

- continued

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32

<210> SEQ ID NO 135

<211> LENGTH: 32

<212> TYPE: DNA

<213> ORGANISM: Hippodamia convergens

<400> SEQUENCE: 135

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32

1-40. (canceled)

41. A method of increasing the pest or pathogen-inhibitory activity of a dsRNA, comprising:

- a) obtaining a first nucleic acid segment that when expressed as a dsRNA and taken up by a target crop pest or pathogen inhibits feeding by the target crop pest or pathogen or progeny thereof; and
- b) linking the first nucleic acid segment to a second nucleic acid segment to create a longer nucleic acid segment, wherein the second nucleic acid segment is a nucleic acid that does not inhibit feeding by the target crop pest or pathogen or progeny thereof when expressed as a dsRNA, and wherein a dsRNA expressed from the longer nucleic acid exhibits increased potency of inhibition of feeding by the target crop pest or pathogen or progeny thereof relative to the dsRNA expressed from the first nucleic acid segment alone.

42. The method of claim **41**, wherein the first nucleic acid segment is obtained by a method comprising the steps of:

- I) obtaining a starting nucleic acid molecule that when expressed as a dsRNA and taken up by a target crop pest or pathogen inhibits feeding by the target crop pest or pathogen or progeny thereof; and
- II) selecting at least a first portion of the starting nucleic acid molecule that inhibits feeding by a target crop pest or pathogen or a progeny thereof following uptake of a dsRNA expressed from said portion; and
- III) employing the portion as said the first nucleic acid segment in step a).

43. The method of claim **42**, wherein the starting nucleic acid molecule is a cDNA.

44. The method of claim **42**, wherein step II) comprises preparing a series of overlapping or consecutive portions from the starting nucleic acid molecule and identifying from said portions at least a first portion that inhibits feeding by a target crop pest or pathogen or a progeny thereof when expressed as a dsRNA and taken up by the target crop pest or pathogen.

45. The method of claim **41**, further comprising producing a recombinant vector comprising a first, a second and a third polynucleotide sequence, wherein the first polynucleotide sequence comprises the longer nucleotide segment and wherein the third polynucleotide sequence is linked to the first polynucleotide sequence by the second polynucleotide sequence, and wherein the third polynucleotide sequence is substantially the reverse complement of the first polynucleotide sequence such that the first and the third polynucleotide sequences hybridize when transcribed into a ribonucleic acid

to form the double stranded ribonucleotide molecule stabilized by the linked second ribonucleotide sequence.

46. The method of claim **41**, wherein the second nucleotide segment is not substantially complementary to a nucleotide sequence of the target crop pest or pathogen.

47. The method of claim **41**, wherein one or both of the first nucleic acid segment and the third nucleic acid segment comprises an intron.

48. The method of claim **47**, comprising introducing an intron into said first nucleic acid segment.

49. The method of claim **41**, wherein the first nucleic acid segment comprises about 19 to about 80, about 19 to about 50, or about 21 to about 30 contiguous bases substantially complementary to a coding sequence of the target crop pest or pathogen.

50-51. (canceled)

52. The method of claim **41**, wherein the longer nucleic acid segment comprises at least about 80 bases, at least about 100 bases, or from about 80 bp to about 250 bases.

53-54. (canceled)

55. The method of claim **41**, where the target crop pest or pathogen is an insect.

56. The method of claim **55**, wherein the insect is selected from the group consisting of a Coleopteran, a Lepidopteran, a Hemipteran, and a Homopteran insect.

57. The method of claim **55**, wherein the target crop pest or pathogen is a *Diabrotica* spp.

58. The method of claim **41**, wherein target crop pest or pathogen is a nematode.

59. An expression construct comprising the longer nucleic acid segment prepared according to the method of claim **41** and the reverse complement thereof operably linked to a promoter.

60. A method of controlling feeding by a target crop plant pest or pathogen or progeny thereof on a plant comprising introducing into the plant cell the expression construct of claim **59**.

61. A dsRNA expressed by the longer nucleic acid prepared according to the method of claim **41**.

62. A plant cell transformed with the expression construct of claim **59**.

63. A transgenic plant comprising the expression construct of claim **59**.

64. A method of producing an expression construct for expressing a dsRNA with increased specificity of pest or pathogen-inhibitory activity comprising:

- a) obtaining a starting nucleic acid molecule substantially complementary to at least a first coding sequence of a target crop pest or pathogen;