

Stability and Esterification of Lutein in Bread Wheat during Post Harvest Storage in Comparison with Banana

Submitted by

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*Special to Mum (Zabidah Biku) and Dad (Tufail Ahmad
Hj. Ashtul)*

-for continuous support and pray-

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
Abstract.....	xiii
Declaration.....	xv
Acknowledgments.....	xvi
List of Publications.....	xviii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
Literature Review.....	1
1.1 An introduction to wheat and lutein.....	1
1.2 Characteristics of lutein.....	3
1.2.1 Chemical structure of lutein.....	3
1.2.2 Biosynthetic pathway.....	5
1.3 Role of lutein in plants.....	7
1.4 Stability of lutein in grain and flour and during production of end-products....	8
1.5 Lutein esters.....	9
1.5.1 Lipid.....	11
1.5.2 Lipid biosynthesis.....	12
1.5.3 Esterification by fatty acids.....	13
1.6 Esterification of lutein in wheat during storage and mechanism of esterification.....	15
1.7 Genetic regulation of lutein esterification in wheat.....	17
1.8 Role of lutein in human health.....	17
1.9 Bioavailability of lutein esters.....	18
1.10 Distribution of lutein wheat.....	19
1.11 Role of lutein in colour and quality of wheat-based food products.....	20
1.12 Determination of lutein and lutein ester in wheat.....	21
1.13 Project aims.....	24
CHAPTER 2.....	25
General Materials and Methods.....	25
2.1 Plant material.....	25
2.2 Reagent an Chemicals.....	26
2.3 Methods.....	26
2.3.1 Extraction and purification.....	26

2.3.2	Separation and quantification.....	27
CHAPTER 3.....		29
Stability of Lutein and Lutein Ester in Wheat.....		29
3.1	Introduction.....	29
3.2	Storage Experiments	30
3.2.1	Effect of storage temperature on free lutein and lutein ester content of grain.....	30
3.2.2	Comparison of stability of lutein and lutein esters in grain and wholemeal during storage.....	30
3.2.3	Effect of storage environment on the lutein and lutein ester content.....	31
3.2.4	Mathematical treatment of data.....	31
3.3	Results.....	33
3.3.1	Effect of storage temperature on free lutein and lutein ester content of grain.....	33
3.3.1.1	Lutein content and composition	33
3.3.1.2	Changes of free lutein content in HFL-DM5685*B12.....	39
3.3.1.3	Changes in total lutein ester content in HFL-DM5685*B12	41
3.3.1.4	Changes in lutein mono-ester content	45
3.3.1.5	Changes in lutein di-esters content	49
3.3.1.6	Total lutein loss during storage of grain at different temperatures at low relative humidity (8% RH)	56
3.3.1.7	Changes of total lutein content in HLE-DM5685*B12.....	58
3.3.2	Comparison of stability of lutein and lutein esters in grain and wholemeal during storage	59
3.3.3	Effect of storage environment on the lutein and lutein esters.....	65
3.3.3.1	Total lutein content in HFL-DM5685*B12, HLE-DM5685*B12 and Kamilaroi	65
3.3.3.2	Lutein ester content in HFL DM5685*B12 and HLE-DM5685*B12..	67
3.4	Discussion.....	68
CHAPTER 4.....		75
Mechanism of Lutein Esterification.....		75
4.1	Introduction.....	75
4.2	Material.....	76
4.3	Methods.....	77
4.3.1	Free fatty acid analysis	77
4.3.1.1	Extraction of fatty acids	77
4.3.1.2	Separation and identification of free fatty acids	78

