



Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

Elsevier hereby grants permission to make all its COVID-19-related research that is available on the COVID-19 resource centre - including this research content - immediately available in PubMed Central and other publicly funded repositories, such as the WHO COVID database with rights for unrestricted research re-use and analyses in any form or by any means with acknowledgement of the original source. These permissions are granted for free by Elsevier for as long as the COVID-19 resource centre remains active.

Deduced Sequence of the Bovine Coronavirus Spike Protein and Identification of the Internal Proteolytic Cleavage Site¹

SUSHMA ABRAHAM, THOMAS E. KIENZLE,² WILLIAM LAPPS,³ AND DAVID A. BRIAN⁴

Department of Microbiology, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0845

Received October 13, 1989; accepted January 17, 1990

The sequence of the spike (also called peplomer or E2) protein gene of the Mebus strain of bovine coronavirus (BCV) was obtained from cDNA clones of genomic RNA. The gene sequence predicts a 150,825 mol wt apoprotein of 1363 amino acids having an N-terminal hydrophobic signal sequence of 17 amino acids, 19 potential N-linked glycosylation sites, a hydrophobic anchor sequence of approximately 17 amino acids near the C terminus, and a hydrophilic cysteine-rich C terminus of 35 amino acids. An internal Lys-Arg-Arg-Ser-Arg-Arg sequence predicts a protease cleavage site between amino acids 768 and 769 that would separate the S apoprotein into S1 and S2 segments of 85690 and 65153 mol wt, respectively. Amino terminal amino acid sequencing of the virion-derived gp100 spike subunit confirmed the location of the predicted cleavage site, and established that gp120 and gp100 are the glycosylated virion forms of the S1 and S2 subunits, respectively. Sequence comparisons between BCV and the antigenically related mouse hepatitis coronavirus revealed more sequence divergence in the putative knob region of the spike protein (S1) than in the stem region (S2). © 1990 Academic Press, Inc.

The bovine coronavirus (BCV) is an important cause of neonatal calf diarrhea (14, 26) and may also be the cause of winter dysentery in adult cattle (30). The mechanisms by which BCV causes disease and persistent infection are not understood, nor are current vaccines universally regarded as effective. Toward these ends, we have begun a detailed study of the BCV protein and genome structure.

BCV is comprised of four major structural proteins (17). These are (i) a 200-kDa spike (peplomer) glycoprotein (S), that exists on the virion as cleaved subunits of approximately 120 and 100 kDa, (ii) a 140-kDa glycoprotein (HE) that has both hemagglutinating (18) and esterase (37) activities, and which is comprised of two identical, disulfide-linked 65-kDa subunits (10, 12, 16, 28), (iii) a 26-kDa integral membrane glycoprotein (M) (21), and (iv) an internal phosphorylated nucleocapsid protein (N) (21). Of these, the S protein is presumed to

be the major structure by which coronaviruses attach to cells and initiate infection (reviewed by Spaan *et al.* (34)). The HE protein, however, may also bind to cells to initiate infection, and for BCV, the relative importance of these two proteins in initiating infection is not known. Both S and HE are probably important in inducing immunity since antibodies to each are known to neutralize virus infectivity in cell culture and in calves (8, 9). S and HE, therefore, may both be useful in developing effective engineered vaccines against BCV.

cDNA cloning of BCV genomic RNA was accomplished essentially as previously described (11, 21) except that random 5-mer oligodeoxynucleotides (Pharmacia) and 17-mer oligodeoxynucleotides of specific sequences were used as primers for first-strand synthesis. Clones were mapped relative to one another and to the 3' end of the genome using a matrix spot hybridization technique. Some clones were sequenced by the chemical method of Maxam and Gilbert (25) and some by the dideoxynucleotide-induced chain termination method of Sanger (31) as described by Kraft *et al.* (19) using Sequenase enzyme (United States Biochemicals). For much of the sequencing, restriction endonuclease fragments were subcloned into the pGEM4Z vector (Promega) and forward and reverse sequencing

¹ Sequence data from this article have been deposited with the EMBL/GenBank Data Libraries under Accession No. M31053.

² Present address: Department of Molecular Biology and Microbiology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106.

³ Present address: DNX Corporation, One President Street, Athens, OH 45701-2979.

