

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL

CENTRO DE BIOTECNOLOGIA DO ESTADO DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL

PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM BIOLOGIA CELULAR E MOLECULAR

**Uso de *Babesia bovis* como uma vacina de vetor vivo para o controle do carrapato  
bovino *Rhipicephalus microplus*.**

Daiane Patrícia Oldiges

Porto Alegre, agosto de 2016

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Tese submetida ao Programa de Pós-graduação em Biologia Celular e Molecular (PPGBCM) da UFRGS como parte dos requisitos para a obtenção do grau de doutor em Ciências.

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*“One, remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Two, never give up work. Work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it. Three, if you are lucky enough to find love, remember it is there and don’t throw it away.”*

— Stephen Hawking

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*Look up at the stars and not down at your feet:* Foi o olhar para as estrelas que trouxe para mais perto de mim o pensamento científico. Ainda que eu não tenha seguido o caminho da astronomia (profissionalmente), se não fossem aquelas discussões, que aconteciam no laboratório de física do Colégio Militar de Porto Alegre, talvez eu não visse a ciência como um caminho tão brilhante a ser seguido. Além disso, graças a esse envolvimento com as estrelas eu conheci o meu bilhete premiado, aquele com quem hoje eu divido a minha vida.

*Work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it:* Mesmo que as vezes os experimentos, os relatórios e os prazos me enlouqueçam, não posso negar que o meu lugar é na ciência! Eu não gosto mais de bioquímica do que de fisiologia, mesmo que eu saiba um pouquinho mais de uma do que da outra. Eu gosto de ciência, eu gosto do pensamento científico, eu gosto da procura sem fim por respostas que muitas vezes só te trazem mais perguntas. Mas eu escolhi um laboratório, uma linha de pesquisa. E junto com todo o conhecimento vieram as pessoas: os colegas, os vizinhos de laboratório, os orientadores, os professores/estudantes/pós-docs dispostos a ajudar a melhorar o meu trabalho. A todos vocês: muitíssimo obrigado, eu não teria chegado aqui sem a sua ajuda. Não podemos esquecer do seleto grupo de pessoas que só querem

que você não chegue a lugar algum, eles existem, todos nós sabemos. A eles, meus caros, beijinho no ombro.

*If you are lucky enough to find love, remember it is there and don't throw it away:*  
E eu achei, desde sempre, na minha família. As minhas escolhas profissionais me fizeram ficar longe, mas tudo bem, família militar... Nós entendemos a distância, e nós sabemos o caminho de volta. Agora eu tenho também na minha mini-família de dois humanos e 3 gatos, e também na família bem grande e barulhenta que veio de brinde. Amo também os amigos, que nem são tantos assim mas são ótimos. Amado (não posso citar nomes, eu prometi), obrigada por tudo, obrigada por fazer parte da minha vida, obrigada por fazermos uma vida juntos do nosso jeito, com as nossas peculiaridades. Os problemas serão sempre pequenos frente à nossa resiliência. Te amo.

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## **LISTA DE ABREVIATURAS**

BSD : blasticidina deaminase - “*blasticidin deaminase*”

cDNA: DNA complementar

Ef1 $\alpha$  : fator de alongamento 1 alfa – “*elongation factor 1 alfa*”

FACS: seleção de células ativada por fluorescência - “*fluorescence-activated cell sorting*”

gDNA: DNA genômico – “*genomic DNA*”

GFP: proteína verde fluorescente – “*green fluorescent protein*”

GSH: glutationa – “*glutathione*”

GST: glutationa S-transferase – “*glutathione S-transferase*”

HlGST: glutationa S-transferase de *Haemaphysalis longicornis*- “*Haemaphysalis longicornis glutathione S-transferase*”

IRES: sítio de entrada interno do ribossomo “*internal ribosome entry site*”

mRNA: RNA mensageiro – “*messenger RNA*”

MSA: antígeno de superfície de merozoíto “*merozoite surface antigen*”

ORF: fase aberta de leitura – “*open reading frame*”

PCV: hematócrito – “*packed cell volume*”

PCR: Reação em cadeia da polimerase – “*polymerase chain reaction*”

