



# Biofuels Series

RAPID MEASUREMENT OF GLUCOSE DURING  
FERMENTATION IN BIOETHANOL PRODUCTION

Application Note 300LS  
YSI Life Sciences



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# Rapid Measurement of Glucose during Fermentation in Bioethanol Production



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### INTRODUCTION

Glucose concentrations in complex matrices such as corn mash in fermentation can be measured in about one minute with minimal preparation using the YSI 2900 Series biochemistry analyzer. YSI's unique enzyme electrode technology provides for specific glucose measurements in the range of 0.005 to 0.900% w/v. Measurements are virtually unaffected by color, turbidity, density, pH, or the presence of chemical substances.

When configured with YSI 2357 buffer and the YSI 2365 glucose oxidase enzyme membrane, the YSI 2900 analyzer measures glucose after aspiration of just 25 microliters of sample. Some samples may need filtered; and for glucose concentrations that exceed 0.90% w/v (9.00 g/L), dilution of sample may be required. The sample is automatically flushed from the electrode chamber within 30 seconds after the displayed result and the YSI 2900 Series instrument is ready to measure the next sample. Turn around time is under two minutes.

In the study described glucose was measured in filtered and diluted corn mash samples obtained from two fermentation stages of a production-scale bioethanol operation; one at 12-hours and the other at 24-hours after yeast addition. To demonstrate reliable performance in the sample matrix, both standard additions and precision studies were performed with these samples. Results are shown below. The advantage of this simple, easy to perform glucose measurement is that operators can perform in-process testing and make process adjustments to maximize ethanol yield.

### I. MATERIALS & SETUP

#### Sample Collection

Collection container (250 ml flask)

Whatman #1 filter paper, funnel and 100 ml collection flask

Nylon syringe filter (0.22 micron); 3 ml luer lock syringe

Collection tube (5 ml, 75mm x 100mm - to collect filtrates)

2900 Series instrument configured for glucose measurement

### YSI 2900 Series Instrument Setup

See the YSI 2900 Series instrument user's manual for general setup and safety information. The information below outlines glucose configuration.

Sample Size: 25 microliters

#### Probe A Parameters

Chemistry	Glucose
Unit	% (w/v)
Calibrator	0.25%
End Point	30 Sec

#### Autocal Parameters

Temperature	1°C
Time	30 Min
Sample	5 Sam
Cal Shift	2%

### II. METHOD

- Calibrate the YSI 2900 Series instrument.
- Each day, prior to runs, perform the FCN membrane test using YSI 2363 solution.
- Each day, prior to runs, test the linearity of the system with 0.90% w/v glucose using YSI 1531 (9.00 g/L glucose) linearity standard.
- When idle for more than 15 minutes during sampling, initiate a calibration to ensure greatest accuracy.
- Collect about 100 ml of sample from the fermentation tank, ensuring a representative sample.
- Mix samples well and pour through filter paper to capture particulates. Retain filtrate for additional filtration.
- Draw about 3 ml of filtrate from F into the syringe, secure a 0.22 micron filter to the luer fitting and then dispense solution into a 5 ml tube. *continued*

- H. Dilute filtrate as necessary to bring glucose concentration within the YSI analytical method range (0 - 9.00 g/L)<sup>1</sup>.
- I. Immediately present the sample to Station #2 of the YSI 2900 series instrument for aspiration; and then record the glucose concentration when it is displayed.
- J. Record the concentration, adjust with calculations as necessary, and compare to your reference range values.

### III. CALCULATIONS

Samples that were compensated for dilution must be back-calculated by the dilution factor.

Example: If you had a solution that you expect to be near 12% w/v glucose with the YSI 2900 series instrument, you might consider a 20-fold dilution (1 ml sample; 19 ml water) to bring the value into reportable range. You would expect a number near 0.6 % w/v (12% ÷ 20). In this example let us assume the diluted sample now measures 0.62% w/v. Corrected for dilution, the undiluted sample concentration is 12.4% w/v (20 x 0.62%). Since 0.62% w/v is well within the 0 - 0.90% w/v glucose range, record the result.

