A A A G A A C A A C A G A C T A
F.viral F F.opt	700 710 720 C T A G A G A T T A C C A G G G A A T T T A G T G T T A A T C T A G A G A T T A C C A G G G A A T T T A G T G T T A A T C T G G A A A T C A C C C G G G A G T T C A G T G T G A A C C T A G A G A T T A C C A G G G A A T T T A G T G T T A A T
F.viral F F.opt	730 740 750 G C A G G T G T A A C T A C A C C T G T A A G C A C T T A C G C A G G T G T A A C T A C A C C T G T A A G C A C T T A C G C T G G C G T G A C C A C T C C T G T C T C C A C C T A C G C A G G T G T A A C T A C C C T G T A A G C A C T T A C
F.viral F F.opt	760 770 780 ATGTTAACTAATAGTGAATTATTGTCATTA ATGTTAACTAATAGTGAATTATTGTCATTA ATGCTGACCAACAGCGAGCTGCTGAGCCTG ATGTTAACTAATAGTGAATTATTGTCATTA

Figure 2a(iii) substitute sheet (RULE 26)

8/40

F.viral F F.opt	790 800 810 A T C A A T G A T A T G C C T A T A A C A A A T G A T C A G A T C A A T G A T A T G C C T A T A A C A A A T G A T C A G A T C A A C G A C A T G C C C A T C A C C A A C G A C C A G A T C A A T G A T A T G C C T A T A A C A A A T G A T C A G
F.viral F F.opt	820 830 840 A A A A A G T T A A T G T C C A A C A A T G T T C A A A T A A A A A A G T T A A T G T C C A A C A A T G T T C A A A T A A A G A A G C T T A T G T C C A A C A A C G T G C A G A T C A A A A A A G T T A A T G T C C A A C A A T G T T C A A A T A
F.viral F F.opt	850 860 870 G T T A G A C A G C A A A G T T A C T C T A T C A T G T C C G T T A G A C A G C A A A G T T A C T C T A T C A T G T C C G T G A G G C A G C A G G C T A C T C C A T C A T G A G C G T T A G A C A G C A A A G T T A C T C T A T C A T G T C C
F.viral F F.opt	880 890 900 A T A A T A A A A A A A G A G G A A G T C T T A G C A T A T G T A A T A A T A A A A A G A G G A A G T C T T A G C A T A T G T A A T C A T C A A G G A G G A G G T G C T G G C C T A T G T G A T A A T A A A A G A G G A A G T C T T A G C A T A T G T A
F.viral F F.opt	910 920 930 G T A C A A T T A C C A C T A T A T G G T G T T A T A G A T G T A C A A T T A C C A C T A T A T G G T G T T A T A G A T G T G C A G C T G C C C T G T A C G G C G T C A T C G A T G T A C A A T T A C C A C T A T A T G G T G T T A T A G A T
F.viral F F.opt	940 950 960 A C A C C C T G T T G G A A A C T A C A C A C A T C C C C T A C A C C C T G T T G G A A A C T A C A C A C C A T C C C C T A C C C C T T G C T G G A A G C T G C A C A C C A G C C C C A C A C C C T G T T G G A A A C T A C A C A C A T C C C C T
F.viral F F.opt	970 980 990 C T A T G T A C A A C C A A C A C A A A A G A A G G T C C C T A T G T A C A A C C A A C A C A A A A G A A G G G T C C C T G T G C A C C A A C A C C A A G G A G G G C A G C C T A T G T A C A A C C A A C A C A A A A G A A G G G T C C
F.viral F F.opt	1000 1010 1020 A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A A A C A T C T G C C T G A C C C G G A C C G C G G C A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A
F.viral F F.opt	1030 1040 1050 T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T T G G T A C T G T G A C A A C G C T G G C T C G G T G A G C T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T

Figure 2a(iv) substitute sheet (RULE 26)

9/40

F.viral F F.opt	1060 1070 1080 T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T T T C T T C C C T C A A G C T G A A A C C T G C A A G G T C T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T
F.viral F F.opt	1090 1100 1110 CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTGTGACACAATG CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTGTGACACAATG CAGAGCAACAGTGTTCTGTGACACCATG CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTTTTGTGACACAATG
F.viral F F.opt	1120 1130 1140 A A C A G T T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T A A C A G T G A A G T A A A T A A C T C C C T G C C C T C C G A G G T G A A C A C A G T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T
F.viral F F.opt	1150 1160 1170 C T C T G C A A T G T T G A C A T A T T C A A C C C C A A A C T C T
F.viral F F.opt	1180 1190 1200 TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA TATGACTGCAAGATCATGACCTCCAAGACC TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA
F.viral F F.opt	1210 1220 1230 GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA GATGTCTCGAGCTCCGTGATCACCAGCCTG GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA
F.viral F F.opt	1240 G G A G C C A T T G T G T C A T G C T A T G G C A A A A C T G G A G C C A T T G T G T C A T G C T A T G G C A A A A C T G G C G C C A T C G T G T C C T G C T A T G G C A A A A C T G G A G C C A T T G T G T C A T G C T A T G G C A A A A C T
F.viral F F.opt	1270 1280 1290 A A A T G T A C A G C A T C C A A T A A A A A T C G T G G A A A A T G T A C A G C A T C C A A T A A A A A T C G T G G A A A G T G C A C C G C C A G C A A C A A G A A C C G G G G
F.viral F F.opt	1300 1310 1320 A T C A T A A A G A C A T T T T C T A A C G G G T G C G A T A T C A T A A A G A C A T T T T C T A A C G G G T G C G A T A T C A T C A A G A C C T T C A G C A A T G G G T G C G A C A T C A T A A A G A C A T T T T C T A A C G G G T G C G A T
	Figure 2a(v) substitute sheet (rule 26)

10/40

F.viral F F.opt	TATGTATCAAATAA TACGTTTCGAACAA	1340 1350 A A G G G T G G A C A C T G T G A A G G G G T G G A C A C T G T G A G G G C G T G G A C A C T G T G A A G G G G T G G A C A C T G T G
F.viral F F.opt	T C T G T A G G T A A C A C	1370 1380 CATTATATATGTAAAT CATTATATTATGTAAAT CCCTGTACTACGTGAAC CATTATATTAT
F.viral F F.opt	A A G C A A G A A G G T A A A A G C A A G A G G G C A A	1400 1410 A A A G T C T C T A T G T A A A A A A A G T C T C T A T G T A A A A A G A G C C T G T A T G T G A A G A A A G T C T C T A T G T A A A A
F.viral F F.opt	GGTGAACCAATAA1 GGCGAGCCCATCA1	1430 1440 TAAATTTCTATGACCCA TAAATTTCTATGACCCA TCAACTTCTACGACCCC TAAATTTCTATGACCCA
F.viral F F.opt	TTAGTATT CCCCTCCTGCTGCTGTTCCCCTC	1460 1470 CTGATGAATTTGATGCA CTGATGAATTTGACGCG CCGACGAATTCGACGCC CTGATGAATTTGACGC
F.viral F F.opt	T C A A T A T C T C A A G T T C C A T T A G C C A A G T	1490 1500 T C A A C G A G A A G A T T A A C T C A A C G A G A A G A T T A A C T C A A C G A G A A G A T C A A C T C A A C G A G A A G A T T A A C
F.viral F F.opt	CAGAGCTTAGCATT CAGAGCCTGGCCTT	1520 1530 T T A T T C G T A A A T C C G A T T T A T T C G T A A A T C C G A T T C A T C C G C A A G T C C G A C T T A T T C G T A A A T C C G A T
F.viral F F.opt	GAATTATTACATAA	1550 1560 ATGTAAATGCTGGTAAAATGCTGGAAGACGTCAACGCTGGCAAGATGCTGG
F.viral F F.opt	A G C A C C A C A A A T A T A G C A C C A C C A A C A T A G C A C C A C A A A T A T	1580 T C A T G A T A A C T A C T A T A T C A T G A T A A C T A C T A T A T C A T G A T C A C C A C C A T C T C A T G A T A A C T A C T A T A
	Figure suвsтітит	2a(vi) TE SHEET (RULE 26)

11/40

	1600	1610	1620
F.viral	ATTATAGTGATT		
F	ATTATAGTGATT	ATAGTAATATTG	TTATCA
F.opt	ATCATCGTGATC	ATCGTGATCCTG	CTGAGC
	ATTATAGTGATT	A T A G T A A T A T T G '	TTATCA
	1630	1640	1650
F.viral	TTAATTGCTGTT	The second secon	
F	TTAATTGCTGTT		
	CTGATCGCCGTG		
	TTAATTGCTGTT		
	1660	1670	1680
F.viral	AAGGCCAGAAGC	A C A C C A G T C A C A	CTAAGC
F	AAGGCCAGATCT	A C A C C A G T C A C A	CTAAGC
F.opt	AAGGCCCGGAGC		
	AAGGCCAGAAGC	A C A C C A G T C A C A (CTAAGC
	1690	1700	1710
F.viral	AAAGATCAACTG		
F	AAAGATCAACTG	AGTGGTATAAAT	ΔΑΤΑΤΤ
F.opt	AAGGACCAGCTG	AGCGGCATCAAC	AACATC
•	AAAGATCAACTG		
	1720	1730	1740
F.viral	GCATTTAGTAAC		
F	GCATTTAGTAAC	TAA	
F.opt	GCCTTCAGCAAC		
	GCATTTAGTAAC	TAA	

Figure 2a(vii) substitute sheet (RULE 26)

12/40

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

Figure 2b SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

ClustalW Formatted Alignments

10 20 30 A T G G A G T T G C T A A T C C T C A A A G C A A A T G C A A T G G A G T T G C T A A T C C T C A A A G C A A A T G C A A T G G A G C T G C T G A T C C T G A A G G C C A A C G C C A T G G A G T T G C T A A T C C T C A A A G C A A A T G C A
40 50 60 A T T A C C A C A A T C C T C A C T G C A G T C A C A T T T T A T T A C C A C A A T C C T C A C T G C G G T C A C C T T T A T C A C C A C C A T C C T G A C C G C G G T G A C C T T C A T T A C C A C A A T C C T C A C T G C G G T C A C C T T T
70 80 90 T G T T T T G C T T C T G G T C A A A A C A T C A C T G A A T G T T T T G C T T C T G G T C A A A A C A T C A C T G A A T G C T T C G C C T C T G G C C A G A A C A T C A C T G A G T G T T T T G C T T C T G G T C A A A A C A T C A C T G A A
100 110 120 GAATTTTATCAATCAACATGCAGTGCAGTT GAATTTTATCAATCAACATGCAGTGCAG
130 140 150 A G C A A A G G C T A T C T T A G T G C T C T G A G A A C T A G C A A A G G A T A T C T T A G T G C T C T G A G A A C C A G C A A G G G C T A C C T G A G C G C C C T G A G G A C C A G C A A A G G C T A T C T T A G T G C T C T G A G A A C C
160 170 180 GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAACTATAGAA GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAACTATAGAA GGTTGGTACACCAGCGTGATCACCATCGAG GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAACTATAGAA
190 200 210 T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A A A A G T G T A A T T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A T A A G T G T A A T C T G A G C A A C A T C A A G A A G A A C A A G T G C A A C T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A A A G T G T A A T
220 230 240 GGAACAGATGCTAAGGTAAAATTGATAAAA GGTACCGATGCTAAGGTAAAATTGATAAAA GGCACCGACGCCAAGGTGAAGCTGATCAAG GG ACCGATGCTAAGGTAAAATTGATAAAA Figure 2b(i) SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

14/40

F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	250 CAAGAATTAGATAAAATATAAAAATGCTGTACAAGAATTAGATAAAAATGCTGTACAAGAGTAGAACGCCGTGCAAGAATTAGAAAATGCTGTA
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	280 290 300 A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A A A G C A C A A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A G T C G A C A A C C G A G C T G C A A C T G C T G A T G C A G T C G A C T A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A G T C G A C A
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	310 CAAGCAACAAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAA CAAGCAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAA CAAGCCACCAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAGAA CAAGCAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGAGAG
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	340 C T A C C A A G G T T T A T G A A T T A T A C A C T C A A C C T A C C T A G G T T T A T G A A T T A T A C A C T C A A C C T G C C C G C T T C A T G A A C T A C A C C C T G A A C C T A C C A G G T T T A T G A A T T A T A C A C T C A A C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	370 380 390 A A T G C C A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A T T A A G C A A T G C C A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A C T T T C G A A C G C C A A G A G A C C A A C G T G A C C C T G T C C A A T G C C A A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A C T T C C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	400 410 420 A A G A A A A G G A A A A G A A G A T T T C T T G G T T T T T A A G A A A G A A G A G
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	430 T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C T G C A A T C G C C A G T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C C G C A A T C G C C A G T C T G C T G G G C G C T C C G C C A T T G C C A G T T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C C G C A A T C G C C A G T
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	460 470 480 GGCGTTGCTGTATCTAAGGTCCTGCACCTA GGCGTTGCTGTATCTAAGGTCCTGCATCTA GGCGTGGCCGTGTCCAAGGTCCTGCACCTG
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	490 500 510 GAAGGGAAGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGTGCT GAGGGGAAGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGTGCT GAGGGCGAGGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGTGCT

