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M.B. Melchior, J. Fink-Gremmels, W. Gaastra

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Original research paper

Title:

**Extended antimicrobial susceptibility assay for *Staphylococcus aureus*
isolates from bovine mastitis growing in biofilms.**

Authors:

M.B. Melchior^{1,3}

J. Fink-Gremmels¹

W. Gaastra²

Adresses of authors:

¹ Department of Veterinary Pharmacy and Toxicology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine,
University of Utrecht, PO Box 80152, 3508 TD Utrecht.

² Department of Infectious Diseases and Immunology, Division of Molecular Infectiology,
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Utrecht, PO Box 80165, 3508 TD Utrecht.

³ Corresponding author: phone: *31 30 253 5327, fax: *31 30 253 4125

E-mail: m.b.melchior@vet.uu.nl

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Abstract:

Staphylococcus aureus is one of the most prevalent causes of bovine mastitis. The antimicrobial treatment of this disease is currently based on antimicrobial susceptibility tests according to CLSI standards. However, various studies have shown that there is a discrepancy between the results of this standard susceptibility test and the actual cure rate of the applied antimicrobial treatment. Increasing evidence suggests that biofilm formation by *S. aureus* is associated with this problem. The currently available antimicrobial susceptibility assays for bacteria growing in biofilms, are not considered reliable enough for routine application. Therefore, the objective of this study was to further develop a susceptibility test for bacteria growing in biofilm, suitable for routine testing of the antimicrobial susceptibility of *S. aureus*. With the expansion of the available MBECTTM assay to an extended biofilm susceptibility test, that comprises two and four consecutive days of antimicrobial challenge, the antimicrobial susceptibility for *S. aureus* growing in biofilm was further analysed. The results showed clear differences between strains and various antimicrobial agents with respect to the effect of longer duration of the antimicrobial challenge on the eradication of *S. aureus* growing in biofilm. The extended biofilm susceptibility test also indicates that each bacterial strain requires a specific duration of antimicrobial therapy, which cannot be derived from a standard susceptibility test or from a 24-hour biofilm susceptibility test.

Introduction.

Staphylococcus aureus is one of the major causes of subclinical, clinical, recurrent and chronic mastitis in dairy cattle. These infections are commonly treated with antimicrobial agents and it is known, based on various epidemiological studies, that only a moderate correlation exists between the antimicrobial susceptibility of *S. aureus in vitro* and its bacteriological cure after antimicrobial therapy of the patient (Sol et al., 2000; Sol et al., 1997). In fact treatment of cows suffering from chronic mastitis due to *S. aureus* infection often fails completely, regardless of the antimicrobial susceptibility determined in a diagnostic laboratory (Taponen et al., 2003; Wilson et al., 1999).

In human medicine, therapy- resistant, recurrent and chronic nosocomial infections caused by staphylococci have been associated with the growth of these bacteria in biofilms (Dunne, 2002; Vuong and Otto, 2002).

Increasing evidence indicates that biofilm formation by *S. aureus* at the site of infection is also the explanation for the apparent therapy resistance of *S. aureus* isolates causing bovine mastitis (Cucarella et al., 2004; Melchior et al., 2006b; Melchior et al., 2006a; Oliveira et al., 2006). It has been demonstrated that both *S. aureus* isolates obtained from bovine mastitis and clinical *S. aureus* isolates from humans, are 10-1000 times more resistant to antimicrobial agents when growing in biofilm, than the same isolate, growing in planktonic (free floating) form (Amorena et al., 1999; Ceri et al., 1999; Melchior et al., 2006b; Olson et al., 2002).

Although several tests for the determination of the susceptibility to antimicrobials of bacteria growing in biofilm, including the MBEC™ assay (Innovotech Inc¹, Edmonton, Canada), have been developed, these assays are not yet considered reliable enough for routine application. Furthermore, the results from a comparison of the susceptibility of *S. aureus* isolates from bovine mastitis growing in biofilm against a broad range of antimicrobials (Melchior et al.,

¹ Formerly MBEC BioProducts Inc.

2006b) revealed surprisingly little difference between strains and antimicrobials. The 24h biofilm susceptibility test resulted in all cases in a Minimal Biofilm Eradication Concentration (MBEC) higher than the concentration that can be reached *in vivo*, indicating that all strains were almost identically therapy resistant. This observation, together with the results obtained during several clinical trials, which demonstrated that the chance of a positive therapy outcome increases with a longer duration of the therapy (Pyorala and Pyorala, 1998; Sol et al., 2000), led to the development of the extended MBEC assay.