⁴ To whom requests for reprints should be addressed.

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120
TAGACCATAACTAAACATGTTTTGATACTTTAAATTCCTTACCAATGGCTTTGGCTGTTATAGGAGATTAAAGTGACTACGGTTTCCATTAAATGATGTTGACACCGGTGCTCCTT
M F L I L L I S L P M A F A V I G D L K C T T V S I N D V D T G A P

130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 210 220 230 240
CTATTAGCAGTATGTCGATGTTACTAAATGGTTTAGGTACTTATTATGTTTTAGATCGTGGTATTTAAATACTACGTTGGTCTAAATGGTTACTACCTACTTCCAGGTTCTACAT
S I S T D I V D V T N G L G T Y Y V L D R V Y L N T T L L L N G Y Y P T S G S T

250 260 270 280 290 300 310 320 330 340 350 360
ATCGTAATGGCAGTGAAGGAACTTTACTATTGAGCAGACTATGGTTTAAACCACCTTTTCTTCTGATTTTAAATGGTATTTTGGTAAAGTCAAAAAATACGAAGTTATTAAAA
Y R N M A L K G T L L L S R L W F K P P F L S D F I N G I F A K V K N T K V I K

370 380 390 400 410 420 430 440 450 460 470 480
AGGGTGAATGTATAGTAGTTCCTGCTATAACTATAGTAGTACTTTTGTAAATACATCCTATAGTGGTAGTACAACCACATACTACCAATTTGGATAATAAATACAAGGTCTCT
K G V M Y S E F P A I T I G S T F V N T S Y S V V V Q P H T T N L D N K L Q G L

490 500 510 520 530 540 550 560 570 580 590 600
TAGAGATCTGTTTGGCAGTATACTATGCGAGTACCCACATACGATTTGTATCCATCCTGGTAAATAACGGGTAGAACTATGGCAATGGGATACAGGTGTTGTTTCTGTTTAT
L E I S V C Q Y T M C E Y P H T I C H P N L G N K R V E L W H W D T G V V S C L

610 620 630 640 650 660 670 680 690 700 710 720
ATAAGCGTAATTTACATATGATGGAAGTCTGATTTACTTGTATTTCCATTTTATCAAGAAGTGGTACTTTTTATGCATATTTTACAGACACTGGTGTGTTACTAAGTTTCTGTTTA
Y K R N F T Y D V N A D Y L Y F H F Y Q E G G T F Y A Y F T D T G V V T K F L F

730 740 750 760 770 780 790 800 810 820 830 840
ATGTTTATTTAGGACCGTGGCTTTCACATTTATTATGTCCTGCTTTGACTTGTCTAGTGTATGACTTTAGAATATTTGGGTTACACCTCTCACTTAAACAAATATTACTAGCTTTCA
N V Y L G T V L S H Y Y V L P L T C S S A M T L E Y W V T P L T S K Q Y L L A F

850 860 870 880 890 900 910 920 930 940 950 960
ATCAAGTGGTGTATTTTAAATGCTGTGATGTAAGAGTGAATTTATGAGTGAAGTAAAGTGAACACATCTATAGCACCACTACTGGTGTGTTATGAATAAACGGTTACACTG
N Q D G V I F N A V D C K S D F M S E I K C K T L S I A P S T G V Y E L N G Y T

970 980 990 1000 1010 1020 1030 1040 1050 1060 1070 1080
TTCAGCAATTTGCAGATGTTTACCGAGTATACCTAATCTTCCCGATGTAATATAGAGCGTGGCTTAAATGATAAGTGGTCCCTCTCCATTAAATGGGAACGTAAGACCTTTTCAA
V Q P I A D V Y R R I P N L P D C N I E A W L N D K S V P S P L N W E R K T F S

1090 1100 1110 1120 1130 1140 1150 1160 1170 1180 1190 1200
ATTGTAATTTTAAATGAGCAGCCTGATGCTTTTATTCAGGCAGACTCACTTACTTGAATAATATGATGGTCTGAAGATATATGGTATGTTTTCAGCAGTAATCTATAGTAAGT
N C N F N M S S L M S F I Q A D S F T C N N I D A A K I Y G M C F S S I T I D K