4.3.2	Preparation of a crude enzyme fraction and determination of its ester catalysing capacity	79
4.3.3	Extraction and separation of lipids into, polar and non-polar lipid fractions.	79
4.3.4	Thin layer chromatography (TLC)	80
4.3.4.1	Visualisation of compound separated by TLC	80
4.3.5	Bioassay for ester forming activity.....	81
4.4	Results.....	81
4.4.1	Free fatty acid analysis	81
4.4.2	Bioassay for ester forming activity.....	885
4.4.3	Lipid fractionation	88
4.5	Discussion.....	90
CHAPTER 5.....		94
Genetic Control of Lutein Esterification		94
5.1	Introduction.....	94
5.2	Materials and methods	95
5.2.1	Chinese spring nullisomic-tetrasomic lines	95
5.2.2	Haruhikari//Sunco/Indis.82 double haploid population	95
5.2.3	Extraction, separation and quantification	96
5.2.4	Genetic analysis.....	96
5.3	Results.....	97
5.3.1	Lutein and lutein ester in Chinese Spring nullisomic-tetrasomic lines.....	97
5.3.2	Lutein ester phenotype of Haruhikari//Sunco/Indis.82 double haploids.....	99
5.4	Discussion	105
CHAPTER 6.....		107
Distribution of Lutein and Lutein Esters in Banana.....		107
6.1	Introduction.....	107
6.2	Material and Methods	108
6.2.1	Plant material and chemicals	108
6.2.2	Banana preparation.....	108
6.2.3	Banana ripening stages	109
6.2.4	Lutein and lutein ester extraction and purification	109
6.2.5	Colour measurement.....	110
6.3	Results.....	110
6.3.1	Lutein and lutein esters in banana peel.....	110
6.3.2	Lutein in banana flesh during ripening	117

6.3.3 Rates of total lutein loss from the peel and synthesis in the flesh of banana.....	123
6.4 Discussion	125
CHAPTER 7	129
General Discussion	129
References.....	133

3.1	Initial concentration of free lutein and lutein ester in HFL-5685*B12, HLE-5685*B12 and Kamilaroi	34
3.2	Comparison of rates of change (k_1) in free lutein and lutein ester in HFL-DML5685*B12 grain stored at different temperatures	54
3.3	Comparison of the Arrhenius data	55
3.4	Estimated half life ($t_{1/2}$) for free lutein stored at different temperatures and low relative humidity (8% RH)	55
3.5	Rates of change of lutein loss in HFL-DML5685*B12 grain stored at different temperatures	57
3.6	Rates of total lutein loss in HLE-DML5685*B12 grain (81% lutein esters) stored at different temperatures	59
3.7	Amount ($\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) and percentage of free lutein converted to lutein ester in Kamilaroi	62
3.8	Comparison of rates of change, k_1 , in free lutein and lutein esters in wholemeal and grain of Kamilaroi and HFL-DM5685*B12	64
3.9	Amount ($\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) and percentage of lutein loss (%) in wholemeal and grain of high lutein bread wheat and Kamilaroi	65
3.10	Free lutein and lutein ester stability	72
4.1	Free fatty acid ($\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) in HFL-DM5685*B12 (L1) and Haruhikari (H1) grain	83
4.2	Free lutein and lutein esters ($\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) in mixture of commercial lutein and crude enzyme with or without substrate before and after 7 days storage	86
5.1	Lutein and lutein ester concentration ($\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$) in Chinese Spring nullisomic-tetrasomic lines	97
5.2	Percent of total lutein as lutein esters in parental genotypes, Sunco/Indis.82 and Haruhikari, and doubled haploid progeny from Haruhikari//Sunco/Indis.82 in 2007 and 2008	99
5.3	Number and percentage of lines (Year 2007 and Year 2008) with high or low ester phenotype	101

6.1	HPLC absorbances and retention times of carotenoids in banana peel at 0 day	111
6.2	HPLC absorbances and retention times of carotenopids in banana peel at 7 th day	112
6.3	Total of lutein content, chroma CIELAB values and observed colour of banana peel	117
6.4	Correlation of CIELAB measurements and total lutein content in banana peel	117
6.5	HPLC absorbances and retention times of carotenopids in banana flesh at 0 day	118
6.6	HPLC absorbances and retention times of carotenopids in banana flesh at 7 th day	118
6.7	Total of lutein content, CIELAB values and observed colour of banana flesh	123
6.8	Correlation of CIELAB measurements with total lutein content in banana flesh	123
6.9	Rates of change (k_1) in free lutein and lutein ester in banana peel and flesh	124

