Rapid determination of transgene copy number in tobacco by competitive PCR using a pair of SSR primers

K.Y. Xu¹, S.H. Wang¹, L. Xi¹, Q.J. Wang¹, C. Dong¹, J.Y. Zhang¹, S.C. Qu¹ and Z. Zhang¹

¹College of Horticulture, Nanjing Agricultural University, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China
²Department of Wood Sciences, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
³Liaoning Agricultural Vocation-Technical College, Yingkou, Liaoning, China
⁴Department of Horticulture, Heilongjiang Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Haerbin, Heilongjiang, China

Corresponding author: Z. Zhang
E-mail: zhangzh@njau.edu.cn / qscnj@njau.edu.cn

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ABSTRACT. We developed a straightforward, rapid, and inexpensive method to determine transgene copy number in tobacco. The plasmid (pSSRCopy) used for tobacco transformation contains a simple sequence repeat (SSR) locus, PT1199, which was partially deleted in the middle, a homogenous SSR locus in tobacco K326. A 168-bp segment of the cloned PT1199 was shortened to 95 bp by deleting a 73-bp internal fragment. Using a pair of SSR primers, competitive PCR was amplified from genomic DNA from transgenic tobacco harboring pSSRCopy, and the two expected bands were found. The 168-bp band (SSR-168) corresponds to endogenous PT1199 and the 95-bp band (SSR-95) comes from the integrated pSSRCopy. A single
copy of a transgene can be easily distinguished from multiple copies by comparing band densities.

**Key words:** Copy number; Transgene; Competitive PCR; SSR; Tobacco