Figure 2b(ii)
SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

15/40

F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	520 CTACTATCCACAAACAAGGCTGTAGTCAGCCTACTATCCACAAACAA)))
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	550 T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C A G C T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C A G C C T G A G C G T G A G T G T G C T G A C T A G C T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C A G C T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C A G C	5 5 5
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	580 590 600 AAAGTGTTAGACCTCAAAAACTATATAGAT AAAGTGTTAGACCTCAAAAACTATATAGAT AAGGTGCTGGACCTGAAGAACTACATCGAC	Γ Γ 2
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	610 620 630 A A A C A A T T G T T A C C T A T T G T G A A C A A G C A A A A A C A A T T G T T A C C T A T T G T G A A C A A G C A A A A G C A A T T G C T G C C C A T C G T G A A C A A G C A A A A C A A T T G T T A C C T A T T G T G A A C A A G C A A	A A F
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	640 A G C T G C A G C A T A T C A A A T A T A G A A A C T G T G A G C T G T A T C A A A T A T A G A A A C T G T G T C C T G T A G C A T C T C C A A C A T C G A G A C T G T G A G C T G T A G C A T A T A G A A A C T G T G A G C T G T G T G A G C T G T G T G T G T G T G T G T G T G	ε 3 3
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	670 680 690 A T A G A G T T C C A A C A A A A G A A C A A C A G A C T A A T A G A G T T C C A A C A A A A G A A C A A C A G A C T A A T C G A G T T C C A G C A G A A G A A C A A C C G C C T G A T A G A G T T C C A A C A A A A G A A C A A C A G A C T A	À A S
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	700 710 720 C T A G A G A T T A C C A G G G A A T T T A G T G T T A A T C T A G A G A T T A C C A G G G A A T T T A G T G T T A A T C T G G A A A T C A C C C G G G A G T T C A G T G T G A A C C T A G A G A T T A C C A G G G A A T T T A G T G T T A A T	Γ
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	730 740 750 GCAGGTGTAACTACACCTGTAAGCACTTAC GCAGGTGTAACTACACCTGTAAGCACTTAC GCTGGCGTGACCACCTGTCTCCACCTAC GCAGGTGTAACTACACCTGTAAGCACTTAC)
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	760 770 780 ATGTTAACTAATAGTGAATTATTGTCATTA ATGTTAACTAATAGTGAATTATTGTCATTA ATGCTGACCAACAGCGAGCTGCTGAGCCTG ATGTTAACTAATAGTGAATTATTGTCATTA	A

Figure 2b(iii) substitute sheet (RULE 26)

16/40

F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	790 800 810 A T C A A T G A T A T G C C T A T A A C A A A T G A T C A G A T C A A T G A T A T G C C T A T A A C A A A T G A T C A G A T C A A C G A C A T G C C C A T C A C C A A C G A C C A G A T C A A T G A T A T G C C T A T A A C A A A T G A T C A G
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	820 830 840 A A A A A G T T A A T G T C C A A C A A T G T T C A A A T A A A A A A G T T A A T G T C C A A C A A T G T T C A A A T A A A G A A G C T T A T G T C C A A C A A T G T T C A A A T A A A A A A A G T T A A T G T C C A A C A A T G T T C A A A T A
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	850 860 870 G T T A G A C A G C A A A G T T A C T C T A T C A T G T C C G T T A G A C A G C A A A G T T A C T C T A T C A T G T C C G T G A G G C A G C A G C T A C T C C A T C A T G A G C G T T A G A C A G C A A A G T T A C T C T A T C A T G T C C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	880 890 900 A T A A T A A A A A G A G G A A G T C T T A G C A T A T G T A A T A A A A A G A G G A A G T C T T A G C A T A T G T A A T C A T C A A G G A G G G T G C T G G C C T A T G T G A T A A A A A A G A G G A A G T C T T A G C A T A T G T A
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	910 920 930 G T A C A A T T A C C A C T A T A T G G T G T T A T A G A T G T A C A A T T A C C A C T A T A T G G T G T T A T A G A T G T G C A G C T G C C C C T G T A C G G C G T C A T C G A T G T A C A A T T A C C A C T A T A T G G T G T T A T A G A T
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	940 A C A C C C T G T T G G A A A C T A C A C A C A T C C C C T A C A C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	970 980 990 C T A T G T A C A A C C A A C A C A A A A G A A G G G T C C C T A T G T A C A A C C A A C A C A A A A G A A G G G T C C C T G T G C A C C A A C A C A C A A A G A A G G G C A G C C T A T G T A C A A C C A A C A C A A A A G A A G G G T C C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1000 1010 1020 A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A A A C A T C T G C C T G A C C C G G A C C G C G G C A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1030 1040 1050 T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T T G G T A C T G T G A C A A C G C T G G C T C G G T G A G C T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T

Figure 2b(iv)
SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

17/40

F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1060 1070 1080 T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T T T C T T C C C T C A A G C T G A A A C C T G C A A G G T C T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T	٠
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1090 1100 1110 CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTGTGACACAATG CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTGTGACACAATG CAGAGCAACAGTGTTCTGTGACACCATG CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTTGTGACACAATG	a against a
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1120 1130 1140 A A C A G T T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T A A C A G T T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T A A C T C C C T G A C C C T G C C C T C C G A G G T G A A C A A C A G T T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T	-
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1150 1160 1170 C T C T G C A A T G T T G A C A T A T T C A A C C C C A A A C T C T	1
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1180 1190 1200 TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA TATGACTGCAAGATCATGACCTCCAAGACC TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA	Change of the Strange
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1210 1220 1230 GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA GATGTCTCGAGCTCCGTGATCACCAGCCTG GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA	
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1240 1250 1260 GGAGCCATTGTGTCATGCTATGGCAAAACTGGAGCCATTGTGTCATGCTATGGCAAAACTGGCGCCATCGTGTCCTGCTATGGCAAAACT	j
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1270 1280 1290 A A A T G T A C A G C A T C C A A T A A A A A T C G T G G A A A A T G T A C A G C A T C C A A T A A A A A T C G T G G A A A G T G C A C C G C C A G C A A C A A G A A C C G G G G	
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	ATCATAAAGACATTTTCTAACGGGTGCGATATCATAAAGACATTTTCTAACGGGTGCGATATCATCAAAGACATTTTCTAACGGGTGCGATATCATCAAAGACATTTTCTAACGGGTGCGACATCATAAAGACATTTTCTAACGGGTGCGAT	

Figure 2b(v) substitute sheet (Rule 26)

18/40

	1330		1340	1350
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	TATGTATCAA TATGTATCAA TACGTTTCGA TATGTATCAA	ATAAA	GGGGTGG GGGGTGG	A C A C T G T G A C A C T G T G A C A C T G T G
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1360 T C T G T A G G T A T C T G T A G G T A T C C G T G G G C A T C T G T A G G T A	A C A C A	TTATATT	A T G T A A A T A C G T G A A C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1390 A A G C A A G A A G A A G C A A G A A G A A G C A A G A G G A A G C A A G A A G	G T A A A G C A A G	AGTCTCT AGCCTGT	ATGTAAAA ATGTGAAG
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1420 G G T G A A C C A A G G T G A A C C A A G G C G A G C C C A G G T G A A C C A A	TAATA TCATC	AATTTCT AACTTCT	A T G A C C C A A C G A C C C C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1450 T T A G T A T T C C T T A G T A T T C C C T G G T G T T C C T T A G T A T T C C	CCTCT	GATGAAT GACGAAT	T T G A C G C G T C G A C G C C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1480 T C A A T A T C T C T C A A T A T C T C T C C A T T A G C C T C A A T A T C T C	AAGT C	AACGAGA AACGAGA	A G A T T A A C A G A T C A A C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1510 CAGAGCCTAG CAGAGCTTAG CAGAGCCTGG CAGAGCCTAG	CATTT	ATTCGTA ATCCGCA	A A T C C G A T A G T C C G A C
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	1540 G A A T T A T T A C G A A T T A T T A C G A G C T G C T G C G A A T T A T T A C	ATAAT	G T A A A T G G T C A A C G	C T G G G A A G C T G G C A A G
F.sol.viral F.sol F.sol.opt	6	ATTAA ATTAA gure 21		1590
			•	

19/40

(i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

Figure 3a substitute sheet (RULE 26)

1 480

460

440

>BstXI

4b) found in the plasmid pCICO.F.Fl.opt (see fig as BamH1 fragment Pst1 to the Sequence of

100 TCTGGCCA AGACCGGT S G Q>	200 TCACCATC AGTGGTAG I T I>	300 GACCGAGC CTGGCTCG	400 AAGACCAA TTCTGGTT K T N>
>PstI 10	SAGEI 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 CHACATCACT GAGGAGTTCT ACCAGAGGAC TTGTTCCGCT GTGAGCAAGG GCTACCTGAG CGCCCTGAGG ACCGGTTGGT ACACCAGCGT GATCACCATC CTTGTAGTGA CTCCTCAAGA TGGTCTCGTG AACAAGGCGA CACTGTTCC CGATGGACTC GCGGGGACTCC TGGCCAACCA TGTGGTCGCA CTAGTGGTAG N I T E E F Y Q S T C S A V S K G Y L S A L R T G W Y T S V I T I S A A A S K G Y L S A L R T G W Y T S V I T I S A A A B A B A B A B A B A B A B A B A	SAGCTGAGCA ACATCAAGAA GAACAAGGCACCG ACGCCAAGGT GAAGCTGATC AAGCAAGAGC TGGACAAGTA CAAGAACGCC GTGACCGAGC CTCGACTCGT TGTAGTTCTT CTTGTTCACG TTGCGTTCCA CTTCGACTAG TTCGTTCTCG ACCTGTTCAT GTTCTTGCGC CACTGGCTCG E L S N I K K N K C N G T D A K V K L I K Q E L D K Y K N A V T E>	310 320 330 340 350 360 370 370 380 400 TGCAACTGCT GATGCAGTCG ACTCAAGCCA AGACAGCGCAGA GAGCTGCCCC GCTTCATGAA CTACACCCTG AACAACGCCA AGAAGACCAA ACGTTGACGA CTACGTCAG GGTTGTTGTC TCGGGCGTTCT CTCGACGGG CGAAGTACTT GATGTGGGAC TTGTTGCGGT TCTTCTGGTT L Q L L M Q S T Q A T N N R A R R E L P R F M N Y T L N N A R K T N N A A K K T N N A A R K T N N A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A R R B A A A A
>BstEII 80 80 CGCGGTGACC GCCCACTGG	>AgeI 180 G ACCGGTTGGT T G W T G W	280 TGGACAAGTA ACCTGTTCAT L D K Y	380 CTACACCCTG GATGTGGGAC
70 CCATCCTGAC GGTAGGACTG T I I T) 170 5 CGCCCTGAGG 5 CGCGGACTCC 6 A L R	270 RAGCAAGAGC TTCGTTCTCG K Q E	370 CGTTCATGAA CGAAGTACTT R F M N
60 GCCATCACCA GCGTAGTGGT A I T	160 G Y L S	260 F GAAGCTGATC A CTTCGACTAG	360 A GAGCTGCCCC C CTCGACGGGG
50 c GAAGGCCAAC C C C C C C C C C C C C C C	150 r GTGAGCAAGG A CACTCGTTCC V S K	ACCCCAAGGT TGCGGTTCCA D A K V	350 3 AGCCCGCAGA TCGGGCGTCT A A R R
40 TGCTGATCCT ACGACTAGGA L L L L	140 TTGTTCCGCT AACAAGGCGA C S A	240 AACGGCACCG TTGCCGTGGC N G T	340 CCAACAACAG GGTTGTTGTC T N N R
>PstI 10 20 30 CTGCAGTCAC CGTCCTTGAC ACCATGGAGC TGCTGA GACGTCAGTG GCAGGAACTG TGGTACCTCG ACGACT	130 ACCAGAGCAC T TGGTCTCGTG Y Q S T	230 GAACAAGTGC CTTGTTCACG N K C	330 B ACTCAAGCCA T C A T Q A
20 CGTCCTTGAC GCAGGAACTG	120 GAGGAGTTCT CTCCTCAGA E E F	220 ACATCAAGAA TGTAGTTCTT N I K K	320 GATGCAGTCG CTACGTCAGC M Q S
>PstI 10 CTGCAGTCAC GACGTCAGTG	110 GAACATCACT CTTGTAGTGA N I T	210 GAGCTGAGCA CTCGACTCGT E L S	310 TGCAACTGCT ACGTTGACGA L Q L L
	SUB	STITUTE SHEE	ET (RULE 26)