List of Figures

1.1	Isoprene (2-methylbuta-1,3-diene)	4
1.2	<i>all-trans</i> lutein (3 <i>R</i> ,3' <i>R</i> - β,ϵ -carotene-3,3'-diol)	4
1.3	Chemical structures of the geometrical isomers of lutein	5
1.4	Lutein biosynthesis in <i>Arabidopsis</i> .	6
1.5	Chemical structure of lutein ester	9
1.6	Chemical structure of fatty acids; palmitic and linoleic acid	10
1.7	Chemical structures of lysophosphatidylcholine and phosphatidylcholine	12
1.8	Schematic diagram of fatty acid biosynthetic pathway in general plant	13
1.9	Chromatogram showing the free and esterified lutein separated by High Performance Liquid Chromatography	16
1.10	Absorption spectrum of lutein	22
1.11	Separation of free lutein and lutein esters in high ester sample (DM5685*B12) by RP-HPLC	23
3.1a	HPLC chromatogram of free lutein and lutein esters extracted from HFL-DM5685*B12 stored at -20°C measured at 445nm with the internal standard β -apo-carotenal	35
3.1b	HPLC chromatogram of free lutein and lutein esters extracted from HFL-DM5685*B12 stored at 10°C for 2 weeks measured at 445nm with the internal standard β -apo-carotenal	36
3.1c	HPLC chromatogram measured of free lutein and lutein esters extracted from HFL-DM5685*B12 stored at 50°C for 2 weeks at 445nm	37
3.1d	HPLC chromatogram of free lutein and lutein esters extracted from HFL-DM5685*B12 stored at 100°C for 2 weeks measured at 445nm	38
3.2a	Free lutein content in bread wheat HFL-DM 5685*B12 stored at 10°C, 20°C, 30°C, 40°C, 50°C, 60°C, 80°C, 110°C and 130°C	39
3.2b	Rate of disappearance of free lutein	40
3.2c	Arrhenius plot of lutein disappearance	41
3.3a	Total lutein ester (mono- plus di-esters) content in bread wheat HFL- DM 5685*B12 stored at 10°C, 20°C, 30°C, 40°C, 50°C, 60°C, 80°C, 110°C and 130°C	42

3.3b	Rate of increase in total lutein esters	43
3.3c	Arrhenius plot for total lutein esters formation fitted with a 2 nd order polynomial convex curve	44
3.3d	Arrhenius plot for total lutein ester synthesis (using data ≤80°C)	45
3.4a	Mono-ester content (measured as lutein equivalents) in bread wheat HFL- DM 5685*B12 stored at 10°C, 20°C, 30°C, 40°C, 50°C, 60°C, 80°C, 110°C and 130°C	46
3.4b	Rate of increase in mono-ester (measured as lutein equivalents)	47
3.4c	Arrhenius plot for mono-ester formation fitted with a 2 nd order polynomial convex curve	48
3.4d	Linear portion of the Arrhenius plot for total lutein mono-ester synthesis using data ≤80°C	49
3.5a	Di-ester content (measured as lutein equivalents) in bread wheat HFL- DM 5685*B12 stored at 10°C, 20°C, 30°C, 40°C, 50°C, 60°C, 80°C, 110°C and 130°C	50
3.5b	Rate of increase in di-esters	51
3.5c	Arrhenius plot for di-ester formation fitted with a 2 nd order polynomial convex curve	52
3.5d	Arrhenius plot for total lutein di-ester synthesis (using data 20-80°C)	53
3.6	Total lutein (free lutein plus lutein esters) loss in bread wheat HFL-DM5685*B12, grain stored at 10°C, 20°C, 30°C, 40°C, 50°C, 60°C, 80°C, 110°C and 130°C.	56
3.7	Total lutein (81% lutein esters) content (measured as lutein equivalents) in HLE-DM 5685*B12 stored at 20°C, 40°C and 60°C	58
3.8a	Change free lutein content in Kamilaroi wheat (grain and wholemeal) during 7 weeks storage at 50°C and low relative humidity(8% RH) fitted with a first order rate equation	60
3.8b	Lutein ester content in Kamilaroi (grain and wholemeal) stored for 7 weeks at 50°C and low relative humidity (8% RH)	61
3.9a	Free lutein content in HFL-DM5685*B12 (grain and wholemeal) stored at 50°C and low relative humidity (8% RH) for 7 weeks	62
3.9b	Lutein ester content (measured as lutein equivalents) in HFL-DM5685*B12 (wholemeal and grain) stored at 50°C for 7 weeks at low relative humidity (8% RH)	63