In this extended assay, the MBEC is determined after two and four days of antimicrobial challenge, whereas in the normal MBEC™ assay the MBEC concentration is determined after 24 hours of antimicrobial challenge (Ceri et al., 1999; Melchior et al., 2006b; Olson et al., 2002). Furthermore, the Biofilm Minimal Inhibitory Concentrations (BMIC) were derived with antimicrobial challenge plates from four consecutive days in the extended MBEC assay, whereas in the normal MBEC™ assay the BMIC is determined once in a 24 h assay.

The aim of the present study was to compare the antimicrobial susceptibility of *S. aureus* isolates obtained from bovine mastitis in the extended two and four day MBEC assay with that of the one day MBEC assay. Secondly, it was evaluated whether the extended assay is better suited for differentiation of the *in vitro* susceptibility of *S. aureus* strains growing in biofilm. This would allow for a better comparison between strains and antimicrobials.

Four strains used in a previous study with the MBEC™ assay (Melchior et al., 2006b) were tested in the extended MBEC biofilm susceptibility assay. Antimicrobials were selected based on their usage and registration for the control of mastitis caused by *S. aureus*. The assays were conducted both in CAMHB (Mueller Hinton Broth with cation adjustments according to the CLSI guidelines, Sigma, St Louis, USA) and in Ultra Heated (UHT) milk.

Materials and Methods

2.1 Bacterial strains and media

The standard reference strain *S. aureus* Newbould 305 (ATCC 29740) (Prasad and Newbould, 1968) and three field isolates from bovine mastitis (Hensen et al., 2000; Melchior et al., 2006b) were used in this first study. Prior to the experiments, the strains were stored at -70°C .

Strains Newbould 305, and BMA/GE/032/0412 (designated N305, and 0412 respectively) are penicillin susceptible strains whereas strains BMA/UK/032/0106 and BMA/GE/032/0385 (designated 0106, and 0385) are penicillin resistant strains. All four strains are susceptible, according to standard CLSI assays, for all other antimicrobials tested (Melchior et al., 2006b). The growth media used in the biofilm assay (see below) were CAMHB and commercial UHT milk with 3.5 % protein and 1.5 % fat. The UHT milk was buffered with 83 mmol HEPES (4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid), with the exception of UHT milk in which strain 0412 was grown, where 200 mmol HEPES had to be used. The growth medium for all antimicrobial challenge plates was CAMHB.

All inocula to be used in antimicrobial susceptibility tests were freshly prepared from overnight sheep blood agar plates (Biotrading, Mijdrecht, Netherlands).

2.2 Extended Antimicrobial susceptibility assay for bacteria growing in biofilms

Measurements of the antimicrobial susceptibility of bacteria growing in biofilms were performed with the MBEC™ biofilm assay. In brief, biofilms are allowed to form on the surface of 96 pegs on the peg- lid of the assay. These biofilms were found to be statistically equivalent (Ceri et al., 1999) and were subsequently exposed in 96- well plates for a variable period of time to growth medium containing antimicrobials in different concentrations, to allow determination of the susceptibility of the bacteria grown in the biofilm for these antimicrobial agents (Ceri et al., 1999).

The assay was performed as previously described (Ceri et al., 1999; Melchior et al., 2006b) with some modifications. In brief (see also Fig. 1), antimicrobial challenge was extended by replacement of the antimicrobial challenge plates every 24 hours during two and four consecutive days. During this period the 96-well plates were incubated at 37°C. BMIC concentrations were determined from the challenge plates for two or four day periods, respectively. MBEC concentrations were determined with the presence of visible bacteria present after sonication for 5 min (Branson sonicator, Branson, Danbury, CR, USA) and 20 h incubation at 37°C of the MBEC assay peg-lid in the CAMHB recovery plates. The presence of visible growth, in both the BMIC and MBEC assay was determined by measuring the optical density at 655nm in a 96-well plate reader (Biorad plate reader, Bio-rad, Hercules, CA, USA).

The assays were performed in duplicate and in triplicate in two independent experiments, and the results are presented as the mean antimicrobial dilution concentration from these five assays. Quality controls were performed according to the MBEC protocols².