1210 1220 1230 1240 1250 1260 1270 1280 1290 1300 1310 1320
TTGCTATACCAATGGTAGGAAGTTGACTTACAATTTGGGCAATTTGGGCTATTGCGACTTTTAACTATAGAATGATACTACTGCTACAAGTTGTCAGTGTATTATAATTACCTG
F A I P N G R K V D L Q L G N L G Y L Q S F N Y R I D T T A T S C Q L Y Y N L P

1330 1340 1350 1360 1370 1380 1390 1400 1410 1420 1430 1440
CTGCTAATGTTTCTGTTAGCAGGTTTAAATCCTTCTACTTGGAAATAGGAGATTTGGTTTTACAGAACAAATTTGTTTTAAGCCCTCAACCTGAGGTGTTTTTACTCATGATGTTGTTT
A A N V S V S R F N P S T W N R R F G F T E Q F V F K P Q P V G V F T H H D V V

1450 1460 1470 1480 1490 1500 1510 1520 1530 1540 1550 1560
ATGCACAACATTTGTTTAAAGTCCCTCAAATTTCTGTCGGTGAATTTGGATGGGCTTTGTTGTTAGGTAATGGTCCCTGGTATAGATGCTGGTTATAAAAAATAGTGGTATAGGCATT
Y A Q H C F K A P S N F C P C K L D G S L C V G N G P G I D A G Y K N S G I G T

1570 1580 1590 1600 1610 1620 1630 1640 1650 1660 1670 1680
GTCCTGAGGTAATTTAACTTGGCAATGCTGCCCCAATGTAATGTTTGGTACTCCCGACCCATTACATCTAAATCTACAGGGCCTTACAAGTGGCCCAAACCTAAATACT
C P A G T N Y L T C H N A A Q C N C L C T P D P I T S K S T G P Y K C P Q T K Y

1690 1700 1710 1720 1730 1740 1750 1760 1770 1780 1790 1800
TAGTTGGCATAGGTAGCAGCTTTCGGGCTTGGCTAATTAAGATGATTTATGTTGGAGGTAATCCTTGTACTTCCCAACCACAAGCATTTTGGGCTGGTCTGTGACTCTTGTTTACAAG
L V G I G E H C S G L A I K S D Y C G G N P C T C Q P Q A F L G W S V D S C L G

1810 1820 1830 1840 1850 1860 1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920
GGGATAGGTGTAATTTTGTCAATTTTATTTGATGATGTTAATAGTGGTACTACTTGTCTACTGATTTACAAAAATCAAACACAGACATAATCTTGGTGTGTTGTTAATATG
G D R C N I F A N F I L H D V N S G T T C S T D L Q K S N T D I I L G V C V N Y

1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020 2030 2040
ATCTTTATGGTATTACAGGCCAAGGTATTTTGTGAGGTTAATGCGACTTATTATAATAGTTGGCAGAACCTTTTATATGATTTAATGGTAATCTCTATGGTTTATAGACTACTTAA
D L Y G I T G Q G I F V E V N A T Y Y N S W Q N L L Y D S N G N L Y G F R D Y L

2050 2060 2070 2080 2090 2100 2110 2120 2130 2140 2150 2160
CAACAGAACTTTTATGATTCGTAGTTAGCTATAGCGGTCGTGTTTACGGCCCTTTCATGCTAACTTCCGAACCCAGCATTTGCTAATTCGGAATATAATGAATACGTTTAAATA
T N R T F M I R S C Y S G R V S A A F H A N S S E P A L L F R N I K C N Y V F N

2170 2180 2190 2200 2210 2220 2230 2240 2250 2260 2270 2280
ATACTCTTTCAGCAGCTGCAACCTATTAACATTTTGTATGATTTATGTTGGTGTGTTGCTCAATGCTGATAATAGTACTTCTAGTGTGTTTCAAACATGTTGCTCAGAGTGTAGTGTG
N T L S R Q L Q P I N Y F D S Y L G C V V N A D N S T S S V V Q T C D L T V G S