Figure 3a(i)

GCACTGGGAC AGGTTCTTCT CCTTCGCGGC GAAGGACCGACC CGCACCCGAG GCGGTAACGG TCACCGCACC GGCACAGGTT CCACGACGTG V T L S K K R R F L G F L L G V G S A I A S G V A V S K V L H> CGTGACCCTG TCCAAGAAGA GGAAGCGCCG CTTCCTGGGC TTCCTGCTGG GCGTGGGCTC CGCCATTGCC AGTGGCGTGG CCGTGTCCAA GGTGCTGCAC

						a.		
600 AGCAAGGTGC TCGTTCCACG S K V>		TCCAGCAGAA AGGTCGTCTT F Q Q K>		800 GCTGCTGAGC CGACGACTCG L L S>		AGCATCATCA TCGTAGTAGT S I I>		1000 CCACCAACAC GGTGGTTGTG T T N T>
590 TGTGCTGACT ACACGACTGA V L T		GTGATCGAGT CACTAGCTCA V I E		790 CCAACAGCGA GGTTGTCGCT T N S E		890 CTCCATCATG GAGGTAGTAC S I M		990 CCCCTGTGCA GGGGACACGT P L C
580 ACGCCTGAG TGCCGCACTC N G V S		680 CATCGAGACT GTAGCTCTGA I E T		780 TACATGCTGA ATGTACGACT Y M L	å	880 AGCAGAGCTA TCGTCTCGAT		980 GCACACCAGC CGTGTGGTCG H T S
570 AGCCTGAGCA TCGGACTCGT S L S				770 TGTCTCCACC ACAGAGGTGG V S T		870 ATCGTGAGGC TAGCACTCCG I V R		
560 CGGCCGTGGTG CCGGCACCAC A V V		660 CAGTCCTGTA GTCAGGACAT Q S C		760 TGACCACTCC ACTGGTGAGG V T T P		860 CAACGTGCAG GTTGCACGTC N V Q	н	960 GATACCCCTT CTATGGGGAA D T P
550 CCACTAACAA GGTGATTGTT S T N K		650 CGTGAACAAG GCACTTGTTC V N K		750 AACGCTGGCG TTGCGACCGC N A G	ı	850 TTATGTCCAA AATACAGGTT L M S N	>ClaI	950 CGGCGTCATC GCCGCAGTAG
540 GCCCTGCTGT CGGGACGACA A L L		640 TGCTGCCCAT ACGACGGTA L L P I		740 GTTCAGTGTG CAAGTCACAC F S V	>HindIII	 840 CAGAAGAAGC GTCTTCTCG QKK		930 940 GTGGTGCAGC TGCCCCTGTA CACCACGTCG ACGGGGACAT V V Q L P L Y
530 GATCAAGAGT CTAGTTCTCA I K S	>MfeI	GACAAGCAAT CTGTTCGTTA D K Q	>SmaI	TCACCCGGGAAGTGCCT				930 GTGGTGCAGC CACCACGTCG V V Q
510 520 530 540 CTGGAGGGCG AGGTGAACAA GATCAAGAGT GCCCTGCTGT GACCTCCCGC TCCACTTGTT CTAGTTCTCA CGGGACGACA L E G E V N K I K S A L L A A A L L		610 620 630 640 650 660 TGGACCTGAA GAACTACATC GACAAGCAAT TGCTGCCCAT CGTGAACAAG CAGTCCTGTA ACCTGGACTT CTTGATGTAG CTGTTCGTTA ACGACGGGTA GCACTTGTTC GTCAGGACAT L D L K N Y I D K Q L L P I V N K Q S C		720 CTGCTGGAAA GACGACCTTT L L E		820 ACATGCCCAT TGTACGGTA D M P I		920 GCTGGCCTAT CGACCGGATA L A Y
510 CTGGAGGGCG GACCTCCCGC L E G		610 TGGACCTGAA ACCTGGACTT L D L K		710 GAACAACCGC CTTGTTGGCG N N R		810 CTGATCAACG GACTAGTTGC L I N		910 AGGAGGAGGT TCCTCCTCCA K E E V

Figure 3a(i

(III)
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ure
Figu
11

0 0 U A ^I	0 H & 1	0 4 E & ^	0 U D A ^ I	0 & H ^				
1100 AACCTGCAAG TTGGACGTTC T C K>	1200 AAGTATGACT TTCATACTGA K Y D>	130 CCGCCAGCZ GGCGGTCGT	1400 GTACTACGTG CATGATGCAC Y Y V>	1500 GCCTCCATTA CGGAGGTAAT A S I>				
1090 CTCAAGCTGA GAGTTCGACT P Q A E	1190 CTTCAACCCC GAAGTTGGGG F N P	1290 ACCAAGTGCA TGGTTCACGT T K C	1390 GCAACACCCT CGTTGTGGGA G N T L	1490 CGAATTCGAC GCTTAAGCTG E F D				
1080 AGCTTCTTCC TCGAAGAAGG S F F	>ECORV 1170 1180 AACCTGTGCA ACGTGGATAT TTGGACACGT TGCACCTATA N L C N V D I	1280 CTATGGCAAG GATACCGTTC Y G K	1380 GTGTCCGTGG CACAGGCACC V S V	1480 TCCCCTCCGA AGGGGAGGCT F P S D				
1070 TGGCTCGGTG ACCGAGCCAC G S V		1270 TCGTGTCCTG AGCACAGGAC I V S C	1370 CGTGGACACT GCACCTGTGA V D T					
	1160 CTCCGAGGTG GAGGCTCCAC S È V	1260 CTGGGCGCCA GACCCGCGGT L G A		1460 CTTCTACGAC GAAGATGCTG F Y D				
1050 GGCTGGTACT CCGACCATGA G W Y	40 1150 cc reacccrecc GG ACTGGGACGG L T L P	1250 GATCACCAGC CTAGTGGTCG I T S	>Bs 1350 GACTACGITT CTGATGCAAA D Y V	1450 CCATCATCAA GGTAGTAGTT P I I N				
1040 GACCGACCGC CTGGCTGGCG T D R	11 ATGAACTC TACTTGAG M N S	1240 CGAGCTCCGT GCTCGAGGCA S S S V	1340 CAATGGGTGC GTTACCCACG N G C	1440 AAGGGCGAGC TTCCCGCTCG K G E				
1030 GCCTGACCG CGGACTGGGC C L T R	1130 CTGTGACACC GACACTGTGG C D T	>Xho 1230 ACCGATGTCT TGGCTACAGA T D V	1320 .1330 GGCATCATCA AGACCTTCAG CCGTAGTAGT TCTGGAAGTC G I K T F S	1430 CCTGTATGTG GGACATACAC L Y V				
1020 AGCAACATCT TCGTTGTAGA S N I	1110 1120 GTCCAGAGCA ACAGAGTGTT CAGGTCTCGT TGTCTCACAA V Q S N R V F	1220 GACCTCCAAG CTGGAGGTTC T S K	1320 GGCATCATCA CCGTAGTAGT G I I	1420 AGGGCAAGAG TCCCGTTCTC E G K S				
1010 CAAGGAGGGC GTTCCTCCCG K E G	,	1210 GCAAGATCAT CGTTCTAGTA C K I M	1310 CAAGAACCGG GTTCTTGGCC K N R	1410 AACAAGCAAG TTGTTCGTTC N K Q				
	SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)							

GCCAAGTCAA CGAGAAGATC AACCAGAGCC TGGCCTTCAT CCGCAAGTCC GACGAGCTGC TGCACAACGT CAACGCTGGC AAGAGCACCA CCAACATCAT CGGTTCAGTT GCTCTTCTAG TTGGTCTCGG ACCGGAAGTA GGCGTTCAGG CTGCTCGACG ACGTGTTGCA GTTGTGGTGT GGTTGTAGTA S O V N E K I N Q S L A F I R K S D E L L H N V N A G K S T T N 'I M'	1610 1620 1630 1650 1660 1670 1680 1690 1700 GATCACCACC ATCATCATCGT GATCCTGCTG AGCCTGATCG CCGTGGGCCT GCTGCTGTAC TGCAAGGCCC GGAGCACTCC CGTGACCCTG CTAGTGGTGG TAGTAGTAGCA CTAGGACGAC TCGGACTAGC GGACGACTAGC GGACGACTG ACGTTCCGGG CCTCGTGAGG GCACTGGGAC I T I I V I I V I L S L I A V C L L L Y C K A R S T P V T L>	, re	
1590 AAGAGCACCA TTCTCGTGGT K S T	1690 GGAGCACTCC CCTCGTGAGG R S T P	ro.	
1580 CAACGCTGGC GTTGCGACCG N A G	1680 TGCAAGGCCC ACGTTCCGGG		
ACGAGCTGC TGCACAACGT CAACGCTGGC AAGAGCACCA.TGCTCGACG ACGTGTTGCA GTTGCGACG TTCTCGTGGT D E L L H N V N A G K S T	1670 GCTGCTGTAC CGACGACATG L L Y	II a	TCC AGG
1560 GACGAGCTGC CTGCTCGACG D E L	1650 1660 1670 1670 CGCGGGCCT GCTGCTGTAC CGGACTAGC GGCACCGGA CGACGACATG S L L A V G L L Y	>xbaI >BamHI	GTCTAGAGGA CAGATCTCCT
1550 CCGCAAGTCC GGCGTTCAGG R K S	1650 AGCCTGATCG TCGGACTAGC S L I	x >X 1750	GCAACTGATA CGTTGACTAT S N X>
1540 TGGCCTTCAT C ACCGGAAGTA G L A F I	1640 GATCCTGCTG CTAGGACGAC	1740	ATCGCCTTCA TAGCGGAAGT I A F
1530 AACCAGAGCC TTGGTCTCGG	1630 TGATCATCGT ACTAGTAGCA V I I V	aa1730	CATCAACAAC GTAGTTGTTG I N N
GCCAAGTCAA CGAGAAGATC AACCAGAGCC TGGCC CGGTTCAGTT GCTCTTCTAG TTGGTCTCGG ACCGG S Q V N E K I N Q S L A	GATCACCACC ATCATCATCG TGATCATCGT GATCCT CTAGTGGTGG TAGTAGTAGC ACTAGTAGCA CTAGGA I I V I I V I L	1720	AGCAAGGACC AGCTGAGGG CATCAACAAC ATCGCCTTCA GCAACTGATA GTCTAGAGGA TCC TCGTTCCTGG TCGACTCGCC GTAGTTGTTG TAGCGGAAGT CGTTGACTAT CAGATCTCCT AGG S K D Q L S G I N N I A F S N X>
1510 GCCAAGTCAA CGGTTCAGTT S Q V N	1610 GATCACCACC CTAGTGGTGG	aa1710	AGCAAGGACC TCGTTCCTGG S K D

24/40

(i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

Figure 3b

mHl fragment as found in the plasmid p.CICO.F.opt (s >BstEII 40	SABCATCACT GAGGAGTTCT ACCAGAGCAC TTGTTCCGCT GTGAGCAAGG GCTACCTGAG CGCCCTGAGG ACCGGTTGGT ACACCAGCGT GATCACCATC CTTGTAGTGA CTCCTCAAGA TGGTCTCGTG AACAAGGCGA CACTCGTTCC CGATGGACTC TGGCCAACCA TGTGGTCGCA CTAGTGGTAG M I T E E F Y Q S T C S A V S K G Y L S A L R T G W Y T S V I T I> A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A	210 220 240 250 260 270 280 290 300 m Gagctgagca acatcaagaa gaacaagagc acgccaaggc gaaccgagc grgaccgagc grcgactcg grcgactcg grcgactcg grgaccgagc grgaccgagc grgaccgagc grgaccgagc grgaccgagc grgaccgagc grgaccagagc grcgactcg grcgactagag grgacagag grgacag grgacagag g	TIO 320 330 340 350 360 370 380 390 400 300 310 320 320 330 340 350 350 360 370 380 390 400 320 310 320 320 320 320 320 320 320 320 320 32	SBSTXI 1 1 CGTGACCCTG TCCAAGAAGA GGAAGCGCCG CTTCCTGCTGG GCGTGGGGCTC CGCCATTGCC AGTGGCGTGG CCGTGTCCAAA GGTGCTGCAC GCACTGGGAC AGGTTCTTCT CCTTCGCGGC GAAGGACCCG AAGGACGACC CGCA^*CCGAG GCGGTAACGG TCACCGCACC GGCACAGGTT CCACGACGTG V T L S K K R R F L G F L L G V G S A I A S G V A V S K V L H> A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A
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Figure 3b(i)