3.10	Comparison of changes in total lutein (free lutein plus lutein esters) in HFL-DM5685*B12 stored at 30°C in nitrogen (N ₂), 75% and 8% relative humidity (RH) or under vacuum (VC)	66
3.11	Comparison of changes in total lutein (free lutein plus lutein esters) in HLE-DM5685*B12 stored at 30°C in nitrogen (N ₂), 75% relative humidity (RH) or under vacuum (VC)	66
3.12	Comparison of changes in total lutein (no esterification) in Kamilaroi stored at 30°C in nitrogen (N ₂), 75% relative humidity (RH) or under vacuum (VC)	67
3.13	Comparison of total lutein ester content (measured as lutein equivalents) extracted from HFL-DM5685*B12 stored at 30°C in nitrogen (N ₂), 75% and 8% relative humidity (RH) or under vacuum (VC)	67
3.14	Comparison of total lutein ester content (measured as lutein equivalent) extracted from HLE-DM5685*B12 stored at 30°C in nitrogen (N ₂), 75% relative humidity (RH) or under vacuum (VC)	68
3.15	Structure of lutein ester indicating possible position of fatty acids	69
3.16	Lutein ester synthesis in grain	71
4.1a-e	Changes in the concentration of free fatty acids in HFL-DM5685*B12 and Haruhikari stored for 35 days at 50°C and low RH.	84
4.1f	Changes in the concentration of lutein ester (mono- plus di-esters) in HFL-DM5685*B12 stored at 50°C and low RH	84
4.2a	Free lutein content in mixture of commercial lutein and crude enzyme with hexane fraction 2 during 7 days storage	87
4.2b	Lutein ester formation in mixture of commercial lutein and crude enzyme with hexane fraction 2 during 5 days storage	88
4.3	Thin layer chromatography of hexane extracts of Tasman (1) and Kamilaroi (2) flour compared with pure linoleic acid	89
4.4	Thin layer chromatography of water-saturated butanol extract compared with 1,2-dipalmitoylphosphatidyl-choline	90
5.1	Frequency distribution for lutein ester (%) in (a) 2007 and (b) 2008	102
5.2	Scatter plot of ester content (%) for lines from the doubled haploid population Haruhikari//Sunco/Indis 82 2007 and 2008	103

5.3	A genetic map of part of the short arm of wheat chromosome 7D using data for 114 Haruhikari//Sunco/Indis.82 doubled haploid lines	104
6.1	Picture of banana <i>Cavendish</i> group (<i>Musa acuminata</i>) stored at 20°C for 7 days	109
6.2a	HPLC chromatogram measured at 445nm of free lutein extracted from banana peel (<i>Musa acuminata</i> , <i>Cavendish</i> group) before storage	113
6.2b	HPLC chromatogram measured at 445nm of free lutein, mono-ester and di-ester extracted from banana peel (<i>Musa acuminata</i> , <i>Cavendish</i> group) after 7 day storage at 22°C	114
6.3	Lutein and lutein ester (μg lutein equivalents g^{-1}) concentration in banana peel (<i>Musa acuminata</i> (<i>Cavendish</i> group) during ripening	115
6.4	Concentration (μg lutein equivalents g^{-1}) of different lutein esters in banana peel stored at 22°C	116
6.5a	HPLC chromatogram measured at 445nm of free lutein extracted from banana flesh (<i>Musa acuminata</i> , <i>Cavendish</i> group) before storage	119
6.5b	HPLC chromatogram measured at 445nm of free lutein, mono-ester and di-ester extracted from banana flesh (<i>Musa acuminata</i> , <i>Cavendish</i> group) after 7 day storage at 22°C	120
6.6	Lutein and lutein ester (μg lutein equivalents g^{-1}) concentrations detected in banana flesh <i>Musa acuminata</i> (<i>Cavendish</i> group) during ripening	121
6.7	Concentration (μg lutein equivalents g^{-1}) of different lutein esters in banana flesh stored at 22°C	122
6.8	Total lutein [free lutein plus lutein ester (μg lutein equivalents g^{-1})] content in the peel and flesh of bananas stored at 22°C for 7 days	124