2290 2300 2310 2320 2330 2340 2350 2360 2370 2380 2390 2400
GTTACTGTTGGATTTACTTACAAAAAGCAGGAGTCTAGAGCGAATACCACTGGTTTCTCGGTTTACTACTTTGAGCCATTTACTGTTAATTCAGTAAATGATAGTTTGAACCTGTAG
G Y C V D Y S T K R R S R R A I T T G Y R F T T F E P F T V N S V N D S L E F V

2410 2420 2430 2440 2450 2460 2470 2480 2490 2500 2510 2520
GTGGTTGATGAAATCAAATACCTTCAGAGTTACTATAGGTAATATGGAGGATTTAATCAAACAAGCTCTCCTAAAGTTACTATGATTTGTTCTGCTTTTGTCTGTTGATGATG
G G L Y E I Q I P S E F T I G N M E E F I Q T S S P K V T I D C S A F V C G D Y

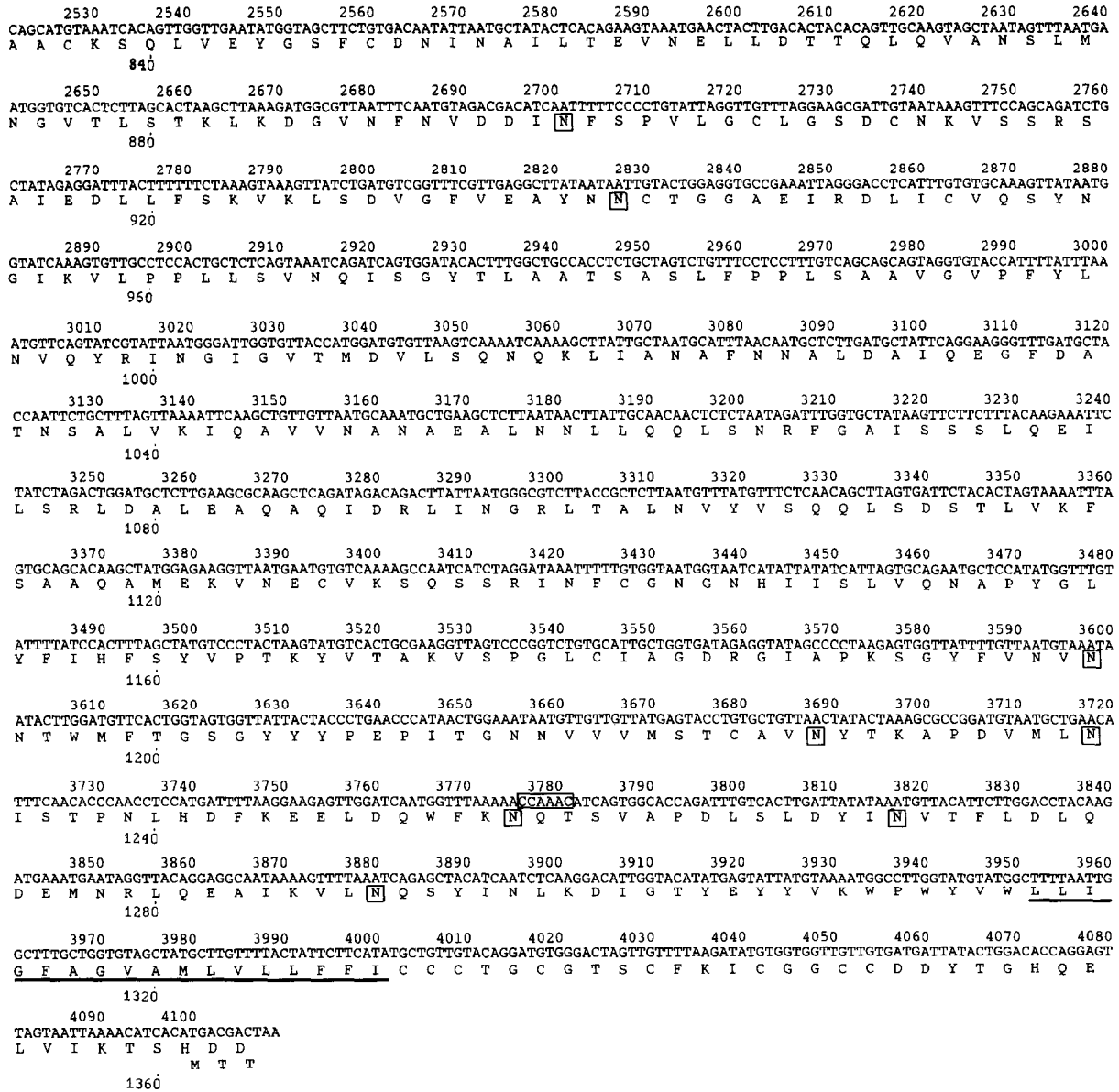


Fig. 2. Nucleotide sequence of the S gene and its deduced amino acid sequence. The nucleotide sequence shown begins with the TAG termination codon of the HE gene (underlined) 17 bases upstream of the presumed S start site (7407 bases from the poly(A) tail), and ends with the TAA termination codon of the S protein. The first three amino acids of the putative 4.9-kDa protein are shown beginning at base position 4099. Consensus CYAAAC sequences are boxed. The presumed amino-terminal signal peptide and carboxy-terminal anchor sequences are underlined. Potential N-linked glycosylation sites (NXS or NXT, where X ≠ P) are boxed. The proteolytic cleavage site separating S1 and S2 is identified with an arrow. The extended sequence of amino acids missing in MHV JHM is identified by individually underlined amino acids, and that missing in MHV A59, by asterisks.

