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**DETECTION OF VIRUSES THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL  
TO ALTER THE PATHOGENICITY OF WILD TYPE  
MAREK'S DISEASE VIRUS**

**Thesis submitted by**

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**in January 2006**

**for the research degree of Master of Tropical Veterinary Sciences  
in the Discipline of Microbiology and Immunology  
at James Cook University**

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**Samjhana K. KAFLE PANDEY**

**February 2007**

# **Statement of Sources**

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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## **Statement of the Contribution of Others**

This project was supervised by Dr. Graham W. Burgess, Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology, James Cook University, Townsville Australia. The laboratory procedural assistance was obtained from Mr. Ramon Layton, Dept. of Microbiology and Immunology, James Cook University, Townsville Australia. I am thankful to Dr. Graham Burgess for editorial and proofreading of the thesis.

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**Samjhana K. KAFLE PANDEY**

**February 2007**

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## ABSTRACT

Marek's disease virus serotype one (MDV-1) causes neuropathic, cytolytic and lymphoproliferative disease in poultry. Chicken anaemia virus (CAV) is also a pathogen causing anaemia and immunosuppression in chicken. Marek's disease serotype two virus (MDV-2) is naturally occurring in chicken and apathogenic virus. Natural multiple infection of these three viruses is possible. Presence of CAV and MDV-2 in the poultry flocks is potential to change in the pathogenicity of MDV-1 and also the pathogenicity of the CAV when infected alone.

Three hundred and ten feather samples as three different panels were collected from representative broiler flocks throughout Australia. These broiler flocks had different vaccination history against MDV. These samples were examined to detect the status of MDV-2 and CAV. The results of nested polymerase chain reaction (PCR) demonstrated that these two viruses are present in the broiler flocks. The samples were also investigated for MDV-1 by Mr. Ramon Layton (JCU) and the data from the MDV-1 investigation was analysed together with these two viruses. The flocks, vaccinated with HVT (herpesvirus of turkey) were found to be free from both MDV-1 and MDV-2. However, after the cessation of vaccination, both MDV1 and MDV-2 reappeared, first MDV-1 and then MDV-2. Interestingly when the MDV-2 was increasing progressively, the MDV-1 was decreasing. Although the available data is not sufficient to draw a conclusion, it is strongly suggestive that the presence of MDV-2 in infected birds changes the pathogenicity of MDV-1. The MDV-2 possibly works as a vaccine reducing the clinical MDV despite up to 30% prevalence of wild type MDV-1.

The CAV was present in all the flocks tested with more or less similar pattern of the viral distribution ranged between 50%-100%. Two sets of nested primers were used for detection of the CAV variably reacted with samples. The difference in the reactivity of the primer was then assumed as primer sequence mismatch due to CAV strain differences. This project further aimed to determine the source of CAV in the broilers. The CAV can be transmitted through both horizontal and vertical route. Both parents can transmit the virus to the progeny. To control clinical disease in young chicks, breeding flocks are generally vaccinated with a live vaccine.



Possible source of CAV infection in the broiler flocks and the genetic divergence of the CAV detected in the samples were determined by sequencing the CAV field isolates selected on the basis of reactivity differences of two nested primer pairs and geographical location of the broiler farms. Eight field isolates, vaccine strain 3711 and a reference strain BF4 were sequenced generating 951 bp long sequences covering complete VP3 gene, 3' 86% of VP2 gene and starting 42% of VP1 gene including hypervariable region. The sequence alignment and evolutionary analysis of these data, only Australian isolates and along with other global CAV isolates demonstrated that the Australian CAV field isolates fitted in to three different groups. Vaccine (strain 3711), strain BF4 and one of the field isolates included in a group, six field isolates included in next group together with CIA-1, and remaining one field isolate included in the third group together with the Cux-1.

Although one of the field isolate is included in the group along with vaccines, the isolate had genetic differences sufficient to differentiate from the strain 3711. These results demonstrated that the CAV in the broilers is not the vaccine virus. In addition this group of virus have two non-synonymous mutations in the VP3 gene, not described to dates in the sequences of CAV global isolates except in the sequences of strain CAU/7 (an Australian isolate).

To differentiate possible vertical and horizontal transmission of CAV in the broiler flocks, weekly sequential samples from week one till slaughter from one of the previous test flock was collected and investigated by nested PCR. The nested PCR result demonstrated that the birds were infected from week one. Eighty percent of the samples tested contained CAV DNA in it. This result further indicated that the virus was transmitted vertically. However the infection was sustained to the flock with similar pattern of distribution in the subsequent week samples till slaughter.