RAP: Proteína associada a roptrias - “*rhoptry-associated protein*”

rHlGST: glutationa S-transferase de *Haemaphysalis longicornis* recombinante - “*recombinant Haemaphysalis longicornis glutathione S-transferase*”

RT-PCR: reação da transcriptase reversa seguida por reação em cadeia da polimerases –

“*reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction*”

SEM: erro padrão – “*standard error of mean*”

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## RESUMO

O carapato *Rhipicephalus microplus* é um ectoparasito hematófago de grande importância para a pecuária por ser responsável por perdas massivas na produção animal, de forma que o seu controle é economicamente relevante. Este carapato, além dos danos que causa por si só, é também um importante vetor para a transmissão de microorganismos patogênicos, entre eles o hemopprotozoário intraeritrocítico *Babesia bovis*. O presente trabalho descreve o desenvolvimento de uma linhagem de *B. bovis* capaz de expressar um antígeno protetor, uma glutationa S-transferase do carapato *Haemaphysalis longicornis* (HlGST), e o teste desta linhagem como uma vacina de vetor vivo para o controle do carapato *R. microplus*. *B. bovis*, em cultivo, da linhagem S74-T3B foram eletroporados em presença de plasmídeo contendo o promotor bidirecional de *B. bovis Ef-1 $\alpha$*  responsável pela expressão independente de dois genes: o repórter fusionado ao agente para seleção (*GFP-BSD*) e *HlGST* fusionada à sequência codificadora do peptídeo sinal de MSA-1 (*merozoite surface antigen-1*). Após a eletroporação, foi feita a seleção com blasticidina para obtenção da linhagem nomeada HlGST. A linhagem HlGST é composta por parasitos contendo diferentes padrões de inserção dos genes exógenos, tanto dentro quanto fora do locus *Ef-1 $\alpha$* . Uma linhagem clonal denominada HlGST-Cln expressando HlGST e GFP-BSD foi obtida a partir da linhagem HlGST. Dois ensaios, independentes, de imunização de bovinos com os parasitos clonais foram realizados, sendo usado como controle uma linhagem clonal previamente caracterizada denominada GFP-Cln. Todos os animais inoculados desenvolveram uma forma branda de babesiose, indicando que ambas as linhagens clonais são atenuadas, mas apenas os animais imunizados com a linhagem HlGST-Cln foram capazes de produzir anticorpos anti-HlGST. O segundo procedimento de

imunização foi seguido por um desafio com larvas de *R. microplus*. O desenvolvimento dessas larvas no hospedeiro levou a fêmeas adultas de menor peso e fertilidade. Coletivamente, esses dados mostram a possibilidade de uso de linhagens transfectadas de *B. bovis* como vacinas de vetor vivo.

## ABSTRACT

The tick *Rhipicephalus microplus* is a notorious blood-feeding ectoparasite of cattle, responsible for massive losses in animal production. It is the main vector of pathogenic microorganisms, including *Babesia bovis*, an intraerythrocytic apicomplexan protozoan parasite responsible for bovine babesiosis. This study describes the development and testing of a live *B. bovis* vaccine expressing the protective tick antigen glutathione S-transferase from *Haemaphysalis longicornis* (HlGST). The *B. bovis* S74-T3B parasites were electroporated with a plasmid containing the bidirectional *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  promoter of *B. bovis* controlling expression of two independent genes, the selectable marker *GFP-BSD*, and *HlGST* fused to the *MSA-1* (merozoite surface antigen-1) signal peptide from *B. bovis*. Electroporation followed by blasticidin selection resulted in the emergence of a mixed *B. bovis* transfected line (termed HlGST) in *in vitro* cultures, containing parasites with distinct patterns of insertion of both exogenous genes, either in or outside the *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  locus. A *B. bovis* clonal line termed HlGST-Cln expressing HlGST and GFP-BSD was then derived from the mixed parasite line HlGST. Two independent calf immunization trials were performed via intravenous inoculation of the HlGST-Cln and a control consisting of an irrelevant transfected clonal line of *B. bovis* designated GFP-Cln. The control GFP-Cln line contains a copy of the *GFP-BSD* gene inserted into the *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  locus of *B. bovis* in an identical fashion as the HlGST-Cln parasites. All animals inoculated with the HlGST-Cln and GFP-Cln transfected parasites developed mild babesiosis indicating that both transfected cloned parasite lines are attenuated. All animals immunized with HlGST-Cln produced detectable anti-glutathione-S-transferase antibodies. After immunization with HlGST-Cln, calves were challenged with *R. microplus* larva. Development of these larva produce fully engorged female tick with