with amino acid 763, and, on the basis of the pattern in MHV and IBV, predicts a cleavage between amino acids 768 and 769 (note arrow in Fig. 2). Cleavage at this point would divide the unglycosylated S protein into an N-terminal segment of 85,690 Da (S1) and a C-terminal segment of 65,153 Da (S2).

From amino acid sequencing studies, no N-terminal sequence could be obtained from the virion-derived 120-kDa subunit, possibly because of N-terminal

blockage. The N-terminal sequence of the 100-kDa subunit could be obtained, however, and was determined to be X-I-T-T-G-Y-X-F-, identifying the first amino acids downstream from the predicted internal cleavage site. These results confirmed the predicted internal cleavage site and established that the 120-kDa subunit is S1 and the 100-kDa subunit is S2.

The BCV and MHV S proteins show remarkable sequence homology suggesting that these viruses are re-

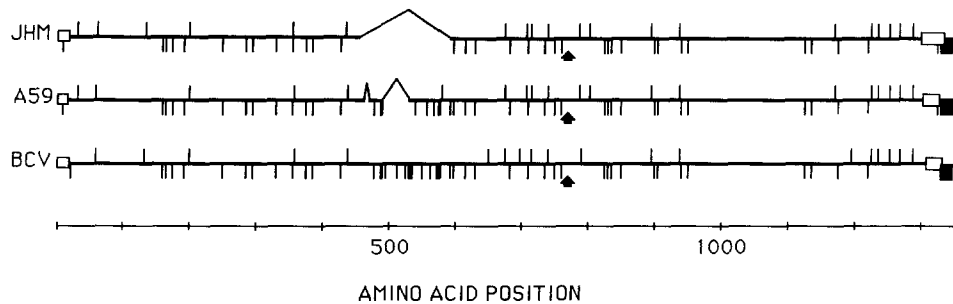


Fig. 3. Structural comparison of the S proteins of MHV-JHM, MHV-A59, and BCV. Sequences are aligned for maximum homology. A sequence found in BCV but not found in MHV-JHM or MHV-A59 is expressed as a gap (broken line) in the MHV sequences. Putative N-terminal signal peptides and C-terminal anchor sequences are boxed. Vertical lines above the sequence indicate potential asparagine-linked glycosylation positions, and below the sequence, cysteine positions. The identified (BCV, MHV-A59) and putative (MHV-JHM) proteolytic cleavage sites are identified by arrows.