CTGGAGGGCG AGGTGAACAA GATCAAGAGT GCCCTGCTGT CCACTAACAA GGCCGTGGTG AGCCTGAGCA ACGGCGTGAG TGTGCTGACT AGCAAGGTGC GACCTCCCGC TCCACTTGTT CTAGTTCTCA CGGGACGACA GGTGATTGTT CCGGCACCAC TCGGACTCGT TGCCGCACTC ACACGACTGA TCGTTCCACG L E G E V N K I K S A L L S T N K A V V S L S N G V S V L T S K V>	- MfeI	TGGACCTGAA GAACTACATC GACAAGCAAT TGCTGCCCAT CGTGAACAAG CAGTCCTGTA GCATCTCCAA CATCGAGACT GTGATCGAGT TCCAGCAGAA ACCTGGACTT CTTGATGTAG CTGTTCGTTA ACGACGGGTA GCACTTGTTC GTCAGGACAT CGTAGAGGTT GTAGCTCTGA CACTAGCTCA AGGTCGTCTT L D L K N Y I D K Q L L P I V N K Q S C S I S N I E T V I E F Q Q K>	>SmaI 	710 720 730 800 GAACAACGC CTGCTGGAAA TCACCGGGA GTTCAGTGTG AACGCTGGCG TGACCACTCC TGTCTCCACC TACATGCTGA CCAACAGGGA GCTGCTGAGC CTTGTTGGCG GACGACCTTT AGTGGGCCCT CAAGTCACAC TTGCGACCGC ACTGGTGAGG ACAGAGGTGG ATGTACGACT GGTTGTCGCT CGACGACTCG N N R L L E I T R E F S V N A G V T T P V S T Y M L T N S E L L S>		GACTAGTTGC TGTACGGGTA GTGGTTGCTG GTCTTCTTCG AATACAGGTT GTTGCACGTC TAGCACTCCG TCGTCTCGAT GAGGTAGTAC TCGTAGTAGT L I N D M P I T N D Q K K L M S N N V Q I V R Q Q S Y S I M S I I> L I N D M P I T N D Q K K L M S N N V Q I V R Q Q S Y S I M S I I> A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A	>ClaI	930 GCTGGCCTAT GTGGTGCAGC TGCCCCTGTA CGACCGGATA CACCACGTCG ACGGGGACAT L A Y V V Q L P L Y	<u>a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a</u>
			QI ID	STITUTE SH	IFFT (RIII F	26)			

Figure 3b(ii)

(iii)
3b
Figure

		27/40	
1100	1200	1300	1400
AACCTGCAAG	AAGTATGACT	CCGCCAGCAA	GTACTACGTG
TTGGACGTTC	TTCATACTGA	GGCGGTCGTT	CATGATGCAC
TCK>	K Y D>	T A S N>	Y Y V>
GTGACAACGC TGGCTCGTG AGCTTCTTCC CTCAAGCTGA AACCTGCAAG CACTGTTGCG ACCTGCAAGG GAGTTCGACT TTGACGTTC C D N A G S V S F F P Q A E T C K>	1190 CTTCAACCCC GAAGTTGGGG	1260 1270 1280 1390 CTGGGCGCCA TCGTGTCCTG CTATGGCAAG ACCAAGTGCA CCGCCAGCAAGCGCGT AGCACAGGAC GATACCGTTC TGGTTCACGT GCCGGTCGTT L G A I V S C Y G K T K C T A S N	1390 GCAACACCCT CGTTGTGGGA G N T L
1050 1060 1070 1080 GGCTGGTACT GTGACAACGC TGGCTCGGTG AGCTTCTTCC CCGACCATGA CACTGTTGCG ACCGAGCCAC TCGAAGAAGG G W Y C D N A G S V S F F	>ECORV 1180 AACCTGTGCA ACGTGGATAT TTGGACACGT TGCACCTATA N L C N V D I	1250 1260 1270 1280 GATCACCAGC CTGGGCGCCA TCGTGTCCTG CTATGGCAAG CTAGTGGTC GACCGCGT AGCACAGGAC GATACCGTTC I T S L G A I V S C Y G K	1380 GTGTCCGTGG CACAGGCACC V S V
1070	1170	1270	1360 1370 CGAACAAGGG CGTGGACACT GCTTGTTCCC GCACCTGTGA S N K G V D T
TGGCTCGGTG	AACCTGTGCA	TCGTGTCCTG	
ACCGAGCCAC	TTGGACACGT	AGCACAGGAC	
G S V	N L C	I V S C	
1060 GTGACAACGC CACTGTTGCG C D N A	1160	1260	1360
	CTCCGAGGTG	CTGGGCGCCA	CGAACAAGGG
	GAGGCTCCAC	GACCCGCGT	GCTTGTTCCC
	S E V	L G A	S N K G
			m m
1040 GACCGACCGC CTGCTGGCG T D R	1140	1240	1340
	ATGAACTCCC	CGAGCTCCGT	CAATGGGTGC
	TACTTGAGGG	GCTCGAGGCA	GTTACCCACG
	M N S	S S S V	N G C
1030 GCCTGACCCG CGGACTGGGC C L T R	1130 CTGTGACACC GACACTGTGG C D T	>XhoI 1 1230 1240	1310 1320 1330 1340 CAAGAACCGG GGCATCATCA AGACCTTCAG CAATGGGTGC GTTCTTGGCC CCGTAGTAGT TCTGGAAGTC GTTACCCACG K N R G I I K T F S N G C
1020	1120	1220	1320
AGCAACATCT	A ACAGAGTGTT	GACCTCCAAG	GGCATCATCA
TCGTTGTAGA	TGTCTCACAA	CTGGAGGTTC	CCGTAGTAGT
S N I	N R V F	T S K	G I I
1010	1110	1210	1310
CAAGGAGGC	GTCCAGAGCA	GCAAGATCAT	CAAGAACCGG
GTTCCTCCCG	CAGGTCTCGT	CGTTCTAGTA	GTTCTTGGCC
K E G	V Q S	C K I M	K N R

gure 3b
gure
$\widetilde{\mathrm{Fig}}$

, ,	
AACAAGCAAG AGGCAAGAG CCTGTATGTG AAGGGCGAGC CCATCATCAACAC CTCTACGAC CCCTGGTGT TCCCCTCCGA CGAATTCGAC GCCTCCATTA TTGTTCGTTC TCCCGTTCTC GGACATACAC TTCCCGCTCG GGTAGTAGTT GAAGATGCTG GGGGACCACA AGGGGAGGCT GCTTAAGCTG CGGAGGTAAT N K Q E G K S L Y V K G E P I I N F Y D P L V F P S D E F D A S I > A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A	GCCAAGTCAA CGAGAAGATC AACCAGAGCC TGGCCTTCAT CCGCAAGTCC GACGAGCTGC TGCACAACGT CAACGCTGGC AAGAGCACCA CCAACTGATA CGGTTCAGTT GCTCTTCTAG TTGGTCTCGG ACCGGAAGTA GGCGTTCAGG CTGCTCGACG ACGTGTTGCA GTTGCGACCG TTCTCGTGGT GGTTGACTAT S Q V N E K I N Q S L A F I R K S D E L H N V N A G K S T T N X> A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A
CCT GGA	CAA GTT N
	04F
1490 rcgac agcrg	1590 CACCA STGGT
AATI ITAZ E E	SAGC
CG CG	AA(TT(K
1480 rccga Aggcr S D	1580 TGGC ACCG
SCTC SGAG	CGCT CGCT SCGP
TCCC AGGC	CAA(GTT(
70 GT CA	1570 VACGT TTGCA N V
1470 CTGGTGT GACCACA L V	15 SAAC STTG
3667	SCAC CGTC H
	G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G
1460 CGAC GCTG D	1560 CTGC GACG L
CTA	GAG SCTC E
CTTT GAR	GAC CTC
1450 ATCAA FAGTT I N	1550 NGTCC CCAGG
1 CAT	1 SAAG STTC K
SCAT SGTP P 1	360 R
1440 GAGC CTCG E	1540 TCAT (AGTA (F I
14 CGA GCT	15 TTC
1000 1000 1000	00000 VCGG
CG PZ	000 H M H
1430 TGTG ACAC	1530 AGCC TCGG
CAT	CAG SGTC O
CCT GGP	AAC TTC N
1420 AGAG TCTC K S	1520 GATC CTAG
CAA GTT	AAG TTC K
1000 1000	GAG
1410 1420 1430 ACAAGCAAG AGGCCAAGAG CCTGTATGTG AAGGGC TGTTCGTTC TCCGGTTCTC GGACATACAC TTCCCG N K Q E G K S L Y V K G	GCCAAGTCAA CGAGAAGATC AACCAGAGCC TGGCC CGGTTCAGTT GCTCTTCTAG TTGGTCTCGG ACCGG S Q V N E K I N Q S L A a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a
1410 GCAAG CGTTC Q	1510 GTCAA CAGTT V N
CAA GTT	CAA GTT Q
AA TT N	00 00 00

Assembly of F synthetic DNA fragments

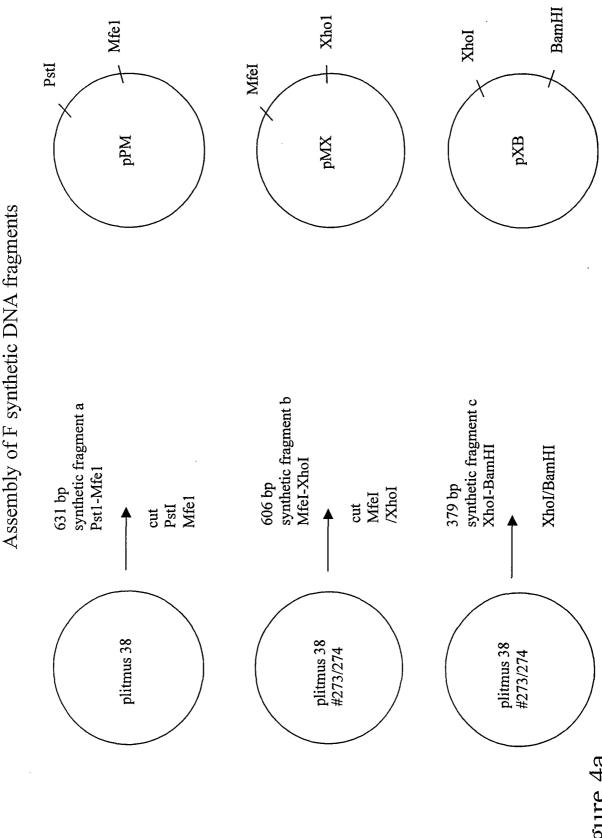


Figure 4a

Assembly of F in pCICO expression vector

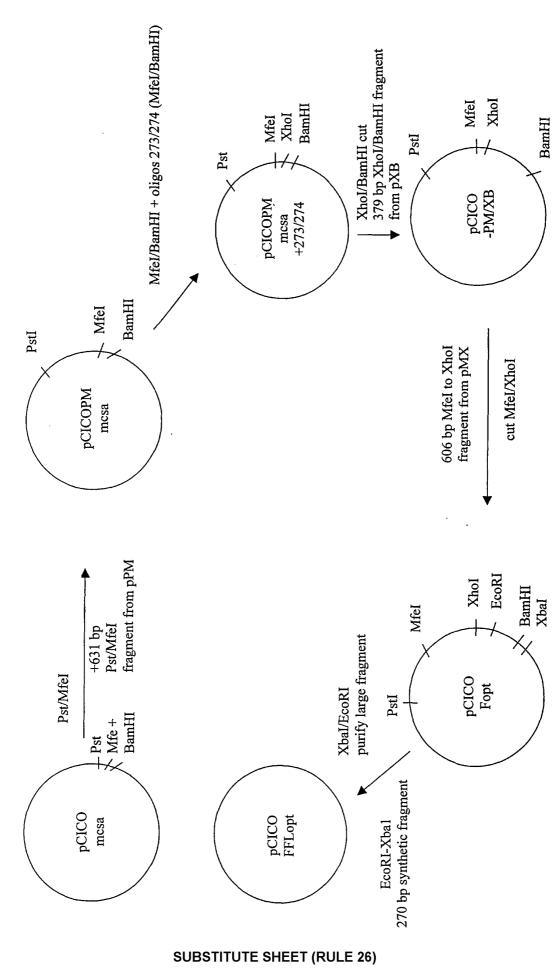


Figure 4b

Autoradiograph of immunoprecipitation of 35 -S labelled transfected cell supernatants