The concentrations of the antimicrobials used in the two and four day assays ranged between 0.5µg/mL and 512µg/mL for amoxicillin/ clavulanic acid (ratio 2:1), cefquinome, cefoperazon, cloxacillin and pirlimycin, between 0.12µg/mL and 128µg/mL for penicillin and penicillin/ neomycin (ratio 1:2) and between 0.25µg/mL and 256µg/mL for trimethoprim/ sulfamethoxazole (ratio 1:19). The antimicrobial concentrations ranges for the MBEC 1d assay were different, and are indicated in the tables 1 and 2.

3. Results

3.1 Extended Antimicrobial susceptibility assay for bacteria growing in biofilm

² (http://www.innovotech.ca/products_instructions.php)

The results obtained in the extended MBEC assay are presented in Tables 1 and 2. In these tables the MBEC values obtained after challenge with the selected antimicrobials for two and four-days (MBEC 2d and MBEC 4d) are compared with the MBEC values obtained in the 24 h MBEC assay (MBEC 1d). The Minimal Inhibitory Concentrations (MIC) as defined in the CLSI guidelines (NCCLS, 2002) and the MBEC 1d values have been published previously (Melchior et al., 2006b). The Biofilm Minimal Inhibitory Concentrations (BMIC) was derived from the extended incubations performed in this study.

Extended antimicrobial challenge for two and four-days of strain 0385 resulted in a slight reduction of the MBEC concentrations, irrespective of whether CAMHB or UHT was used as the growth medium for biofilm formation. Of all eight antimicrobials tested on CAMHB grown biofilms, only cefquinome and pirlimycin resulted in at least 75% lower antimicrobial concentrations necessary for biofilm eradication in the extended four-day challenge. The use of trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole in the extended four-day challenge resulted in an antimicrobial concentration necessary for biofilm eradication that was at least 50% lower. After four-day antimicrobial challenge of the biofilm formed by strain 0385 grown in UHT medium, eradication of this biofilm could be obtained with only 1.6% of an antimicrobial concentration of the antimicrobial pirlimycin that was *NOT* able to cause eradication after 24 hours of challenge.

Reference strain N305 showed the highest decrease in antimicrobial concentration necessary for eradication after a four-day challenge as compared to a one-day challenge with cefquinome, where only 3% of the 24-hour antimicrobial concentration was needed to obtain biofilm eradication after four days. Extended challenge with penicillin decreased the concentration of this antimicrobial needed for eradication of the biofilm by 94%. For all other antimicrobials tested the concentrations were reduced to 12- 25% of the concentration needed for eradication in the 24-hour assay. When UHT medium was used for growth of the biofilm,

the extended four-days challenge with amoxycillin/ clavulanic acid resulted in the largest decrease observed; less than 1% of the two-day eradication concentration was already effective when the biofilm was challenged for four days (MBEC d1 results not available). For strain 0412, the MBEC 4d concentrations showed a sharp reduction when compared to the MBEC 1d concentrations for the antimicrobials penicillin, cloxacillin and amoxycillin/ clavulanic acid. The MBEC 4d concentrations needed in these cases was less than 0.5% of the MBEC 1d concentrations. The results for the extended challenge with cefquinome, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole and neomycin/ penicillin indicated that only 1% of the MBEC 1d concentration was needed for eradication after four days of challenge. For all other antimicrobials tested, little (pirlimycin) or no decrease in the concentration needed for biofilm eradication was observed after an extended antimicrobial challenge. The results obtained for biofilms grown in UHT medium were similar to those obtained after growth in CAMHB medium, with the exception of those obtained with trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole. Strain 0106 is penicillin resistant and therefore, as can be expected, a longer challenge period with this antimicrobial did not result in a decrease of MBEC values. However, the MBEC 4d concentrations needed for cefquinome, pirlimycin and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole were less than 0.2% of those needed for eradication of the biofilm in the MBEC 1d assay. Extended challenge with all other antimicrobials tested during four days of challenge resulted in a decrease of the concentration needed for biofilm eradication to only 1% of the MBEC 1d concentration. With UHT as the growth medium for the biofilm, antimicrobial challenge with cloxacillin, cefquinome, pirlimycin and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole during four days resulted in a 97 - 99% reduction of the MBEC concentration needed after four days of challenge in comparison with the concentration needed after a 24 hour challenge. The antimicrobial MBEC concentration for neomycin/ penicillin and cefoperazon was reduced by 87 – 94 % in the four-day challenge, compared to that in the MBEC 1d challenge.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The selection of antimicrobial agents for therapeutic use is generally based on susceptibility testing of the isolated pathogens conducted according to the standards of the CLSI. In this method the susceptibility of fast growing planktonic bacteria is measured. Accumulating evidence indicates however, that growth of *S. aureus* in the bovine udder in the form of a biofilm is the cause of the poor prediction of bacteriological cure when the data obtained in the CLSI tests are followed (Melchior et al., 2006b; Melchior et al., 2006a; Olson et al., 2002). The difficulty to produce reliable data for susceptibility of isolated field strains implies that it is virtually impossible to choose the optimum antimicrobial agent and treatment protocol under practical conditions. This results in numerous antimicrobial therapies without the desired cure of bovine mastitis. The development of a reliable assay suitable for routine testing, would improve the therapeutic intervention of bovine mastitis with antimicrobials considerably. Furthermore, it would have important implications for dairy economics and animal welfare.