Nearly full length genomic identification of the vaccine virus was determined (19 bp shorter). In attempts to sequence full length genome of one field isolates from three genetically different groups of isolates, five different sequence data were obtained. Three overlapping primer pairs were designed to complete the sequences of the remaining 1347/1368 bp long DNA. The same primers were used for amplification

of vaccine strain as well. Two sequences, 723 bp and 438 bp long were identified as chicken genome, one 563 bp long as *Psychrobacter arcticus* 273-4 and two sequences, 1.28 kb and 499 bp long do not have sequence identification more than twenty base pair except primer sequence as CAV at both end of the sequence. These sequence data demonstrated that chicken/other bacteria also have the primer sequence similarity in their genome enough to initiate DNA amplification in that given condition. In addition, these sequences data of chicken genomes or would be chicken genome or the bacterial genome further indicates reliability of the single round PCR results if used as diagnostic tool.

The results from this project demonstrated that MDV-2 and CAV are present in Australian broilers. The presence of MDV-2 infection in the broiler flock prior to MDV-1 infection is likely to decrease the pathogenicity of MDV-1. Every broiler flocks is likely to have CAV infection. At lease three different strains of CAV are circulating in the present Australian commercial broilers. The CAV strains were not the vaccine virus administered to the parental flocks. The CAV strains were wild type virus most likely vertically transmitted to the broilers and they were maintained in the broiler shed environment.

# Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vii
CHAPTER 1 .....	1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2 .....	4
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	4
<b>2.1. Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>2.2 Marek's disease virus</b> .....	5
2.2.1 Introduction .....	5
2.2.2 Taxonomy and viral characterisation .....	6
2.2.3 Serotypes .....	6
2.2.4 Epidemiology and pathogenesis .....	7
2.2.4.1 Transmission .....	7
2.2.4.2 Pathogenesis .....	8
2.2.4.2.1 Early cytolytic phase .....	8
2.2.4.2.2 Latent infection .....	9
2.2.4.2.3 The late cytolytic phase .....	10
2.2.4.2.4 Fully productive infection in the feather-follicle epithelium .....	10
2.2.4.2.5 Neoplastic transformation .....	11
2.2.4.3 Clinical findings .....	13
2.2.5 Impact of chicken anaemia virus infection on MDV infection .....	13
2.2.6 Diagnosis .....	15
2.2.6.1 Viral isolation .....	15
2.2.6.2 Serological examination .....	16
2.2.6.3 Molecular diagnostics .....	16
2.2.7 Control measures .....	17
2.2.8 Emergence of highly virulent wild type Marek's disease virus .....	18
<b>2.3 Chicken Anaemia Virus</b> .....	19
2.3.1 Introduction .....	19
2.3.2 Taxonomy and viral characteristics .....	20
2.3.2.1 Chicken anaemia virus - induced tumour-specific Apoptosis .....	21
2.3.3 Epidemiology and pathogenesis .....	22
2.3.3.1 Transmission .....	22
2.3.3.2 Incubation period and clinical findings .....	23
2.3.3.3 Infection .....	24
2.3.3.4 Immunosuppression caused by CAV infection .....	28
2.3.4 Impact of chicken anaemia virus on the broiler Industry .....	29
2.3.5 Molecular characterisation .....	29
2.3.6 Molecular Epidemiology .....	30
2.3.7 Diagnosis .....	31
2.3.7.1 Viral isolation and identification .....	31
2.3.7.2 Serology .....	32
2.3.7.3 Molecular diagnostic methods .....	34
2.3.8 Control measures .....	34