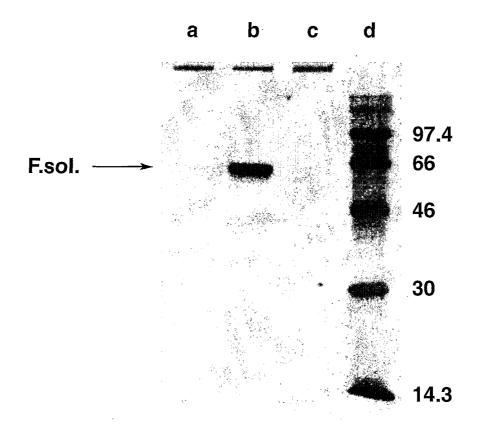


Figure 5

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

Figure 6 SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

ClustalW Formatted Alignments

F.viral F.nat	10 20 30 AT G G A G T T G C T A A T C C T C A A A G C A A A T G C A A T G G A G T T G C T A A T C C T C A A A G C A A A T G C A A T G G A G T T G C T A A T C C T C A A A G C A A A T G C A	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \
F.viral F.nat	40 50 60 ATTACCACAATCCTCACTGCAGTCACATTTATTACCACAATCCTCACTGCAGTCACATTTATTACCACACATCCTCACTGCAGTCACATTT	• .
F.viral F.nat	70 80 90 T G T T T T G C T T C T G G T C A A A C A T C A C T G A A T G T T T T G C T T C T G G T C A A A C A T C A C T G A A T G T T T T G C T T C T G G T C A A A C A T C A C T G A A	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \
F.viral F.nat	100 110 120 GAATTTTATCAATCAACATGCAGTGCAGTT GAATTTTTATCAATCAACATGCAGTGCAG	: "; "}
F.viral F.nat	130 140 150 AGCAAAGGCTATCTTAGTGCTCTGAGAACT AGCAAAGGCTATCTTAGTGCTCTGAGAACT AGCAAAGGCTATCTTAGTGCTCTGAGAACT	7A •
F.viral F.nat	160 170 180 GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAACTATAGAA GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAACCATAGAA GGTTGGTATACCAGTGTTATAAC ATAGAA	
F.viral F.nat	190 200 210 T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A A A A G T G T A A T C T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A T A A G T G T A A T T A A G T A A T A T C A A G A A A A A T A A G T G T A A T	•
F.viral F.nat	220 230 240 G G A A C A G A T G C T A A G G T A A A A T T G A T A A A A G G A A C A G A T G C C A A G G T A A A A T T G A T A A A A G G A A C A G A T G C A A G G T A A A A T T G A T A A A A	i l
F.viral F.nat	250 260 270 CAAGAATTAGATAAAAAATGCTGTA CAAGAATTAGATAAAATATAAAAATGCTGTA CAAGAATTAGATAAAATATAAAAATGCTGTA	
F.viral F.nat	280 290 300 A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A A A G C A C A A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A A A G C A C A A C A G A A T T G C A G T T G C T C A T G C A A A G C A C A	

Figure 6(i) SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

34/40

F.viral F.nat	310 320 CAAGCAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGA CAAGCAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGA CAAGCAACAATCGAGCCAGAAGA	GAA
F.viral F.nat	340 CTACCAAGGTTTATGAATTATACACTC CTACCAAGGTTTATGAATTATACACTC CTACCAAGGTTTATGAATTATACACTC	AAC
F.viral F.nat	370 380 A A T G C C A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A T T A A A T G C C A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A T T A A A T G C C A A A A A A C C A A T G T A A C A T T A	A G C
F.viral F.nat	400 410 A A G A A A G G A A A G A A G A T T T C T T G G T A A G A A A A G G A A A A G A A T T T C T T G G T A A G A A A A G G A A A G A A G A T T T C T T G G T	TIT
F.viral F.nat	430 T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C T G C A A T C G C C T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C T G C A A T C G C C T T G T T A G G T G T T G G A T C T G C A A T C G C C	AGT
F.viral F.nat	460 470 GGCGTTGCTGTATCTAAGGTCCTGCAC GGCGTTGCTGTATCTAAGGTCCTGCAC GGCGTTGCTGTATCTAAGGTCCTGCAC	CTA
F.viral F.nat	490 500 GAAGGGGAAGTGAAGATCAAAAGT GAAGGGGAAGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGT GAAGGGGAAGTGAACAAGATCAAAAGT	GCT
F.viral F.nat	520 530 CTACTATCCACAAACAAGGCTGTAGTC CTACTATCCACAAACAAGGCTGTAGTC CTACTATCCACAAACAAGGCTGTAGTC	AGC
F.viral F.nat	550 560 T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C T T A T C A A A T G G A G T T A G T G T C T T A A C C	AGC
F.viral F.nat	580 590 AAAGTGTTAGACCTCAAAAACTATATAAAAGTGTTAGACCTCAAAAACTATATAAAAGTGTTAGACCTCAAAAACTATATA	GAT
F.viral F.nat	610 620 AAACAATT GTTACCTATT GTGAACAAG AAACAATT GTTACCTATT GTGAACAAG AAACAATT GTTACCTATT GTGAACAAG	CAA

Figure 6(ii) SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

35/40

F.viral F.nat	A G C T G C A G A G C T G C A G	CATATCAAAT CATATCAAAT	650 A T A G A A A C T G T A T A G A A A C T G T A T A G A A A C T G T	G
F.viral F.nat	ATAGAGTT ATAGAGTT	C C A A C A A A A G C C A A C A A A A G	680 6. A A C A A C A G A C T A A C A A C A G A C T A A C A A C A G A C T	Α
F.viral F.nat	CTAGAGAT CTAGAGAT	T A C C A G G G A A T A C C A G G G A A	710 7. T T T A G T G T T A A T T T A G T G T T A A T T T A G T G T T A A	T
F.viral F.nat	GCAGGTGT GCAGGTGT	A A C T A C A C C T A A C T A C A C C T	<i>740</i>	C
F.viral F.nat	ATGTTAAC ATGTTAAC	T A A T A G T G A A T A A T A G T G A A	770 7 TTATTGTCATT TTATTGTCATT	Α
F.viral F.nat	ATCAATGA ATCAATGA	TATGCCTATA TATGCCTATA	800 A C A A A T G A T C A A C A A A T G A T C A A C A A A T G A T C A	G
F.viral F.nat	A A A A A G T T	A A T G T C C A A C A A T G T C C A A C	<i>830</i> A A T G T T C A A A T A A T G T T C A A A T A A T G T T C A A A T	Α
F.viral F.nat	G T T A G A C A G G T T A G A C A	G C A A A G T T A C G C A A A G T T A C	860 T C T A T C A T G T C T C T A T C A T G T C T C T A T C A T G T C	C
F.viral F.nat	ATAATAAA	A G A G G A A G T C A G A G G A A G T C	890 90 T T A G C A T A T G T T T A G C A T A T G T T T A G C A T A T G T	Α.
F.viral F.nat	G T A C A A T T A	A C C A C T A T A T A C C A C T A T A T	920 9. G G T G T T A T A G A G G T G T T A T A G A G G T G T T A T A G A	T
F.viral F.nat	A C A C C C T G	T T G G A A A C T A T T G G A A A C T A	950 96 C A C A C A T C C C C C A C A C A T C C C C C A C A C A T C C C C	T

Figure 6(iii) SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

F.viral F.nat	970 980 990 CTATGTACAACCAACACAAAAGAAGGGTCC CTATGTACAACCAACACAAAAGAAGGGTCC CTATGTACAACCAACACAAAAGAAGGGTCC
F.viral F.nat	1000 1010 1020 A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A A A C A T C T G T T T A A C A A G A A C T G A C A G A G G A
F.viral F.nat	1030 1040 1050 T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T T G G T A C T G T G A C A A T G C A G G A T C A G T A T C T
F.viral F.nat	1060 1070 1080 T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T T T C T T C C C A C A A G C T G A A A C A T G T A A A G T T
F.viral F.nat	1090 1100 1110 CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTGTGACACAATG CAATCAAATCGAGTATTTTGTGACACAATG
F.viral F.nat	1120 1130 1140 A A C A G T T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T A A C A G T T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T A A C A G T T T A A C A T T A C C A A G T G A A G T A A A T
F.viral F.nat	1150 1160 1170 CTCTGCAATGTTGACATATTCAACCCCAAA CTCTGCAATGTTGACATATTCAACCCCAAA
F.viral F.nat	1180 1190 1200 TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA TATGATTGTAAAATTATGACTTCAAAAACA
F.viral F.nat	1210 1220 1230 GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA GATGTAAGCAGCTCCGTTATCACATCTCTA
F.viral F.nat	1240 1250 1260 GGAGCCATTGTGTCATGCTATGGCAAAACT GGAGCCATTGTGTCATGCTATGGCAAAACT GGAGCCATTGTGTCATGCTATGGCAAAACT
F.viral F.nat	1270 1280 1290 A A A T G T A C A G C A T C C A A T A A A A T C G T G G A A A A T G T A C A G C A T C C A A T A A A A T C G T G G A A A A T G T A C A G C A T C C A A T A A A A A T C G T G G A

Figure 6(iv) substitute sheet (Rule 26)

F.viral F.nat	1300 1310 1320 ATCATAAAGACATTTCTAACGGGTGCGAT
F.viral	ATCATAAAGACATTTTCTAACGGGTGCGAT 1330 1340 1350 TATGTATCAAATAAAGGGGTGGACACTGTG
F.nat	TATGTATCAAATAAAGGGGTGGACACTGTG TATGTATCAAATAAAGGGGTGGACACTGTG
F.viral F.nat	T C T G T A G G T A A C A C A T T A T A T T A T G T A A A T T C T G T A G G T A A C A C A T T A T A T T A T G T A A A T T C T G T A G G T A A C A C A T T A T A T T A T G T A A A T
F.viral F.nat	1390 1400 1410 A A G C A A G A A G G T A A A A G T C T C T A T G T A A A A A G C A A G A A G G T A A A A G T C T C T A T G T A A A A A G C A A G A A G G T A A A A G T C T C T A T G T A A A A A G C A A G A A G G T A A A A G T C T C T A T G T A A A A
F.viral F.nat	1420 1430 1440 GGTGAACCAATAATAAATTCTATGACCCA GGTGAACCAATAATAAATTCTATGACCCA GGTGAACCAATAATAAATTCTATGACCCA
F.viral F.nat	1450 1460 1470 T T A G T A T T C C C C T G T G A T G A A T T T G A T G C A T T A G T A T T C C C C T C T G A T G A A T T T G A T G C A T T A G T A T T C C C C T C T G A T G A A T T T G A T G C A
F.viral F.nat	1480 1490 1500 T C A A T A T C T C A A G T C A A C G A G A A G A T T A A C T C A A T A T C T C A A G T C A A C G A G A A G A T T A A C T C A A T A T C T C A A G T C A A C G A G A A G A T T A A C
F.viral F.nat	1510 1520 1530 CAGAGCCTAGCATTTATTCGTAAATCCGAT CAGAGCCTAGCATTTATTCGTAAATCCGAT CAGAGCCTAGCATTTATTCGTAAATCCGAT
F.viral F.nat	1540 1550 1560 GAATTATTACATAATGTAAATGCTGGTAAA GAATTATTACATAATGTAAATGCTGGTAAA
F.viral F.nat	1570 1580 1590 T C C A C C A C A A A T A T C A T G A T A A C T A C T A T A T C C A C C A C A A A T A T C A T G A T A A C T A C T A T A T C C A C C A C A A A T A T C A T G A T A A C T A C T A T A
F.viral F.nat	1600 1610 1620 A T T A T A G T G A T T A T A G T A A T A T

Figure 6(v) SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

		1630	1640	1650
F.viral			CTGCTCTT	
F.nat			CTGCTCTT	
	TTAATTG	CTGTTGGA	CTGCTCTT	ATACTGT
			1670	1680
F.viral	AAGGCCA	GAAGCACA	CCAGTCAC	ACTAAGC
F.nat	AAGGCCA	GAAGCACA	CCAGTCAC	ACTAAGC
	AAGGCCA	GAAGCACA	CCAGTCAC	ACTAAGC
		1690	1700	1710
F.viral	AAAGATC	AACTGAGT	GGTATAAA	TAATATT
F.nat			GGTATAAA	
			GGTATAAA	
		1720	1730	1740
F.viral	GCATTTA	GTAACTAA		
F.nat		GTAACTAA		
	GCATTTA	GTAACTAA	-	

Figure 6(vi) SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

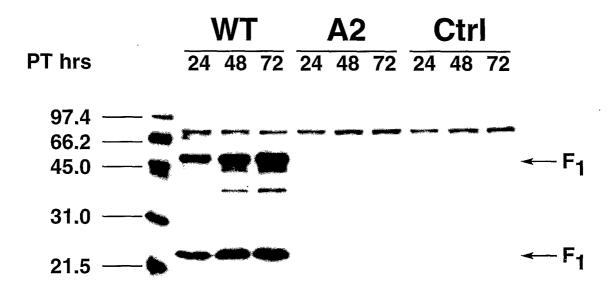


Figure 7
SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

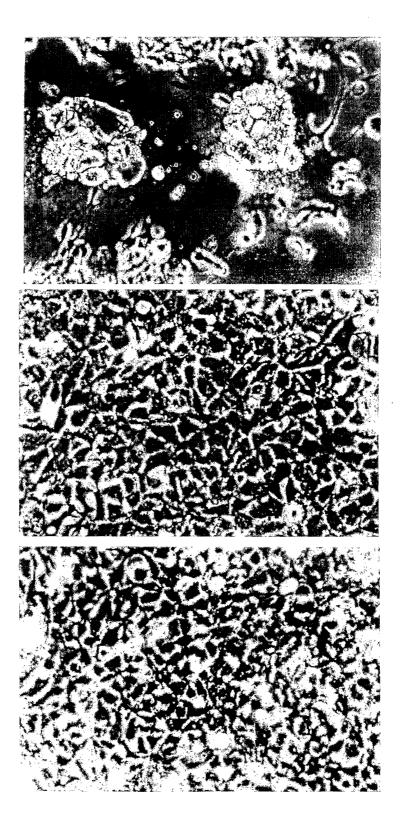


Figure 8 SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

- 1 -

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agcaaag	gget atettagtge tetgagaact ggttggtata ecagtgttat aactatagaa	180
ttaagta	aata tcaagaaaaa taagtgtaat ggaacagatg ctaaggtaaa attgataaaa	240
caagaat	ctag ataaatataa aaatgctgta acagaattgc agttgctcat gcaaagcaca	300
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- 3 -