cently diverged. After aligning sequences for maximal homology, the following points emerge. (i) Relative to BCV, a large deletion appears in the MHV S1 subunits. For JHM it is a contiguous gap of 138 amino acids, and for A59 it is a discontinuous gap of 50 amino acids (Figs. 2 and 3). The function of the additional sequence in the BCV S1 subunit is not known, but it is possibly a structure that interacts in some way with the HE glycoprotein, a structural protein not found on MHV (13, 34) except under certain rare conditions (33). No electron micrographic or chemical data exist, however, to suggest that S and HE do physically interact (3, 17, 18). It is interesting to note that the entire region in the BCV S protein corresponding to the gap region of the JHM S protein is especially rich in cysteine residues and contains 15 (26%) of the 56 total cysteines in the BCV S protein (Figs. 2 and 3). This suggests that this part of the molecule may be important for intramolecular or intermolecular disulfide linkages. (ii) Exclusive of the large gap in the MHV sequences, the S1 subunits of JHM and A59 show 62 and 60% identity, respectively, with BCV, and the S2 subunits show 75 and 74%, respectively. Throughout the S protein, 41 of 56 cysteine positions and 13 of 19 potential N-linked glycosylation sites are conserved. The internal proteolytic cleavage position (not yet confirmed for JHM) is also conserved. The pattern of greater amino acid sequence divergence in the S1 subunit is consistent with the model of Cavanagh (4) and De Groot *et al.* (7) which proposes that the S1 subunit comprises the exposed bulbous structure of the spike and probably contains most (5), but not all (23, 36), of the neutralizable antigenic sites. It is the structure most likely to undergo changes as a result of immunologic selective pressures.

Fusion of cells in culture is one biological activity associated with cleavage of the MHV S protein (35). Despite its extensive sequence similarity with the MHV S protein, however, the BCV S protein shows little fusion

activity. In fact, fusion is a behavior we have not observed with the Mebus strain of BCV even though the S protein is primarily in the cleaved form on the virion (13, 17). It is not clear why BCV and MHV behave so differently in their fusogenic properties, but functional evaluation of sequence differences near the cleavage sites of these two viruses may aid in clarifying the mechanisms of fusion by MHV. This is especially interesting since hydrophobic regions, common at the cleavage sites on fusion proteins of paramyxoviruses and myxoviruses, are absent in the MHV S protein (22) and different mechanisms of fusion may be employed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was supported by Grant AI-14367 from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and by Grant 82-CRSR-2-1090 from the United States Department of Agriculture. T.E.K. and W.L. were predoctoral trainees on Grant T32-AI07123 from the National Institutes of Health.

REFERENCES

1. BINNS, M. M., BOURSNELL, M. E. G., CAVANAGH, D., PAPPIN, D. J. C., and BROWN, T. D. K., *J. Gen. Virol.* **66**, 719–726 (1985).
2. BINNS, M. M., BOURSNELL, M. E. G., TOMLEY, F. M., and BROWN, T. D. K., *J. Gen. Virol.* **67**, 2825–2831 (1986).
3. BRIDGER, J. C., CAUL, E. O., and EGGLESTONE, *Arch. Virol.* **57**, 43–51 (1978).
4. CAVANAGH, D., *J. Gen. Virol.* **64**, 2577–2583 (1983).
5. CAVANAGH, D., DAVIS, P. J., and MOCKETT, A. P. A., *Virus Res.* **11**, 141–150 (1988).
6. CAVANAGH, D., DAVIS, P. J., PAPPIN, D. J. C., BINNS, M. M., BOURSNELL, M. E. G., and BROWN, T. D. K., *Virus Res.* **4**, 133–143 (1986).
7. DEGROOT, R. J., LUYTJES, W., HORZINEK, M. C., VAN DER ZEIJST, B. A. M., SPAAN, W. J. M., and LENSTRA, J. A., *J. Mol. Biol.* **196**, 963–966 (1987).
8. DEREGT, D., and BABIUK, L. A., *Virology* **161**, 410–420 (1987).
9. DEREGT, D., GIFFORD, G. A., IJAZ, M. K., WATTS, T. C., GILCHRIST, J. E., HAINES, D. M., and BABIUK, L. A., *J. Gen. Virol.* **70**, 993–998 (1989).