2.3 Conclusion.....	35
CHAPTER 3 .....	36
GENERAL MATERIALS AND METHODS.....	36
3.1 Cell culture and propagation of chicken anaemia virus.....	36
3.1.1 Cell line for viral propagation.....	36
3.1.2 Viral propagation in MSB1 cells.....	36
3.2 Viruses and its source used in this project.....	37
3.2.1 CAV Reference viruses .....	37
3.2.2 CAV field samples .....	37
3.2.3 CAV plasmid, pBluescript.....	38
3.3 MDV-2 virus strain .....	38
3.4 Oligonucleotide primers used for detection of viruses .....	39
3.4.1 Primers used for chicken anaemia virus detection .....	39
3.4.2 Primers used for detection of MDV-2 .....	40
3.4.3 Primers used for the detection of MDV-1 .....	41
3.5 Viral DNA extraction.....	41
3.6 Estimation of DNA concentration and its purity .....	42
3.7 Published sequences used to compile a CAV database.....	42
CHAPTER 4 .....	43
OPTIMISATION AND ADOPTION OF POLYMERASE CHAIN REACTION AND DETERMINATION OF RELATIVE SENSITIVITY OF TWO CAV STRAIN-SPECIFIC PRIMER PAIRS AGAINST STRAIN BF4.....	43
4.1 Optimisation and adoption of the polymerase chain reaction .....	43
4.1.1 Introduction .....	43
4.1.2 Materials and methods .....	44
4.1.2.1 CAV template for standardisation .....	44
4.1.2.2 Standard PCR for CAV.....	44
4.1.2.3 Agarose gel electrophoresis .....	45
4.1.2.4 Nested PCR for CAV .....	45
4.1.2.5 Adoption of PCR for the detection of MDV .....	46
4.1.2.6 Sensitivity of the nested PCR for MDV-2 .....	46
4.1.2.7 Electrophoresis .....	47
4.1.3 Results .....	47
4.1.3.1 Standard PCR for CAV.....	47
4.1.3.2 Nested PCR for CAV .....	49
4.1.3 Standard and nested PCR for MDV-2 .....	50
4.1.4 Discussion.....	52
4.2 Relative sensitivity of CAV primers, Cux and SH-1, with respect to the Australian CAV strain BF4.....	53
4.2.1 Introduction .....	53
4.2.2 Materials and methods .....	53
4.2.3 Results .....	54
4.2.4 Discussion.....	56
4.3 Conclusion.....	57
CHAPTER 5 .....	58

<b>EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE PREVALENCE OF MAREK’S DISEASE TYPES ONE AND TWO AND CHICKEN ANAEMIA VIRUS USING FEATHER SAMPLES COLLECTED FROM BROILER FLOCKS AT SLAUGHTER.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>5.2 Materials and methods.....</b>	<b>59</b>
5.2.2 Sample materials.....	59
5.2.3 Sample processing.....	60
5.2.3.1 Viral DNA extraction from feather follicle epithelium using the Roche Kit.....	60
5.2.3.2 Extraction of DNA using the CAS 1820 ExtractaGene (Corbett Robotics).....	60
5.2.4 Oligonucleotide primers.....	61
5.2.4.1 Primers used for the detection of chicken anaemia virus.....	61
5.2.4.2 Primers used for the detection of Marek’s disease type two....	61
5.2.4.3 Primers used for the detection of Marek’s disease type one....	61
5.2.5 Detection of Viruses by nested PCR.....	61
5.2.5.1 Detection of chicken anaemia virus.....	62
5.2.5.1.1 Viral DNA amplification.....	62
5.2.5.1.2 Image visualisation.....	63
5.2.5.1.2.1 Image visualisation using E-Gel® agarose gel kit.....	63
5.2.5.2 Detection of Marek’s disease type-2.....	64
5.2.5.2.1 Viral DNA amplification.....	64
5.2.5.2.2 Electrophoresis and Image visualisation.....	64
<b>5.3 Results.....</b>	<b>64</b>
5.3.1 Prevalence of MDV-1, MDV-2 and CAV in broiler flocks vaccinated with HVT.....	66
5.3.2 Estimated prevalence of MDV-1, MDV-2 and CAV in broiler flocks after the cessation of vaccination.....	67
5.3.3 Estimated prevalence of MDV-1, MDV-2 and CAV in a panel of 180 samples from the nine broiler flocks.....	68
<b>5.4 Discussion.....</b>	<b>70</b>
5.4.1 Related to the experimental procedure.....	70
5.4.2 Related to result interpretation.....	71
<b>5.5 Conclusions.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>MOLECULAR CHARACTERISATION OF CHICKEN ANAEMIA VIRUS STRAIN 3711 AND THE FIELD ISOLATES TO DETERMINE SOURCE OF VIRAL TRANSMISSION.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>6.2 Materials and Methods.....</b>	<b>78</b>
6.2.1 Strains of the virus for sequencing.....	78
6.2.1.1 Chicken anaemia virus strain 3711.....	78
6.2.1.3 Chicken anaemia virus field isolates.....	78
6.2.1.3.1 CAV field isolate from South Australia.....	78
6.2.1.3.2 CAV isolates from Western Australia.....	79