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720

780

- 4 -

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<211> 1725

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<213> Artificial Sequence

<220>

<223> Optimised Sequence

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-6-

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<211> 1575

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<220>

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ttaagtaata tcaagaaaaa taagtgtaat ggtaccgatg ctaaggtaaa attgataaaa 240

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- 8 -

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<220>

<223> Optimised Sequence

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<211> 574

<212> PRT

<213> respiratory syncytial virus

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			20					25					30		

Tyr Gln Ser Thr Cys Ser Ala Val Ser Lys Gly Tyr Leu Ser Ala Leu 35 40 45

Arg Thr Gly Trp Tyr Thr Ser Val Ile Thr Ile Glu Leu Ser Asn Ile 50 55 60

Lys Lys Asn Lys Cys Asn Gly Thr Asp Ala Lys Val Lys Leu Ile Lys 65 70 75 80

Gln Glu Leu Asp Lys Tyr Lys Asn Ala Val Thr Glu Leu Gln Leu Leu 85 90 95

Met Gln Ser Thr Gln Ala Thr Asn Asn Arg Ala Arg Arg Glu Leu Pro 100 105 110

Arg Phe Met Asn Tyr Thr Leu Asn Asn Ala Lys Lys Thr Asn Val Thr 115 120 125

Leu Ser Lys Lys Arg Lys Arg Phe Leu Gly Phe Leu Gly Val

Glu Gly Glu Val Asn Lys Ile Lys Ser Ala Leu Leu Ser Thr Asn Lys

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165 170 175

Ala Val Val Ser Leu Ser Asn Gly Val Ser Val Leu Thr Ser Lys Val
180 185 190

Leu Asp Leu Lys Asn Tyr Ile Asp Lys Gln Leu Leu Pro Ile Val Asn 195 200 205

Lys Gln Ser Cys Ser Ile Ser Asn Ile Glu Thr Val Ile Glu Phe Gln 210 215 220

Gln Lys Asn Asn Arg Leu Leu Glu Ile Thr Arg Glu Phe Ser Val Asn 225 230 235 240

Ala Gly Val Thr Thr Pro Val Ser Thr Tyr Met Leu Thr Asn Ser Glu 245 250 255

Leu Leu Ser Leu Ile Asn Asp Met Pro Ile Thr Asn Asp Gln Lys Lys
260 265 270

Leu Met Ser Asn Asn Val Gln Ile Val Arg Gln Gln Ser Tyr Ser Ile
275 280 285

Met Ser Ile Ile Lys Glu Glu Val Leu Ala Tyr Val Val Gln Leu Pro 290 295 300

Leu Tyr Gly Val Ile Asp Thr Pro Cys Trp Lys Leu His Thr Ser Pro 305 310 315 320

Leu	Cys	Thr	Thr	Asn	Thr	Lys	Glu	Gly	Ser	Asn	Ile	Cys	Leu	Thr	Arg
				325					330					335	

Thr Asp Arg Gly Trp Tyr Cys Asp Asn Ala Gly Ser Val Ser Phe Phe 340 350

Pro Gln Ala Glu Thr Cys Lys Val Gln Ser Asn Arg Val Phe Cys Asp 355 360 365

Thr Met Asn Ser Leu Thr Leu Pro Ser Glu Val Asn Leu Cys Asn Val 370 375 380

Asp Ile Phe Asn Pro Lys Tyr Asp Cys Lys Ile Met Thr Ser Lys Thr 385 390 395 400

Asp Val Ser Ser Ser Val Ile Thr Ser Leu Gly Ala Ile Val Ser Cys 405 410 415

Tyr Gly Lys Thr Lys Cys Thr Ala Ser Asn Lys Asn Arg Gly Ile Ile 420 425 430

Lys Thr Phe Ser Asn Gly Cys Asp Tyr Val Ser Asn Lys Gly Val Asp 435 440 445

Thr Val Ser Val Gly Asn Thr Leu Tyr Tyr Val Asn Lys Gln Glu Gly 450 455 460

Lys Ser Leu Tyr Val Lys Gly Glu Pro Ile Ile Asn Phe Tyr Asp Pro

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465 470 475 . 480

Leu Val Phe Pro Ser Asp Glu Phe Asp Ala Ser Ile Ser Gln Val Asn 485 490 495

Glu Lys Ile Asn Gln Ser Leu Ala Phe Ile Arg Lys Ser Asp Glu Leu
500 505 510

Leu His Asn Val Asn Ala Gly Lys Ser Thr Thr Asn Ile Met Ile Thr
515 520 525

Thr Ile Ile Ile Val Ile Ile Val Ile Leu Leu Ser Leu Ile Ala Val 530 535 540

Gly Leu Leu Leu Tyr Cys Lys Ala Arg Ser Thr Pro Val Thr Leu Ser 545 550 555 560

Lys Asp Gln Leu Ser Gly Ile Asn Asn Ile Ala Phe Ser Asn 565 570

<210> 8

<211> 524

<212> PRT

<213> respiratory syncytial virus

<400> 8

Met Glu Leu Leu Ile Leu Lys Ala Asn Ala Ile Thr Thr Ile Leu Thr

1 5 10 15

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			20					25					30		

Tyr	Gln	Ser	Thr	Cys	Ser	Ala	Val	Ser	Lys	Gly	Tyr	Leu	Ser	Ala	Leu
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Arg	Thr	Gly	${\tt Trp}$	Tyr	Thr	Ser	Val	Ile	Thr	Ile	Glu	Leu	Ser	Asn	Ile
	50					55					60				

Lys	Lys	Asn	Lys	Cys	Asn	Gly	Thr	Asp	Ala	Lys	Val	Lys	Leu	Ile	Lys
65					70					75					80

Gln Glu Leu Asp Lys Tyr Lys Asn Ala Val Thr Glu Leu Gln Leu Leu 85 90 95

Met Gln Ser Thr Gln Ala Thr Asn Asn Arg Ala Arg Arg Glu Leu Pro 100 105 110

Arg Phe Met Asn Tyr Thr Leu Asn Asn Ala Lys Lys Thr Asn Val Thr 115 120 125

Leu Ser Lys Lys Arg Lys Arg Phe Leu Gly Phe Leu Gly Val

Gly Ser Ala Ile Ala Ser Gly Val Ala Val Ser Lys Val Leu His Leu 145 150 155 160

Glu Gly Glu Val Asn Lys Ile Lys Ser Ala Leu Leu Ser Thr Asn Lys

165 170 175

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Ala	Val	Val	Ser	Leu	Ser	Asn	Gly	Val	Ser	Val	Leu	Thr	Ser	Lys	Val
			180					185					190		

Leu	Asp	Leu	Lys	Asn	Tyr	Ile	Asp	Lys	Gln	Leu	Leu	Pro	Ile	Val	Asn
		195					200					205			

Lys Gln Ser Cys Ser Ile Ser Asn Ile Glu Thr Val Ile Glu Phe Gln
210 215 220

Gln Lys Asn Asn Arg Leu Leu Glu Ile Thr Arg Glu Phe Ser Val Asn 225 230 235 240

Ala Gly Val Thr Thr Pro Val Ser Thr Tyr Met Leu Thr Asn Ser Glu 245 250 255

Leu Leu Ser Leu Ile Asn Asp Met Pro Ile Thr Asn Asp Gln Lys Lys
260 265 270

Leu Met Ser Asn Asn Val Gln Ile Val Arg Gln Gln Ser Tyr Ser Ile
275 280 285

Met Ser Ile Ile Lys Glu Glu Val Leu Ala Tyr Val Val Gln Leu Pro 290 295 300

Leu Tyr Gly Val Ile Asp Thr Pro Cys Trp Lys Leu His Thr Ser Pro 305 310 315 320

Leu Cys Thr Thr Asn Thr Lys Glu Gly Ser Asn Ile Cys Leu Thr Arg 325 330 335

Thr Asp Arg Gly Trp Tyr Cys Asp Asn Ala Gly Ser Val Ser Phe Phe 340 345 350

Pro Gln Ala Glu Thr Cys Lys Val Gln Ser Asn Arg Val Phe Cys Asp 355 360 365

Thr Met Asn Ser Leu Thr Leu Pro Ser Glu Val Asn Leu Cys Asn Val 370 375 380

Asp Ile Phe Asn Pro Lys Tyr Asp Cys Lys Ile Met Thr Ser Lys Thr 385 390 395 400

Asp Val Ser Ser Ser Val Ile Thr Ser Leu Gly Ala Ile Val Ser Cys
405 410 415

Tyr Gly Lys Thr Lys Cys Thr Ala Ser Asn Lys Asn Arg Gly Ile Ile 420 425 430

Lys Thr Phe Ser Asn Gly Cys Asp Tyr Val Ser Asn Lys Gly Val Asp 435 440. 445

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Val Phe Pro Ser Asp Glu Phe Asp Ala Ser

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Arg Ser Thr Pro Val Thr Leu Ser Lys Asp
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Ser Gly Ile Asn Asn Ile Ala Phe Ser Asn
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Glu Val Thr Lys Glu Ser Pro Ile Thr Ser Asn Ser Thr Ile Ile Asn 50 55 60

Pro Thr Asn Glu Thr Asp Asp Thr Ala Gly Asn Lys Pro Asn Tyr Gln 65 70 75 80

Arg Lys Pro Leu Val Ser Phe Lys Glu Asp Pro Thr Pro Ser Asp Asn 85 90 95

Pro Phe Ser Lys Leu Tyr Lys Glu Thr Ile Glu Thr Phe Asp Asn Asn 100 105 110

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Glu	Glu	Glu	Ser	Ser	Tyr	Ser	Tyr	Glu	Glu	Ile	Asn	Asp	Gln	Thr	Asn
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130 135 140

Ile Leu Gly Met Leu His Thr Leu Val Val Ala Ser Ala Gly Pro Thr
145 150 155 160

Ser Ala Arg Asp Gly Ile Arg Asp Ala Met Ile Gly Leu Arg Glu Glu 165 170 175

Met Ile Glu Lys Ile Arg Thr Glu Ala Leu Met Thr Asn Asp Arg Leu 180 185 190

Glu Ala Met Ala Arg Leu Arg Asn Glu Glu Ser Glu Lys Met Ala Lys
195 200 205

Asp Thr Ser Asp Glu Val Ser Leu Asn Pro Thr Ser Glu Lys Leu Asn 210 215 220

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726

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Val Ala Pro Glu Tyr Arg His Asp Ser Pro Asp Cys Gly Met Ile Ile

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Leu	Cys	Ile	Ala	Ala	Leu	Val	Ile	Thr	Lys	Leu	Ala	Ala	Gly	Asp	Arg
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Ser	Gly	Leu	Thr	Ala	Val	Ile	Arg	Arg	Ala	Asn	Asn	Val	Leu	Lys	Asn
			180					185					190		

Glu Met Lys Arg Tyr Lys Gly Leu Leu Pro Lys Asp Ile Ala Asn Ser 195 200 205

Phe Tyr Glu Val Phe Glu Lys His Pro His Phe Ile Asp Val Phe Val 210 215 220

His Phe Gly Ile Ala Gln Ser Ser Thr Arg Gly Gly Ser Arg Val Glu 225 230 235 240

Gly Ile Phe Ala Gly Leu Phe Met Asn Ala Tyr Gly Ala Gly Gln Val $245 \hspace{1.5cm} 250 \hspace{1.5cm} 255$

Met Leu Arg Trp Gly Val Leu Ala Lys Ser Val Lys Asn Ile Met Leu
260 265 270

Gly His Ala Ser Val Gln Ala Glu Met Glu Gln Val Val Glu Val Tyr \$275\$ \$280\$ \$285\$

Glu Tyr Ala Gln Lys Leu Gly Gly Glu Ala Gly Phe Tyr His Ile Leu 290 295 300

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Asn Asn Pro Lys Ala Ser Leu Leu Ser Leu Thr Gln Phe Pro His Phe 305 310 315 320