Four field isolates of *S. aureus* from bovine mastitis were used in our experiments, all were found susceptible to the antimicrobials tested, with exception of the penicillin resistance for strain 0106 and 0385. It was shown that three of the strains showed a decrease in MBEC value after the extended antimicrobial challenge. The exception was strain 0385, where the extended challenge method did not, or only to a very limited extent yield a decrease in the minimal biofilm eradication concentration. Since the MBEC 4d concentrations needed for strain 0385 were significantly higher than the antimicrobial concentrations that can be reached *in vivo*, we consider this strain to behave as a true therapy resistant strain in this *in vitro* model.

The reference strain N305 in general revealed only moderate decreases in minimal biofilm eradication concentrations after extended challenge, in comparison to both the second

penicillin susceptible strain 0412 and the penicillin resistant strain 0106. Strain N305 has been used in several bovine mastitis studies (Hensen et al., 2000; Schukken et al., 1999), including some studies on experimental mastitis infection and susceptibility (Owens, 1987; Owens et al., 1993; Owens et al., 1993). From these studies it can be concluded that this strain is able to cause clinical and mild chronic mastitis infections and has a consistent susceptibility for a range of antimicrobials. The efficacy of the therapy after experimental infections with strain N305 (Schukken et al., 1999) with two antimicrobials resulted in bacteriological cure in 30- and 70% of the cases, depending on the antimicrobial used (Y.H. Schukken personal communication).

For strains 0412 and 0106 a significant decrease in the MBEC value was observed in the extended antimicrobial challenge for several antimicrobials. However, there are significant differences (i.e. for cloxacillin and cefquinome) between some of the tested antimicrobials. A decrease of at least 99% in MBEC concentrations for all β -lactam antimicrobials, with the exception of cefoperazon, was observed for strain 0412. Furthermore, after four days of antimicrobial challenge, the MBEC concentrations for cloxacillin and amoxycillin/ clavulanic acid were within the susceptibility range according to the CLSI guidelines. Although these guidelines do not apply for biofilm susceptibility assays, it can be assumed that these concentrations can be reached *in vivo*. For strain 0106, a penicillin resistant strain, a decrease of 99 – 99,8% in MBEC concentrations for cefquinome, cloxacillin, pirlimycin and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole was observed.

Most of the tested antimicrobials have a time dependent activity, however, no linear correlation between MBEC 1d values and MBEC 4d outcomes could be established, mainly because of large differences observed in the decrease of the MBEC values after extended challenge. In two reports time dependent β -lactam antimicrobials were tested in a clinical trial with treatment regimens of different length (Oliver et al., 2004; Sol et al., 2000). In both

245 trials bacteriological cure rates were increased upon longer duration of therapy, however Sol
246 and coworkers observed a significant difference between penicillin susceptible and penicillin
247 resistant strains in this respect. The differentiation of *S. aureus* strains according to their
248 penicillin susceptibility, showed that an increased bacterial cure rate from extended therapy is
249 very limited in the case of penicillin resistant strains.