6.2.1.3.3	CAV isolates from Victoria .....	79
6.2.1.3.4	CAV isolates from Queensland .....	79
6.2.1.3.5	CAV isolates from New South Wales .....	79
6.2.2	Oligonucleotide primers used to produce CAV genome to be sequenced .....	79
6.2.3	DNA amplification .....	82
6.2.4	Viral DNA extraction and purification from agarose gel .....	83
6.2.5	Quantitation of DNA .....	83
6.2.6	Cloning of the PCR product .....	84
6.2.6.1	Competent cell transformation .....	84
6.2.6.2	Bacterial culture .....	84
6.2.6.3	Recombinant plasmid DNA extraction .....	85
6.2.6.4	Bacterial culture storage .....	85
6.2.6.5	Plasmid DNA purification .....	85
6.2.6.6	Quantitation of plasmid DNA .....	85
6.2.6.7	Specific size DNA inserts confirmation in the plasmid DNA .....	86
6.2.7	Sequencing .....	86
6.2.7.1	Purification of sequencing reaction product .....	86
6.2.7.2	Nucleotide sequence recording and data generation .....	87
6.2.7.3	Nucleotide sequence clean up .....	87
6.3	Results .....	87
6.3.1	Full length DNA amplification .....	87
6.3.2	Amplification of fragments of CAV genome .....	88
6.3.3	Nucleotide bases comparisons of CAV sequences of Australian isolates with the Cux1CAEGFVIR .....	92
6.3.4	Nucleotide comparisons of CAV Australian isolates with the vaccine strain 3711 .....	100
6.4	Discussion .....	107
6.5	Conclusion .....	111
CHAPTER 7	.....	112
<b>MOLECULAR EPIDEMIOLOGY OF CHICKEN ANAEMIA VIRUS IN AUSTRALIA .....</b>		
7.1	Introduction .....	112
7.2	Materials and methods .....	112
7.3	Results .....	114
7.4	Discussion .....	127
7.5	Conclusions .....	130
CHAPTER 8	.....	131
<b>DETERMINATION OF TIME OF CHICKEN ANAEMIA VIRUS INFECTION IN A BROILER FLOCK .....</b>		
8.1	Introduction .....	131
8.2	Material and methods .....	131
8.2.1	Buffy-coat separation and storage .....	133
8.2.2	Extraction of viral DNA from buffy-coat and the feather samples .....	133
8.2.3	Viral detection .....	133
8.2.4	Agarose gel electrophoresis and image visualisation .....	134

8.3	Results .....	134
8.4	Discussion.....	136
8.5	Conclusions .....	139
<b>CHAPTER 9 .....</b>		<b>140</b>
<b>GENERAL DISCUSSION .....</b>		<b>140</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>		<b>145</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1 .....</b>		<b>157</b>
1.1	Reagents used for cell culture and storage .....	157
1.1.1	RPMI 1640 media for MSB1 cell .....	157
1.1.2	Freezing media .....	157
1.2	Reagents used for agarose gel electrophoresis.....	157
1.2.1	50 × Tris-acetate EDTA buffer (TAE) - Stock solution .....	157
1.2.2	1 × TAE Buffer .....	157
1.2.3	Gel loading dye .....	158
1.3	Reagents used for cloning and sequencing .....	158
1.3.1	LB Medium .....	158
1.3.2	LB agar.....	158
1.4	Reagents used for blood collection and buffy coat preparation .....	159
1.4.1	Sodium citrate buffers .....	159
1.4.2	1 × Phosphate Buffer Solution .....	159
<b>APPENDIX 2 .....</b>		<b>160</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3 .....</b>		<b>162</b>
	Results: Table 1 .....	162
	Results: Table 2 .....	165
<b>APPENDIX 4 .....</b>		<b>169</b>
<b>APPENDIX 5 .....</b>		<b>171</b>
	PCR results .....	171