Ser Ser Val Val Leu Gly Asn Ala Ala Gly Leu Gly Ile Met Gly Glu 325 330 335

Tyr Arg Gly Thr Pro Arg Asn Gln Asp Leu Tyr Asp Ala Ala Lys Ala 340 345 350

Tyr Ala Glu Gln Leu Lys Glu Asn Gly Val Ile Asn Tyr Ser Val Leu 355 360 365

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<223> Optimised Sequence

<400> 559

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- 186 -

cccagaaacc aggacctgta tgatgccgct aaggcatacg ccgagcagct gaaagaaaac 1080
ggcgtgatca attacagcgt gctggacctc accgccgagg aactggaggc tatcaagcac 1140
cagctcaacc ccaaagacaa tgatgtggag ctgtga 1176

<210> 560

<211> 64

<212> PRT

<213> respiratory syncytial virus

<400> 560

Met Glu Asn Thr Ser Ile Thr Ile Glu Phe Ser Ser Lys Phe Trp Pro 1 5 10 15

Tyr Phe Thr Leu Ile His Met Ile Thr Thr Ile Ile Ser Leu Leu Ile
20 25 30

Ile Ile Ser Ile Met Ile Ala Ile Leu Asn Lys Leu Cys Glu Tyr Asn 35 40 45

Val Phe His Asn Lys Thr Phe Glu Leu Pro Arg Ala Arg Val Asn Thr 50 55 60

<210> 561

<211> 195

<212> DNA

<213> respiratory syncytial virus

<400> 561

atggaaaata catccataac aatagaattc tcaagcaaat tctggcctta ctttacacta

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atacaca	atga	tcacaacaat	aatctctttg	ctaatcataa	tctccatcat	gattgcaata	120
ctaaaca	aaac	tttgtgaata	taacgtattc	cataacaaaa	cctttgagtt	accaagagct	180
cgagtca	aaca	catag					195
<210>	562						
<211>	195						
<212>	DNA						
<213>	Arti	ificial Sequ	ience				
<220>							
<223>	Opti	imised seque	ence				
<400>	562						
atggaga	aaca	cctccatcac	cattgagttc	tcctccaagt	tctggccata	cttcaccctg	60
atccaca	atga	tcaccaccat	catctccctg	ctgatcatca	tctccatcat	gattgccatc	120
ctgaac	aagc	tttgtgagta	caatgtcttc	cacaacaaga	cctttgagct	gccccgggcc	180
cgggtg	aaca	cctga			*		195
10101	5.60						
<210>							
<211>							
<212>	PRT						
<213>	res	piratory sym	uchtrat Atti	us			
<400>	E 6 2						
\4UU/	563						
Tue Lu	s Ar	g Lys Arg A	ra				
шуз шу 1	○ WI	g bys Arg A 5	+ 3				
т.		J					

<210> 564 <211> 4

- 188 -

<212> PRT

<213> respiratory syncytial virus

<400> 564

Arg Ala Arg Arg

1

<210> 565

<211> 575.

<212> PRT

<213> Artificial Sequence

<220>

<223> RSV F Protein Variant

<220>

<221> MISC_FEATURE

<222> (575)..(575)

<223> Xaa is any nucleotide

<400> 565

Met Glu Leu Leu Ile Leu Lys Ala Asn Ala Ile Thr Thr Ile Leu Thr 1 5 10 15

Ala Val Thr Phe Cys Phe Ala Ser Gly Gln Asn Ile Thr Glu Glu Phe 20 25 30

Tyr Gln Ser Thr Cys Ser Ala Val Ser Lys Gly Tyr Leu Ser Ala Leu $35 \hspace{1.5cm} 40 \hspace{1.5cm} 45 \hspace{1.5cm}$

Arg Thr Gly Trp Tyr Thr Ser Val Ile Thr Ile Glu Leu Ser Asn Ile

- 189 -

50 55 60

Lys Lys Asn Lys Cys Asn Gly Thr Asp Ala Lys Val Lys Leu Ile Lys 65 70 75 80

Gln Glu Leu Asp Lys Tyr Lys Asn Ala Val Thr Glu Leu Gln Leu Leu 85 90 95

Met Gln Ser Thr Gln Ala Thr Asn Asn Gly Gln Gly Arg Glu Leu Pro
100 105 110

Arg Phe Met Asn Tyr Thr Leu Asn Asn Ala Lys Lys Thr Asn Val Thr
115 120 125

Leu Ser Lys Lys Arg Lys Arg Phe Leu Gly Phe Leu Gly Val

Glu Gly Glu Val Asn Lys Ile Lys Ser Ala Leu Leu Ser Thr Asn Lys

165 170 175

Ala Val Val Ser Leu Ser Asn Gly Val Ser Val Leu Thr Ser Lys Val
180 185 190

Leu Asp Leu Lys Asn Tyr Ile Asp Lys Gln Leu Leu Pro Ile Val Asn 195 200 205

- 190 -

Lys Gln Ser Cys Ser Ile Ser Asn Ile Glu Thr Val Ile Glu Phe Gln 210 215 220

Gln Lys Asn Asn Arg Leu Leu Glu Ile Thr Arg Glu Phe Ser Val Asn 225 230 235 240

Ala Gly Val Thr Thr Pro Val Ser Thr Tyr Met Leu Thr Asn Ser Glu 245 250 255

Leu Leu Ser Leu Ile Asn Asp Met Pro Ile Thr Asn Asp Gln Lys Lys
260 265 270

Leu Met Ser Asn Asn Val Gln Ile Val Arg Gln Gln Ser Tyr Ser Ile
275
280
285

Met Ser Ile Ile Lys Glu Glu Val Leu Ala Tyr Val Val Gln Leu Pro 290 295 300

Leu Tyr Gly Val Ile Asp Thr Pro Cys Trp Lys Leu His Thr Ser Pro 305 310 315 320

Leu Cys Thr Thr Asn Thr Lys Glu Gly Ser Asn Ile Cys Leu Thr Arg 325 330 335

Thr Asp Arg Gly Trp Tyr Cys Asp Asn Ala Gly Ser Val Ser Phe Phe 340 345 350

Pro Gln Ala Glu Thr Cys Lys Val Gln Ser Asn Arg Val Phe Cys Asp

- 191 -

355 360 365

Thr Met Asn Ser Leu Thr Leu Pro Ser Glu Val Asn Leu Cys Asn Val 370 375 380

Asp Ile Phe Asn Pro Lys Tyr Asp Cys Lys Ile Met Thr Ser Lys Thr 385 390 395 400

Asp Val Ser Ser Ser Val Ile Thr Ser Leu Gly Ala Ile Val Ser Cys
405
410
415

Tyr Gly Lys Thr Lys Cys Thr Ala Ser Asn Lys Asn Arg Gly Ile Ile
420 425 430

Lys Thr Phe Ser Asn Gly Cys Asp Tyr Val Ser Asn Lys Gly Val Asp 435 440 445

Thr Val Ser Val Gly Asn Thr Leu Tyr Tyr Val Asn Lys Gln Glu Gly 450 450 460

Lys Ser Leu Tyr Val Lys Gly Glu Pro Ile Ile Asn Phe Tyr Asp Pro 465 470 475 480

Leu Val Phe Pro Ser Asp Glu Phe Asp Ala Ser Ile Ser Gln Val Asn
485 490 495

Glu Lys Ile Asn Gln Ser Leu Ala Phe Ile Arg Lys Ser Asp Glu Leu
500 505 510

- 192 -

Leu His Asn Val Asn Ala Gly Lys Ser Thr Thr Asn Ile Met Ile Thr
515 520 525

Thr Ile Ile Ile Val Ile Ile Val Ile Leu Leu Ser Leu Ile Ala Val 530 535 540

Gly Leu Leu Tyr Cys Lys Ala Arg Ser Thr Pro Val Thr Leu Ser 545 550 550 560

Lys Asp Gln Leu Ser Gly Ile Asn Asn Ile Ala Phe Ser Asn Xaa 565 570 575

<210> 566

<211> 3450

<212> DNA

<213> Artificial Sequence

<220>

<223> RSV F Protein Variant

<400> 566

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tgettegeet etggecagaa cateactgag gagttetace tacetegaeg actaggactt 120

ceggttgegg tagtggtggt aggactggeg ceactggaag acgaagegga gaceggtett 180

gtagtgacte etcaagatgg agageacttg tteegetgtg ageaaggget acetgagege 240

cetgaggace ggttggtaca ecagegtgat caccategag etgageaaca teaagaagaa 300

tetegtgaac aaggegacac tegtteeega tggactegeg ggacteetgg ecaaccatgt 360

- 193 -

420 ggtcgcacta gtggtagctc gactcgttgt agttcttctt caagtgcaac ggcaccgacg 480 ccaaggtgaa gctgatcaag caagagctgg acaagtacaa gaacgccgtg accgagctgc 540 aactgctgat gcagtcgact gttcacgttg ccgtggctgc ggttccactt cgactagttc 600 gttctcgacc tgttcatgtt cttgcggcac tggctcgacg ttgacgacta cgtcagctga 660 caagccacca acaacggcca gggcagagag ctgccccgct tcatgaacta caccctgaac 720 aacgccaaga agaccaacgt gacctgtcc aagaagagga gttcggtggt tgttgccggt 780 cccgtctctc gacgggcga agtacttgat gtgggacttg ttgcggttct tctggttgca 840 ctgggacagg ttcttctcct agegccgctt cctgggcttc ctgctgggcg tgggctccgc 900 cattgccagt ggcgtggccg tgtccaaggt gctgcacctg gagggcgagg tgaacaagat 960 tegeggegaa ggaccegaag gacgaceege accegaggeg gtaacggtea cegeacegge 1020 acaggttcca cgacgtggac ctcccgctcc acttgttcta caagagtgcc ctgctgtcca ctaacaaggc cgtggtgagc ctgagcaacg gcgtgagtgt gctgactagc aaggtgctgg 1080 acctgaagaa ctacatcgac gttctcacgg gacgacaggt gattgttccg gcaccactcg 1140 1200 gactegttgc egcacteaca egactgateg ttecaegace tggacttett gatgtagetg 1260 aagcaattgc tgcccatcgt gaacaagcag tcctgtagca tctccaacat cgagactgtg 1320 atcgagttcc agcagaagaa caaccgcctg ctggaaatca ttcgttaacg acgggtagca 1380 cttgttcgtc aggacatcgt agaggttgta gctctgacac tagctcaagg tcgtcttctt 1440 gttggcggac gacctttagt cccgggagtt cagtgtgaac gctggcgtga ccactcctgt 1500 ctccacctac atgctgacca acagcgaget gctgagcctg atcaacgaca tgcccatcac

- 194 -

gggccctcaa gtcacacttg cgaccgcact ggtgaggaca gaggtggatg tacgactggt 1560 tgtcgctcga cgactcggac tagttgctgt acgggtagtg caacgaccag aagaagctta 1620 tgtccaacaa cgtgcagatc gtgaggcagc agagctactc catcatgagc atcatcaagg 1680 aggaggtgct ggcctatgtg gttgctggtc ttcttcgaat acaggttgtt gcacgtctag 1740 cacteegteg tetegatgag gtagtacteg tagtagttee teetecaega eeggataeae 1800 gtgcagctgc ccctgtacgg cgtcatcgat accccttgct ggaagctgca caccagcccc 1860 ctgtgcacca ccaacaccaa ggagggcagc aacatctgcc cacgtcgacg gggacatgcc 1920 gcagtagcta tggggaacga ccttcgacgt gtggtcgggg gacacgtggt ggttgtggtt 1980 cctcccgtcg ttgtagacgg tgacccggac cgaccgcggc tggtactgtg acaacgctgg 2040 cteggtgagc ttcttccctc aagctgaaac ctgcaaggtc cagagcaaca gagtgttctg 2100 actgggcctg gctggcgccg accatgacac tgttgcgacc gagccactcg aagaagggag 2160 ttcgactttg gacgttccag gtctcgttgt ctcacaagac tgacaccatg aactccctga 2220 ccctgccctc cgaggtgaac ctgtgcaacg tggatatctt caaccccaag tatgactgca 2280 agatcatgac ctccaagacc actgtggtac ttgagggact gggacgggag gctccacttg 2340 gacacgttgc acctatagaa gttggggttc atactgacgt tctagtactg gaggttctgg 2400 gatgtctcga gctccgtgat caccagcctg ggcgccatcg tgtcctgcta tggcaagacc 2460 2520 aagtgcaccg ccagcaacaa gaaccggggc atcatcaaga ctacagagct cgaggcacta gtggtcggac ccgcggtagc acaggacgat accgttctgg ttcacgtggc ggtcgttgtt 2580 cttggccccg tagtagttct ccttcagcaa tgggtgcgac tacgtttcga acaagggcgt 2640