10. DEREKT, D., SABARA, M., and BABIUK, L. A., *J. Gen. Virol.* **68**, 2863–2877 (1987).
11. GULBER, U., and HOFFMAN, B. J., *Gene* **25**, 263–269 (1983).
12. HOGUE, B. G., KIENZLE, T. E., and BRIAN, D. A., *J. Gen. Virol.* **70**, 345–352 (1989).
13. HOGUE, B. G., KING, B., and BRIAN, D. A., *J. Virol.* **51**, 384–388 (1984).
14. HOUSE, J. A., *J. Amer. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **173**, 573–576 (1978).
15. JACOBS, L., DE GROOT, R., VAN DER ZEIJST, B. A. M., HORZINEK, M. C., and SPAAN, W., *Virus Res.* **8**, 363–371 (1987).
16. KIENZLE, T. E., ABRAHAM, S., HOGUE, B. G., and BRIAN, D. A., *J. Virol.*, **64**, in press (1990).
17. KING, B., and BRIAN, D. A. *J. Virol.* **42**, 700–707 (1982).
18. KING, B., POTTS, B. J., and BRIAN, D. A., *Virus Res.* **2**, 53–59 (1985).
19. KRAFT, R., TARDIFF, J., KRAUTER, K., and LEINWARD, L., *BioTechniques* **6**, 544–549 (1988).
20. KUSTERS, J. G., NIESTERS, H. G. M., LENSTRA, J. A., HORZINEK, M. C., and VAN DER ZEIJST, B. A. M., *Virology* **169**, 217–221 (1989).
21. LAPPS, W., HOGUE, B. G., and BRIAN, D. A., *Virology* **157**, 47–57 (1987).
22. LUYTJES, W., STURMAN, L. S., BREDENBEEK, P. J., CHARITE, J., VAN DER ZEIJST, B. A. M., HORZINEK, M. C., and SPAAN, W. J. M., *Virology* **161**, 479–487 (1987).
23. MAKINO, S., FLEMING, J. O., KECK, J. G., STOHLMAN, S. A., and LAI, M. M. C., *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* **84**, 6567–6571 (1987).
24. MATSUDAIRA, P., *J. Biol. Chem.* **262**, 10,035–10,038 (1987).
25. MAXAM, A. M., and GILBERT, W., In "Methods in Enzymology" (L. Grossman and K. Moldave, Eds.), Vol. 65, pp. 499–560. Academic Press, Orlando, FL (1980).
26. MEBUS, C. A., STAIR, E. L., RHODES, M. B., and TWIEHAUS, M. J., *Amer. J. Vet. Res.* **34**, 145–150 (1973).
27. NIESTERS, H. G. M., LENSTRA, J. A., SPAAN, W. J. M., ZUIDERVELD, A. J., BLEUMINK-PLUYM, N. M. C., HONG, F., VAN SCHARRENBURG, G. J. M., HORZINEK, M. C., and VAN DER ZEIJST, B. A. M., *Virus Res.* **5**, 253–263 (1986).
28. PARKER, M. D., COX, G. J., DEREKT, D., FITZPATRICK, D. R., and BABIUK, L. A., *J. Gen. Virol.* **70**, 155–164 (1989).
29. RASSCHAERT, D., and LAUDE, H., *J. Gen. Virol.* **68**, 1883–1890 (1987).
30. SAIF, L. J., REDMAN, D. R., BROCK, K. V., KOHLER, E. M., and HECKERT, R. A., *Vet. Rec.* **123**, 300–301 (1988).
31. SANGER, F., NICKLEN, S., and COULSON, A. R., *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* **74**, 5463–5467 (1977).
32. SCHMIDT, I., SKINNER, M., and SIDDELL, S., *J. Gen. Virol.* **68**, 47–56 (1987).
33. SHEIH, C-K., LEE, H-J., YOKOMORI, K., MONICA, N. L., MAKINO, S., and LAI, M. M. C., *J. Virol.* **63**, 3729–3736 (1989).
34. SPAAN, W., CAVANAGH, D., and HORZINEK, M. C., *J. Gen. Virol.* **69**, 2939–2952 (1988).
35. STURMAN, L. S., RICARD, C. S., and HOLMES, K. V., *J. Virol.* **56**, 904–911 (1985).
36. TALBOT, P. J., DIONNE, G., and LACROIX, M., *J. Virol.* **62**, 3032–3036 (1988).
37. VLASAK, R., LUYTJES, W., LEIDER, J., SPAAN, W., and PALESE, P., *J. Virol.* **62**, 4686–4690 (1988).
38. VON HEIJNE, G., *J. Mol. Biol.* **184**, 99–105 (1985).