250 A comparison of the BMIC and MBEC concentrations determined in CAMHB and UHT-
251 milk shows that each strain reacts different on this change of growth medium. Therefore it
252 was not possible to reveal a specific effect of these growth media on the biofilm antimicrobial
253 susceptibility for any of the antimicrobials tested. Although the MBEC d1 concentrations are
254 generally lower for biofilms grown in UHT milk than for biofilms grown in CAMHB, the
255 values obtained in the extended assay for bacterial biofilms grown in UHT and CAMHB show
256 that the majority (90%) of the obtained results are in the same range for both the MBEC d2
257 and MBEC d4 assay. Previous studies showed that *S. aureus* bacterial biofilms grown in milk
258 medium contain inclusions of milk-fat and- protein particles, and are less compact compared
259 to biofilm grown in standard media (Amorena et al., 1999). The presence of fat and protein
260 particles in the biofilm might explain differences in the susceptibility to individual
261 antimicrobials with a similar mechanism of action, as in this case, the efficacy is also
262 influenced by physico-chemical characteristics of the antimicrobial.

263 However, apparently strain specific effects have more influence on the results in this assay.

264 For example strain 0106 showed a lower susceptibility towards for cloxacillin, and
265 amoxycillin/ clavulanic acid when grown in milk, whereas strain N305 was found to be more
266 susceptible for these antimicrobials if biofilms are grown in UHT. These latter results indicate
267 that the observed variability is strain-dependent and not antimicrobial-dependent.

268 The marked differences observed in the decrease of MBEC values after extended challenge
269 suggest, that each strain requires a strain specific time period during which antimicrobial

treatment should be maintained, independent of the individual MIC, BMIC or MBEC 1d values. Although *in vivo* circumstances will be different for each specific case, with respect to bacterial load and environmental growth conditions, the extended challenge method might provide a tool for the evaluation of the duration of antimicrobial therapy required for an adequate therapy result.

Whether these biofilm susceptibility differences observed *in vitro* are caused by genetic, metabolic, regulatory or other mechanisms remains to be investigated.

In conclusion, the presented model of an extended MBEC assay in which the susceptibility of *S. aureus* biofilm against a panel of common antibiotics was tested, indicates marked differences when these results were compared with common standard procedures such as the CLSI method for planktonic bacteria, or the commercial MBEC™ assay. The extended MBEC assay seems to correlate with the principle of time-dependent effects of the selected antimicrobials as the MBEC concentrations decreased considerably with time, albeit in a strain-dependent manner. At present only four *S. aureus* strains, isolated from cases of bovine mastitis could be tested. The obtained results warrant further investigations with a larger number of field isolates, as this extended MBEC assay might be developed into a valuable tool to predict the outcome of a prolonged therapy under *in vivo* conditions.

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361 Table 1

CAMHB	Method	Conc range ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	strains			
AB			N305	0412	0106*	0385*
Pen	MIC		≤ 0.06	≤ 0.06	4	>8
	BMIC	0.12-128	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5	>128	>128
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	256	256	≥ 2048	≥ 2048
	MBEC 2d		64	64	>128	>128
	MBEC 4d	0.12-128	16	0.5	>128	>128
Clo	MIC		0.25	0.12	0.25	0.12
	BMIC	0.5-512	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	512	512	1024	1024
	MBEC 2d		256	256	32	512
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	128	1	8	>512
Aug 2:1	MIC		$\leq 0.5/0.25$	$\leq 0.5/0.25$	$\leq 0.5/0.25$	1/0.5
	BMIC	0.5-512	$\leq 0.5/0.25$	$\leq 0.5/0.25$	1/0.5	4/2
	MBEC 1d	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	MBEC 2d		256/128	512/128	32/16	>512/256
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	64/32	2/1	1/0.5	>512/256
Ceq	MIC		0.5	0.5	0.5	1
	BMIC	0.5-512	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5	1	1
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	≥ 2048	1024	≥ 2048	≥ 2048
	MBEC 2d		256	512	64	>512
	MBEC 4d	512-0.5	64	16	1	512
Cfp	MIC		2	2	2	4
	BMIC	0.5-512	2	≤ 0.5	2	8
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	≥ 2048	256	≥ 2048	≥ 2048
	MBEC 2d		512	512	32	>512
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	256	256	32	>512
Pirl	MIC		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	BMIC	0.5-512	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	1024	512	≥ 2048	≥ 2048
	MBEC 2d	0.5-512	>512	512	64	512
	MBEC 4d		256	64	4	512
SXT 1:19	MIC		≤ 0.12	≤ 0.12	≤ 0.12	≤ 0.12
	BMIC	0.25-256	≤ 0.25	≤ 0.25	≤ 0.25	≤ 0.25
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	256	512	256	512
	MBEC 2d		128	256	4	>256
	MBEC 4d	0.25-256	64	8	0.5	256
Neo/pen 1:2	MIC		$\leq 0.02/0.03$	$\leq 0.02/0.03$	$\leq 0.02/0.03$	$\leq 0.02/0.03$
	BMIC	0.12-128	$\leq 0.12/0.06$	$\leq 0.12/0.06$	2/4	2/4
	MBEC 1d	0.5-512	32/64	64/128	$\geq 512/1024$	256/512
	MBEC 2d		64/128	16/32	16/32	128/256
	MBEC 4d	0.12-128	4/8	0.25/0.5	8/16	128/256