reduced weight and fertility. Collectively, these data show that transfected *B. bovis* parasites can be used as vectors in live vectored vaccines.

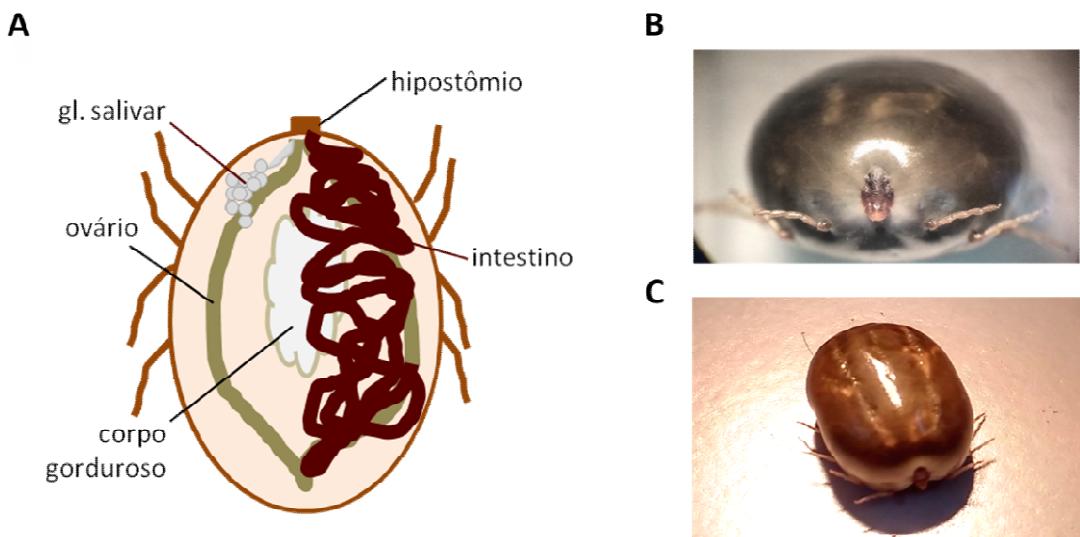
## **1. INTRODUÇÃO**

### **1.1 Carrapatos**

Carrapatos são parasitos hematófagos que transmitem uma ampla variedade de doenças (Sonenshine & Roe, 2013), sendo sobrepujados apenas pelos mosquitos na atuação como vetores (Parola & Raoult, 2001). Taxonomicamente, são classificados na subclasse Acari, ordem Ixodida e subdivididos em 3 famílias: Ixodidae (692 espécies), Argasidae (186 espécies) e Nuttallielidae (1 espécie) (Estrada-Pena, 2015; Nava et al., 2009). A Família Ixodidae é ainda dividida em 2 grupos: prostriata e metastriata, sendo que prostriata contém somente espécies do gênero *Ixodes* enquanto as espécies de todos os outros gêneros desta família são classificados como metastriata (*Amblyomma*, *Dermacentor*, *Haemaphysalis*, *Hyalomma* e *Rhipicephalus*) (Black & Piesman, 1994). Independentemente de sua classificação, todos os carrapatos apresentam em comum algumas características externas como: presença de 6 pares de patas na fase larval e 8 pares de patas nas demais fases; estrutura corporal achatada quando não alimentados; presença de hipostômio (e não uma mandíbula “mordedora”); corpo não segmentado; e ausência de antenas. Internamente, o carrapato apresenta como principais componentes o trato digestivo (faringe, esôfago, intestino e saco retal), os túbulos de Malpighi, a traqueia, as glândulas salivares, o corpo gorduroso e o ovário (Sonenshine & Roe , 2013), como representado na figura 1A. Além dos orgão acima descritos há também o órgão de Gené, responsável por depositar uma cera protetora na superfície dos ovos (Booth et al., 1984).