- 195 -

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agtagcacta	ggacgactcg	gactagcggc	acccggacga	cgacatgacg	ttccgggcct	3360
cgtgagggca	ctgggactcg	ttcctggtcg	actcgccgta	caacaacatc	gccttcagca	3420
actgagttgt	tgtagcggaa	gtcgttgact				3450

<210> 567

<220>

<211> 550

<212> PRT

<213> Artificial Sequence

<220>

<223> RSV F Protein Variant

- 196 -

<221> MISC FEATURE

<222> (550)..(550)

<223> Xaa is any nucletotide

<400> 567

Met Glu Leu Leu Ile Leu Lys Ala Asn Ala Ile Thr Thr Ile Leu Thr 1 5 10 15

Ala Val Thr Phe Cys Phe Ala Ser Gly Gln Asn Ile Thr Glu Glu Phe
20 25 30

Tyr Gln Ser Thr Cys Ser Ala Val Ser Lys Gly Tyr Leu Ser Ala Leu 35 40 45

Arg Thr Gly Trp Tyr Thr Ser Val Ile Thr Ile Glu Leu Ser Asn Ile 50 55 60

Lys Lys Asn Lys Cys Asn Gly Thr Asp Ala Lys Val Lys Leu Ile Lys 65 70 75 80

Gln Glu Leu Asp Lys Tyr Lys Asn Ala Val Thr Glu Leu Gln Leu Leu 85 90 95

Met Gln Ser Thr Gln Ala Thr Asn Asn Lys Lys Arg Lys Arg Phe
100 105 110

Leu Gly Phe Leu Leu Gly Val Gly Ser Ala Ile Ala Ser Gly Val Ala
115 120 125

- 197 -

Val Ser Lys Val Leu His Leu Glu Gly Glu Val Asn Lys Ile Lys Ser 130 135 140

Ser Val Leu Thr Ser Lys Val Leu Asp Leu Lys Asn Tyr Ile Asp Lys

165 170 175

Gln Leu Leu Pro Ile Val Asn Lys Gln Ser Cys Ser Ile Ser Asn Ile 180 185 190

Glu Thr Val Ile Glu Phe Gln Gln Lys Asn Asn Arg Leu Leu Glu Ile 195 200 205

Thr Arg Glu Phe Ser Val Asn Ala Gly Val Thr Thr Pro Val Ser Thr 210 215 220

Tyr Met Leu Thr Asn Ser Glu Leu Leu Ser Leu Ile Asn Asp Met Pro 225 230 230 230 240

Ile Thr Asn Asp Gln Lys Lys Leu Met Ser Asn Asn Val Gln Ile Val 245 250 255

Arg Gln Gln Ser Tyr Ser Ile Met Ser Ile Ile Lys Glu Glu Val Leu 260 265 270

Ala Tyr Val Val Gln Leu Pro Leu Tyr Gly Val Ile Asp Thr Pro Cys

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275 280 285

Trp Lys Leu His Thr Ser Pro Leu Cys Thr Thr Asn Thr Lys Glu Gly
290 295 300

Ser Asn Ile Cys Leu Thr Arg Thr Asp Arg Gly Trp Tyr Cys Asp Asn 305 310 315 320

Ala Gly Ser Val Ser Phe Phe Pro Gln Ala Glu Thr Cys Lys Val Gln 325 330 335

Ser Asn Arg Val Phe Cys Asp Thr Met Asn Ser Leu Thr Leu Pro Ser 340 350

Glu Val Asn Leu Cys Asn Val Asp Ile Phe Asn Pro Lys Tyr Asp Cys 355 360 365

Lys Ile Met Thr Ser Lys Thr Asp Val Ser Ser Ser Val Ile Thr Ser 370 375 380

Leu Gly Ala Ile Val Ser Cys Tyr Gly Lys Thr Lys Cys Thr Ala Ser 385 390 395 400

Asn Lys Asn Arg Gly Ile Ile Lys Thr Phe Ser Asn Gly Cys Asp Tyr 405 410 415

Val Ser Asn Lys Gly Val Asp Thr Val Ser Val Gly Asn Thr Leu Tyr
420 425 430

- 199 -

Tyr Val Asn Lys Gl
n Glu Gly Lys Ser Leu Tyr Val Lys Gly Glu Pro $435 \hspace{1.5cm} 440 \hspace{1.5cm} 445 \hspace{1.5cm}$

Ile Ile Asn Phe Tyr Asp Pro Leu Val Phe Pro Ser Asp Glu Phe Asp 450 455 460

Ala Ser Ile Ser Gln Val Asn Glu Lys Ile Asn Gln Ser Leu Ala Phe 465 470 475 480

Tle Arg Lys Ser Asp Glu Leu Leu His Asn Val Asn Ala Gly Lys Ser
485 490 495

Thr Thr Asn Ile Met Ile Thr Thr Ile Ile Ile Val Ile Val Ile 500 505 510

Leu Leu Ser Leu Ile Ala Val Gly Leu Leu Leu Tyr Cys Lys Ala Arg 515 520 525

Ser Thr Pro Val Thr Leu Ser Lys Asp Gln Leu Ser Gly Ile Asn Asn 530 535 540

Ile Ala Phe Ser Asn Xaa 545 550

<210> 568

<211> 3299 <212> DNA

<213> Artificial Sequence

- 200 -

<220>

<223> RSV F Protein Variant

<400> 568

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- 201 -

1080 tegacaagea attgetgeee ategtgaaca ageagteetg tageatetee aacategaga ctgtgatcga gttccagcag cgacctggac ttcttgatgt agctgttcgt taacgacggg 1140 1200 tagcacttgt tcgtcaggac atcgtagagg ttgtagctct gacactagct caaggtcgtc aagaacaacc gcctgctgga aatcacccgg gagttcagtg tgaacgctgg cgtgaccact 1260 1320 cctgtctcca cctacatgct gaccaacagc gagctgctga ttcttgttgg cggacgacct 1380 ttagtgggcc ctcaagtcac acttgcgacc gcactggtga ggacagaggt ggatgtacga 1440 ctggttgtcg ctcgacgact gcctgatcaa cgacatgccc atcaccaacg accagaagaa 1500 gettatgtee aacaacgtge agategtgag geageagage tactecatea tgageateat cggactagtt gctgtacggg tagtggttgc tggtcttctt cgaatacagg ttgttgcacg 1560 tctagcactc cgtcgtctcg atgaggtagt actcgtagta caaggaggag gtgctggcct 1620 1680 atgtggtgca gctgcccctg tacggcgtca tcgatacccc ttgctggaag ctgcacacca gccccctgtg caccaccaac gttcctcctc cacgaccgga tacaccacgt cgacggggac 1740 1800 atgccgcagt agctatgggg aacgaccttc gacgtgtggt cgggggacac gtggtggttg 1860 accaaggagg gcagcaacat ctgcctgacc cggaccgacc gcggctggta ctgtgacaac gctggctcgg tgagcttctt ccctcaagct gaaacctgca tggttcctcc cgtcgttgta 1920 gacggactgg gcctggctgg cgccgaccat gacactgttg cgaccgagcc actcgaagaa 1980 gggagttcga ctttggacgt aggtccagag caacagagtg ttctgtgaca ccatgaactc 2040 cctgaccctg ccctccgagg tgaacctgtg caacgtggat atcttcaacc ccaagtatga 2100 tecaggtete gttgteteae aagacaetgt ggtaettgag ggaetgggae gggaggetee 2160

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International application No.

PCT/AU01/01517

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl. ⁷: C07K 14/08, 14/115, 14/135, 16/10; A61K 38/16, 39/155; A61P 11/00; C12N 15/45, 15/40; C12Q 1/68; G01N 1/68;

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
PubMed, keywords: F protein, fusion, RSV, respiratory syncytial virus, Paramyxoviridae, Pneunovirus and similar terms;
STN file Medline: fusion, RSV, and sequences RARR, KKRKRR; Espace, keywords, f protein, expression;
ANGIS: seq id's 3, 4, 5, 6, 556, 559, 562

C.	DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT	יין אינער אינע					
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where app	propriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.				
X Y	EP 780475 B1 (SCHWEIZ SERUM- & IMR see whole document	PFINSTITUT) 25 June 1997	1 - 14 1 - 25, 56 - 59				
X, Y X, Y	WO 99/02694 A1 (THE UNIVERSIITY OF 21 January 1999 see whole document WO 96/09378 A1 (THE GENERAL HOSP) 28 March 1996 see whole document		1- 25, 56 -59 1- 25, 56 -59				
	X Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C X See patent fa						
* Specia "A" docum not co "E" earlier the int "L" docum or who anothe "O" docum or oth "P" docum	al categories of cited documents: ment defining the general state of the art which is onsidered to be of particular relevance rapplication or patent but published on or after ternational filing date ment which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) ich is cited to establish the publication date of er citation or other special reason (as specified) ment referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition er means ment published prior to the international filing date "8"	later document published after the in priority date and not in conflict with understand the principle or theory un document of particular relevance; the be considered novel or cannot be con inventive step when the document is document of particular relevance; the be considered to involve an inventive combined with one or more other suc combination being obvious to a perse	the application but cited to derlying the invention cannot asidered to involve an taken alone claimed invention cannot extend the claimed invention cannot extend the document is challenged in the art				
Date of the actu 24 January 2	ual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search	1 9 FEB 2002				
Name and mail	ling address of the ISA/AU	Authorized officer					
PO BOX 200, E-mail address:	N PATENT OFFICE WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA : pct@ipaustralia.gov.au (02) 6285 3929	DAVID GRIFFITHS Telephone No: (02) 6283 2628					

International application No.

PCT/AU01/01517

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT								
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.						
Х	US 4,619,942 A (TIDWELL, et al.) 28 October 1986 col. 1, line 61 - col. 2, line 16	26						
x	WO 99/62932 A2 (VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY) 9 December 1999 page 12 line 15 to page 14 line 11	41, 62, 75, 79						
X	SAKURAI, Hiroshi <i>et al.</i> , "Human Antibody Responses to Mature and Immature Forms of Viral Envelope in Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection: Significance for Subunit Vaccines", Journal of Virology, Vol. 73, No. 4, April 1999, pp. 2956 - 2962 see whole document	41, 62, 75, 79						
X	LI, Xiaomao <i>et al.</i> , "Protection against Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection by DNA Immunization", J. Exp. Med., Vol 188, No. 4, 17 August 1998, pp. 681 - 688 see whole document	41, 62, 75, 79						
X	LOPEZ, Juan A. et al., "Antigenic Structure of Human Respiratory Syncytial Virus Fusion Protein", Journal of Virology, Vol. 72, No. 8, August 1998, pp. 6922-6928 see whole document	41, 62, 75, 75						
P, X	ZIMMER, G. <i>et al</i> , "Proteolytic Activation of Respiratory Syncytial Virus Fusion Protein". Journal of Biological Chemistry, Vol. 276, No. 34, pp. 31642-31650 see whole document	44 - 49						
,								

International application No.

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Box I	Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)						
This inter	rnational search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following						
1.	Claims Nos :						
	because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:						
!							
2.	X Claims Nos: 1 - 41 (in part), 42, 43, 44 -79 (in part)						
	because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:						
	The breadth of the claims is such that a full, meaningful search is not possible on economic grounds. The search was therefore confined largely to the optimisation of expression in eukaryotes by replacing less-preferred codons by more preferred codons. A keyword search was done to cover the other claimed aspects but due to the breadth of the claims this cannot be regarded as complete. It was not technically feasible to search claims 42 and 43.						
3.	Claims Nos :						
	because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule						
	6.4(a)						
Вох П	Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)						
This Inte	rnational Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:						
See s	upplemental sheet						
	As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims						
2.	As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.						
3.	As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search						
	report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:						
4.	No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:						
	report is resulted to the invention has mentioned in the claims, it is covered by claims from.						
Damarl	on Protest The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.						
ixemark							
	No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.						

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Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of Boxes I to VIII is not sufficient)

The following separate inventions have been identified:

- (i) a method of facilitating the production of viral protein (e.g. claim 1)
- (ii) a method of regulating the functional activity of viral F protein (e.g. claim 26)
- (iii) a method of detecting an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of viral F protein (e.g. claim 34)
- (iv) an agent capable of regulating the functional activity of viral F protein (e.g. claim 41)
- (v) a viral F protein variant (e.g. claim 44)
- (vi) a recombinant viral protein construct optimised for expression in a eukaryote (e.g. claim 60).

Information on patent family members

International application No. PCT/AU01/01517

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member					
EP	780475	AU	68208/96	CA	2228956	EP	846181
		WO	9706270				
WO	99/02694	AU	81999/98	EP	1002091		
WO	96/09378	AU	35099/95	CA	2200342	EP	781329
		TR	960230	US	5786464	ZA	9507846
		US	5795737	CA	2231394	EP	851868
		WO	9711086				
US	4619942	US	4324794	US	4397863		
WO	99/62932	US	6315810	US	6299827	DE	19723599
		EP	882679	JР	11005069		
							END OF ANNEX