362 MIC, minimal inhibitory concentration; BMIC, Biofilm MIC; MBEC, minimal biofilm
 363 eradication concentration; AB, antimicrobial; Pen, penicillin; Clo, cloxacillin; Aug,
 364 amoxicillin/clavulanic acid; Ceq, cefquinome; Cfp, cefoperazon; Pirl, pirlimycin; SXT,
 365 trimethoprim sulphamethoxazole; Neo, neomycin.

366 *Strain N305 and 0412 are penicillin susceptible, strain 0106 and 0385 are penicillin resistant

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Table 2.
UHT

	Method	Conc range (µg/ml)	strains			
AB			N305	0412	0106	0385
Pen	BMIC	0.12-128	<=0.12	<=0.12	256	32
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	128	128	>=2048	>=2048
	MBEC 2d		64	32	>128	>128
	MBEC 4d	0.12-128	16	0.5	>128	>128
Clo	BMIC	0.5-512	<=0.5	<=0.5	<=0.5	<=0.5
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	256	1024	1024	1024
	MBEC 2d		512	512	64	512
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	32	1	32	256
Aug 2:1	BMIC	0.5-512	<=0.5/0.25	<=0.50.25	1/0.5	2/1
	MBEC 1d	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	MBEC 2d		256/128	512/256	64/32	>512/256
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	2/1	2/1	32/16	512/256
Ceq	BMIC	0.5-512	<=0.5	<=0.5	1	1
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	>=2048	512	>=2048	>=2048
	MBEC 2d		>512	128	128	>512
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	256	32	32	>512
Cfp	BMIC	0.5-512	<=0.5	<=0.5	4	8
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	>=2048	256	>=2048	>=2048
	MBEC 2d		>512	256	256	>512
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	128	128	256	>512
Pir1	BMIC	0.5-512	<=2	<=0.5	<=0.5	<=0.5
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	256	1024	1024	>=2048
	MBEC 2d		512	256	32	512
	MBEC 4d	0.5-512	256	128	8	32
SXT 1:19	BMIC	0.25-256	<=0.25	<=0.25	<=0.25	<=0.25
	MBEC 1d	2-1024	128	8	256	16
	MBEC 2d		128	128	4	256
	MBEC 4d	0.25-256	64	128	2	64
Neo/pen 1:2	BMIC	0.12-128	<=0.12/0.25	<=0.12/0.25	0.5/1	1/2
	MBEC 1d	0.5-512	64/128	16/32	256/512	16/32
	MBEC 2d		64/128	8/16	32/64	128/256
	MBEC 4d	0.12-128	8/16	4/8	16/32	64/128

Explanation of abbreviations: see table 1.

Table 1. MIC, BMIC, MBEC 1d, MBEC 2d and MBEC 4d concentrations for strains N305, 0412, 0106 and 0385 for biofilms grown in CAMHB.

Table 2 MIC, BMIC, MBEC 1d, MBEC 2d and MBEC 4d concentrations for strains N305, 0412, 0106 and 0385 for biofilms grown in UHT milk.

Fig. 1. Flow diagram for extended antimicrobial challenge for biofilms. Aliquoutes of the same inoculum are divided over separate MBEC assay plates for 24 h growth on a rocking table at 37°C to facilitate the formation of a bacterial biofilm on the 96-pegs on the lid of the MBEC assay plates. After 24h the peg-lid is mounted onto a 96-wells challenge plate containing serial dilutions of the selected antimicrobials. The antimicrobial challenge plate is replaced every 24 h by a new plate, i.e. once in the MBEC 2d assay and three times in the MBEC 4d assay. The biofilm peg-lid and the antimicrobial challenge plates are left for growth at 37°C. After two or four days of challenge, the peg-lid is mounted in a 96-wells recovery plate with CAMHB (200µl) in each well. After sonication, these plates are incubated at 37°C for 24 h. In all plates, bacterial growth is measured as optical density in a 96 well plate reader.

