

Dear Editors:

Thank you for your comments concerning our manuscript entitled "Suppression of Grape White Rot Caused by *Coniella vitis* Using the Potential Biocontrol Agent *Bacillus velezensis* GSBZ09" (ID: pathogens-1550702).

Those comments are all valuable and very helpful for revising and improving our paper. We have studied comments carefully and have made correction which we hope meet with approval. Revised portion are marked in red.

The changes within the revised manuscript are summarized in "Author Response". We answered the comments point-by-point.

Sincerely yours,

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Response to Reviewer 3 Comments

1. Lines 33-34: I believe authors mean that these *Bacillus* species have been identified as PGPR.

Answer: Yes, it is. *Bacillus. cereus*, *B. thuringiensis*, *B. subtilis*, *B. anthracis*, *B. atrophaeus*, and *B. amyloliquefacies* have been identified as PGPR.

2. Lines 33-43: I suggest putting this paragraph after paragraph in lines 44-53 or rearrange information on these paragraphs. This because there is no reason for describing *Bacillus* species in the second paragraph and, for the benefit of train of thought, it would be better to introduce PGPR first.

Answer: Thank you for your kind advice, we agree with your opinion, we had interchanged the two paragraphs, please see the line 34-56 in revised manuscript.

3. Results in 2.1: Were results statically significant in relation to control? I don't see the statistics anywhere in the text manuscript or figures. Also, results for IAA,

diameter of enzyme production should have the statistical results presented. I can see * in figure 5 (that should be figure 6) but I don't see explanation for that in the figure legend.

Answer: Thank you for your kind advice. We had checked the paper to put the Figure 3-6 into right places and added the statistical tests in the Results section in revised manuscript.

4. Line 112: Authors are referring to figure 2E and not 2D. Please change order of figure or text.

Answer: I am sorry for our mistake. We had exchanged the order of Figure 2E and Figure 2D in revised manuscript.

5. Figures: I believe figure 3 and 4 are misplaced. Figures 5 and 6 are also misplaced and legend of figure 5 is incomplete. In figure 6 legend replace “(Protin)” with “(Protein)”

Answer: It was our fault and we felt very sorry, we made a mistake for wrong order of Figure 3 to 6. We had corrected the mistake and exchanged Figure 3 and Figure4, Figure 5 and Figure6. We have changed “protin” to “protein” in the line 214 in revised manuscript.

6. Lines 189-191: I see statistical differences in MDA in relation with the control but this sentence leads to believe that there are none. Also, authors state that there are no significant differences in proline levels but the graph shows that there are in the case of FB.

Answer: I am sorry for our mistake. I had added the statistical tests in the Figure 6 and revised this sentence in the line 200-202 in revised manuscript.

7. Line 209: I believe that authors mean antifungal activity

Answer: I am sorry for our mistake. We had changed “antibacterial” to “antifungal” in the line 222 in revised manuscript.

8. Line 266: which indicators did authors take into account to conclude that sampled soil was healthy? Or do authors mean that vineyards from which soil was collected were apparently free of disease? Also, how was soil collected? Was it randomly collected in the vineyard? Considering that “ten grams of soil were weighted”, I believe that may have collected soil near the roots and not “rhizosphere soil” because to obtain rhizosphere soil, authors should have collected roots and use soil that was adjacent to roots. Please clarify this part of the methodology.

Answer: We are sorry that the method of this section was unclear. *B. velezensis* GSBZ09 was isolated from soil around the roots of a healthy grape plants in vineyards. The soil was near the roots not “rhizosphere soil”. We had revised the paragraph in the line 281 in revised manuscript.

9. Line 267: replace “was” with “were”

Answer: Thank you for your advice, we had replaced “was” with “were” in the line 283 in revised manuscript.

10. Line 271: what does “purified for further investigation” means? Do authors mean that pure cultures were used?

Answer: It means *Bacillus*-like strains were selected based on the colony morphology, and used for further screening of antagonistic bacteria. We had revised the sentence in the line 286-287 in revised manuscript.

11. Line 276: I believe authors mean that these fungal pathogens “were used” instead of “were detected”. Or did authors also isolate them from collected soil samples? Where did authors obtained these fungal isolates?

Answer: We modified this sentence to clarify this point. We had revised this sentence as follows:

G. fructigrum, *B. cinerea*, *D. eres*, *A. viticola*, *F. oxysporum*, *A. niger*, and *P. clavispora*, which were kept in our library, were used to determine the percentage inhibition of mycelial growth of other fungal pathogens in grapes. Please see line 290-292 in revised manuscript.

12. Lines 265-284: Please clarify how *B. velezensis* was identified? Did authors used sequencing of 16S region?

Answer: Strain was identified as *B. velezensis* according to morphological, physiological, biochemical characteristics and a multilocus gene sequence analysis (MLSA) based on six housekeeping genes (16S rRNA, *gyrB*, *rpoD*, *atpD*, *rho* and *pgk*). we also sequenced with the 16S region.

In line 271 authors state that *Bacillus* like strains were selected and from then on there is no reference of how was this species identified. Reading the results, I can see that this was selected based on the ability to inhibit different fungal pathogens but that is not clear in material and method section.

Answer: *Bacillus*-like strains were selected based on the colony morphology, and used for further screening of antagonistic bacteria.

Please try to reformulate 4.1 sub-chapter to explain that more clearly. Also, I suggest either not naming GSBZ09 before the identification section or changing the order (4.2.2 to be 4.2.1) improve reading.

Answer: We are sorry that our formulation was unclear. We had exchanged the order “4.22” and “4.21”, and as suggested, we had changed “*B. velezensis* GSBZ09” to “strain GSBZ09”. Please see the line 301-323 in revised manuscript.

13. Lines 289-290: Please specify the used methods

Answer: Thank you for your advice, Physiological and biochemical tests were performed using Biolog EcoPlate. We had revised this sentence as “Physiological and biochemical tests were performed using the Biolog GN2 microplate system (Biolog, Haywood, CA, USA)”. Please see the line 315-316 in revised manuscript.

14. Line 302: I am not sure the sentence “*B. velezensis* GSBZ09 overnight at 28°C” belongs in here.

Answer: Sorry, it is a mistake. We had removed the “*B. velezensis* GSBZ09 overnight at 28°C” in the revised manuscript (line 326).

15. Line 304: Please clarify the inoculation into wells. Were wells made in the agar plates?

Answer: We are sorry that our formulation was unclear. We had revised this paragraph as follows: *B. velezensis* GSBZ09 overnight at 28°C with shaking at 200 rpm, then 2 µL of GSBZ09 culture (OD₆₀₀=0.8) was inoculated onto the center of skim milk agar plates. Please see the line 327-331 in revised manuscript.

16. Line 309: Please substitute “by the medium (carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC), 1 g;” with “by using a medium with carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC, 1 g;”

Answer: I am so sorry about this mistake, we had revised the sentence in the line 334 in revised manuscript .

17. Lines 348-350: Were culture filtrates prepared separately? For how long were plants irrigated with culture and filtrates?

Answer: Thank you for your kind advice, irrigation treatment with culture and filtrates were conducted weekly during a month. Culture and filtrates were prepared separately. We had revised this sentence. Please see the line 374-375 in revised manuscript.