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	Chicken anaemia virus strains used for this project and its source.....	38
Table 3.2	CAV Plasmid, pBluescript.....	38
Table 3.3	Primers used in PCR assay to detect CAV.....	39
Table 3.4	Description of MDV-2 primers.....	40
Table 3.5	Description of MDV-1 primers.....	41
Table 6.1	Primers used in the full length sequencing trial.....	80
Table 6.2	Primers used in PCR to sequence CAV.....	82
Table 6.3	Reagents concentration and DNA amplification parameters used for each primers used for sequencing.....	83
Table 6.4	Common nucleotide bases substitution in CAV VP3.....	94
Table 6.5	Common amino acid substitution in CAV VP3.....	95
Table 6.6	Common nucleotide bases substitution in CAV VP2 gene.....	96
Table 6.7	Common amino acid substitution in CAV VP2.....	97
Table 6.8	Common nucleotide bases substitution in CAV VP1 gene.....	98
Table 6.9	Common amino acid substitution in CAV VP1.....	99
Table 6.10	Common nucleotide substitution in VP3 gene.....	101
Table 6.11	Common amino acid substitution in CAV VP3.....	101
Table 6.12	common nucleotide substitution in VP2 gene.....	102
Table 6.13	Common amino acid substitution in CAV VP2.....	102
Table 6.14	Common nucleotide bases substitution in CAV VP1 gene.....	105
Table 6.15	Common amino acid substitution in CAV VP1.....	106
Table 7.1	CAV sequences used for multiple alignment analysis.....	113
Table 7.2	Non-synonymous predicted amino acids in VP2 gene.....	116
Table 7.3	Common amino acid substitution in the VP3 gene.....	117
Table 7.4	Non-synonymous amino acids in the VP1 gene.....	118



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Schematic diagram presenting different phases of MD pathogenesis ....	12
Figure 2.2	Critical points in the epidemiology of MD and possible strategies of control .....	19
Figure 2.3	Schematic representations of the effects of chicken anaemia virus on haemopoiesis and T cell development .....	25
Figure 2.4	Schematic representation of the susceptibility of lymphoblastoid cells to infection with chicken anaemia virus.....	26
Figure 4.1	Agarose gel electrophoresis of CAV PCR products .....	48
Figure 4.2	Agarose gel electrophoresis of CAV PCR products .....	48
Figure 4.3	Electrophoresis of nested CAV PCR products.....	49
Figure 4.4	Electrophoresis of CAV PCR products.....	50
Figure 4.5	Agarose gel electrophoresis of MDV-2 nested PCR products.....	51
Figure 4.6	Electrophoresis of CAV PCR products.....	55
Figure 4.7	Electrophoresis of nested PCR products .....	56
Figure 5.1	Electrophoresis of CAV nested PCR products Primers used were CAV SH-1N3 and SH-1N5 (inside primer set) .....	65
Figure 5.2	Electrophoresis of nested PCR products. Nested PCR reaction .....	66
Figure 5.3	Estimated prevalence of three viruses in broiler flocks vaccinated with full dose HVT in ovo on day 19 .....	67
Figure: 5.4	Estimated prevalence of three viruses in samples collected from broiler after the cessation of vaccination .....	68
Figure 5.5	Estimated prevalence of three viruses in nine representative broiler flocks in Australia .....	69
Figure 5.6	E-Gel® agarose gel electrophoresis of PCR products .....	70
Figure 6.1	Electrophoresis of PCR product.....	91
Figure 6.2	Phylogenetic tree constructed from the 951 bp sequence data of Australian isolates using Mega3 minimum evolution, style radiation ....	93
Figure 6.3	Phylogenic analysis of starting 42% sequences of VP1 Australian CAV isolates, MEGA3 (ME, tree/branch style- radiation) .....	104
Figure 7.1	Phylogenetic tree derived from the full length sequence of vaccine strain 3711 and 26 published CAV sequences strains using MEGA3 and minimum evolution .....	120

Figure 7.2	Unrooted phylogenetic tree derived from the 951 bp sequence length of 12 Australian strains and 26 published CAV sequences using MEGA3 and minimum evolution .....	121
Figure 7.3	Unrooted phylogenetic tree derived from the 571bp sequence of VP1 gene of 12 Australian strains and 26 published CAV sequences using MEGA3 minimum evolution .....	123
Figure 7.4	Unrooted phylogenetic tree constructed from the 190 amino acids of the VP1 gene of 12 Australian strains and 26 published CAV sequences using MEGA3 minimum evolution.....	124
Figure 7.5	Unrooted phylogenetic tree derived from the complete amino acid sequence of VP3 gene of 12 Australian strains and 26 global CAV strains using MEGA3 and minimum evolution.....	126
Figure 8.1	Demonstration of blood collection in the capillary collection tube .....	132
Figure 8.2	Electrophoresis of first round PCR. Template: 2 µl sample DNA, Primers CAV Cux - O3F and O3R.....	135
Figure 8.3	Electrophoresis of nested PCR products Primers: CAV Cux-N3 and N4 (inside primer set) .....	135
Figure 8.4	Estimated prevalence of CAV in broilers at 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 weeks of age .....	136