Lutein is an important micronutrient for humans as well as being the primary contributor to the pale creamy to yellow colour of bread wheat and durum based products but tends to be unstable against heat and UV light. During post harvest storage of bread wheat grain some of the lutein may be converted to mono- and di-fatty acid esters that appear to be more stable forms of lutein.

The aims of the work presented in this thesis were: to study the effects of temperature on lutein esterification; to compare the relative stability of free lutein and lutein esters in grain stored under wide temperatures and conditions; to confirm that esterification is an enzymic process; to examine the genetic control mechanisms; to attempt to identify the enzyme and the endogenous substrate source of fatty acids; and finally to compare esterification in wheat grain with the same process in banana fruit tissues. This study utilised a high lutein, ester forming bread wheat, *Triticum aestivum* L. cv DM5685*B12, a non-ester forming bread wheat cv Haruhikari and a high lutein durum wheat, *Triticum durum* L cv Kamilaroi, that like many durum cultivars does not form lutein esters. Reverse phase high pressure liquid chromatography (RP-HPLC) was used to quantify the lutein and lutein ester concentrations.

Lutein esterification was strongly favoured by low relative humidity (8% RH) and followed a first order reaction rate. The maximum rate of lutein esterification was at $\approx 80^{\circ}\text{C}$, however the optimum temperature for maximum synthesis with minimum degradation was between 50 and 60°C . No ester synthesis was observed at temperature higher than 120°C . These data were consistent with an enzyme participating in the esterification reaction. Lutein ester was found to be more stable than free lutein with a substantially longer shelf life at a temperature of 60°C .

An attempt to establish a bioassay system to study esterification was only partially successful since only very low levels of esterification were achieved in reconstituted samples. Further investigation would be required to optimise the process. The limited

data did provide suggestive evidence that free fatty acids were probably not involved, rather the fatty acids were more likely to be derived from phospholipids via an acyltransferase reaction. A hexane-soluble fraction derived from a non-ester forming durum, Kamilaroi, was the only substrate that in the presence of a crude enzyme extract and free lutein gave a significant formation of lutein ester.

As esterification appeared to be enzymatically controlled, the genetic control of ester synthesis was investigated. Lutein esterification was compared in a series of nullisomic-tetrasomic Chinese Spring lines and a Haruhikari (zero ester)//Sunco/Indis.82 (high ester) doubled haploid population. Lutein esterification was controlled by a locus, designated *Lute*, located on the short arm of chromosome 7D closely linked with the marker loci *gwm295*, *wPt-1163* and *wPt-3727*.

In addition to wheat, esterification in banana, *Musa acuminata* Colla cv Cavendish group was also investigated. Compared to wheat, different patterns of esterification were observed in banana during the ripening with ester synthesis occurring in both banana peel and flesh during post harvest ripening. Esterification in banana occurred under higher moisture content than in wheat and offers another tissue model for the study of the esterification mechanism.

This thesis contributes valuable new information on the formation and genetic control of lutein ester formation in wheat grain and will be of value to manufacturers of wheat products seeking to retain lutein in end-products for delivery to costumers.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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