### IV. RESULTS

Two samples from a 48-hour yeast fermentation were collected and filtered. The samples were obtained at the 12-hour and 24-hour stages of fermentation where glucose consumption would be well underway. To demonstrate method performance, instrument precision (n=10) and standard additions (spike and recovery of known glucose addition) were performed. In the spikes 5 mg and 10 mg of glucose in water were delivered to each of two filtrate aliquots of 10 ml. The spiked concentrations were compared to the original filtrates to determine percent recovery.

#### YSI 2900 Precision for Unspiked Filtrate Samples

Samples 12-HR and 24-HR were selected for precision studies. Ten (10) replicates of each sample were performed. Results are shown in the table below.

Sample	Replicates	Mean % w/v	STD % w/v	CV (%)
12-HR	10	14.04	0.198	1.41

The standard deviation (STD) was determined for each replicate series. YSI precision results fall within the YSI-specified limits of 2% CV or 0.002% w/v, whichever the greater limit.

### Percent Recovery of Spiked Samples

A glucose spike standard of 100 g/L (100 mg/ml) was prepared in reagent water using high purity D-Glucose. The solution was mixed for a minimum of 4 hours at room temperature to allow for mutarotational equilibrium. Spikes of 5 mg and 10 mg glucose were delivered by pipet (50 uL & 100 uL) into 10 ml volumetric flasks. Sample filtrate was added to the 10 ml mark to produce the spiked solutions. Original solutions (before spike) and spiked solutions were measured using the YSI 2900 Series instrument. Results are displayed in the table below and percent recoveries calculated.

All diluted samples were back-calculated by the 20-fold dilution factor and results are expressed in concentration units of glucose % w/v. These units would be equivalent to g/100 ml.

Sample	Spike, µl	Unspiked*
12-HR	50	14.04%
12-HR	100	13.79%
24-HR	50	4.50%
24-HR	100	4.48%
Spiked*	Calculated	Recovery
14.98	15.02	99.7%
15.68	15.66	100.2%
5.45	5.48	99.4%
6.47	6.43	100.5%

\*Glucose values in % w/v units

### V. DISCUSSION

Glucose is the primary simple sugar that results from the enzymatic hydrolysis of starch and therefore the main carbon source for yeast in the production of ethanol in fermentation. In typical corn bioethanol production, the consumption of glucose over the course of 24 to 48 hour yeast fermentation is a common method of monitoring ethanol production efficiency. Although ethanol measurement is also important, glucose concentration profiles, and sometimes glucose consumption rates, are often more easily measured and are of great importance early in the fermentation process when adjustments to process can be made. In addition, a set glucose concentration at the end of fermentation is often the signal to move the 'beer' to distillation.

HPLC is the analytical method of choice to measure not only glucose, but also dextrans, maltose, glycerol, acetic acid, lactic acid, and ethanol. All have relevant meaning to measuring efficiency of the bioethanol production process. However, the YSI 2900 has proven to *continued*

be a valuable tool in monitoring glucose during fermentation. The enzyme-electrode based system not only provides rapid, accurate glucose measurements (sometimes 30 minutes before an HPLC result) but also is simple to use and easy to maintain. Results are available earlier than HPLC and allow operators to make adjustments more rapidly.

In the data presented in this study performance of the method indicates precision and accuracy that is comparable to HPLC. Precision of samples studied proved to be better than 2%. Percent recoveries were < +/- 1% showing that glucose measured by the YSI 2900 was not affected by metabolic by-products or the ethanol concentrations present during fermentation. Once filtered (and diluted as necessary), the sample was presented to the instrument and glucose results were displayed and printed in one minute. Total turn-around time was less than two minutes. The YSI 2900 instrument automatically updates calibration on a user-defined schedule, or may be initiated at the user's command.

In conclusion the YSI 2900 instrument used in glucose monitoring provides valuable information relevant to maximizing ethanol production. The measurements allow the operators to make timely decisions thus improving plant efficiency and reducing costs.

#### ORDERING INFORMATION

YSI Part Numbers:

- 2900 Biochemistry Analyzer
- 2365 Glucose Oxidase Membrane Kit
- 2357 Buffer Kit
- 2776 Glucose/Lactate Calibrator (2.50 g/L glucose)
- 1531 Glucose Linearity test standard (9.00 g/L)
- 2363 Potassium Ferrocyanide Test Solution
- 2392 NaCl Solution (for membrane installation)

#### For further information, please contact:

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