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

μ	Microns
μg	Microgram
μl	Microlitre
A260	Absorbance at 260 nanometres
A280	Absorbance at 280 nanometres
B-cell	B -lymphocyte
Bcl-2	Cancer expressing protein
BFDV	Beak and feather disease virus
BLAST	Basic Local Alignment Search Tool
bp	Base pair
CAV	Chicken anaemia virus
CD	Cluster of differentiation
CEF	Chicken embryo fibroblasts
CIA-1	Chicken infectious anaemia-1
CKC	Chicken kidney cells
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
CPE	Cytopathic effect
CTL	Cytotoxic T lymphocytes
Cux-1	Cuxhaven-1
DEF	Duck embryo fibroblast
DMSO	Dimethyl sulphoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DNase	Deoxyribonuclease
dNTP	Deoxynucleotide 5'-triphosphates
dsDNA	Double stranded DNA
EDTA	Ethylene diamine tetra-acetic acid
EGTA	Ethylene glycol tetra-acetic Acid
ELISA	Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
ERE	Estrogens response element
FAPP	Filtered-air, positive-pressure
FBS	Foetal bovine serum

FFE	Feather follicle epithelium
FREIT	Fluorescence resonance energy transfer
<i>g</i>	Unit of acceleration
g	Gram
GaHV-3	<i>Gallid Herpesvirus</i> Type 3
G-C	Guanine and cytosine
HVT	Herpes virus of turkey
IBDV	Infectious bursal disease virus
IFAT	Indirect immunofluorescent antibody test
IFN $\gamma$	Interferon gamma
IPTG	Isopropyl-beta-D-thiogalactopyranoside
IL-6	Interleukin 6
IL-18	Interleukin 18
IR <sub>L</sub>	Long internal repeat
IR <sub>S</sub>	Short internal repeat
IU	International unit
kb	Kilo base
kDa	Kilo Dalton
LB	Luria-Bertani
M	Molar
MATSA	Marek's disease tumour-associated surface antigen
MBP	Maltose-binding protein
MD	Marek's disease
MDV	Marek's disease virus
MDV-1	Marek's disease virus serotype one
MDV-2	Marek's disease virus serotype two
MSB1	Marek's disease lymphoblastoid cell lines
mg	Milligram
Mg <sup>+2</sup>	Magnesium ion
MHC	Major histocompatibility complex
ml	Millilitre
mM	Millimolar
NDV	Newcastle disease virus

ng	Nanogram
NO	Nitric oxide
P53	Cancer expressing protein
PBS	Phosphate buffer saline
PBS A	Phosphate buffer saline A
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PFU	Plaque formation unit
pH	The negative logarithm of the hydrogen ion concentration
qPCR	Real-time quantitative PCR based serum neutralisation
RECC-CU205	Reticuloendotheliosis virus transformed T-cell line
rpm	Revolutions per minute
RPMI	Rosewell Park Memorial Institute
RNase	Ribonuclease
SN	Serum neutralisation
SOgE-QM7	Recombinant quail muscle cell line
SPF	Specific pathogen free
ssDNA	Single stranded DNA
TAE	Tris acetate EDTA
T-cells	T- lymphocyte
TCIC <sub>50</sub>	Tissue cytotoxic infective dose
TCR+	T-cell antigen receptor
Th	T-helper cell
T <sub>m</sub>	Melting temperatures
TR <sub>L</sub>	Long terminal repeat
TR <sub>S</sub>	Short terminal repeat
U <sub>L</sub>	Unique-long
U <sub>S</sub>	Unique-short
UV	Ultra violet
vIL8	Viral interleukin-8
VP	Viral protein
vvMDV	Very virulent pathogenic strains of MDV
vv+ MDV	Very virulent plus strains of MDV
w/v	Weight per volume

X-Gal	5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl-beta-D-galactopyranoside
°C	Degree Celsius