Devido a sua importância econômica - em função dos danos trazidos à pecuária, o foco do presente estudo é o carrapato *Rhipicephalus microplus* (Figura 1B e C). Este carrapato, considerado o ectoparasita bovino economicamente mais importante no

mundo todo (Ferreira et al., 2015), é originário da Ásia e teve sua disseminação para outras regiões durante a segunda metade do século XIX, quando, através do transporte do gado bovino, se espalhou para Austrália, Madagascar, México, Sul da África, América do Sul e EUA (Madder et al., 2011). A infestação por carapatos causa impacto direto sobre a produção de carne e leite em função da expoliação do hospedeiro, que pode levar a morte em casos de alta infestação, e também a redução na qualidade do couro, quando a pele é danificada pela fixação das peças bucais do parasita no hospedeiro (Burger et al., 2014; de Castro, 1997). A mortalidade de animais acometidos por agentes de doenças transmitidas por carapatos deve ser adicionada a esse prejuízo econômico, bem como os gastos com o tratamento dos animais doentes e investimento na tentativa de reduzir a infestação dos animais por estes parasitos (Grisi et al., 2014;



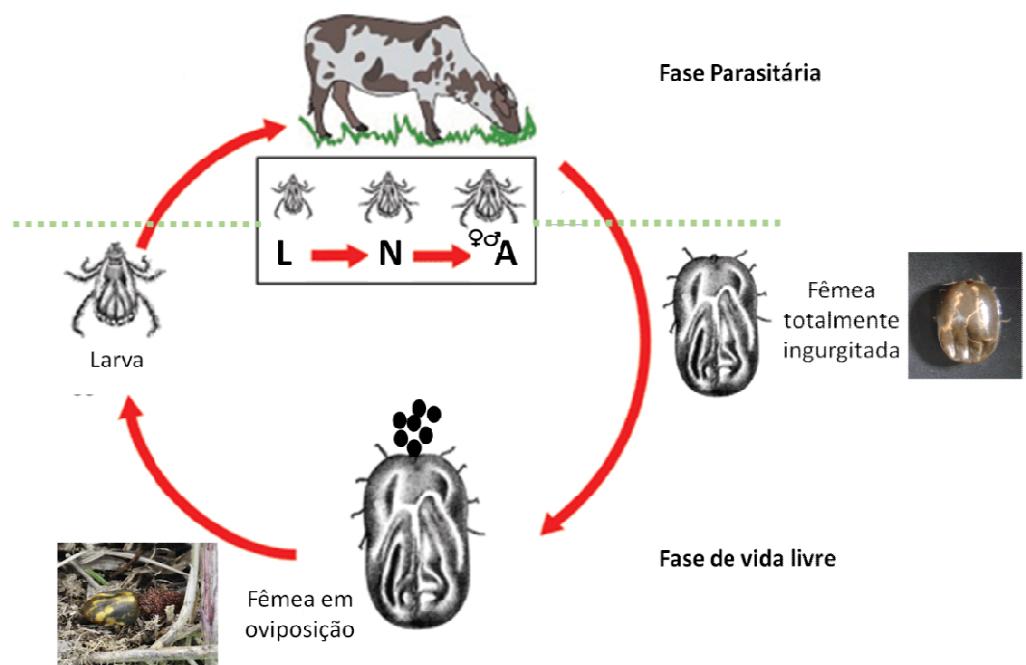
**Figura 1:** Carapato *R. microplus*. A) Esquema gráfico mostrando a estrutura interna de fêmea (o intestino está representado em metade do esquema apenas para fins ilustrativos). B) e C) Fêmea de *R. microplus* após finalização do repasto sanguíneo.

O ciclo de vida do carapato pode ser dividido em uma fase de vida livre e uma fase de vida parasitária. A fase parasitária ocorre toda em um mesmo hospedeiro, uma vez que o *R. microplus* é uma espécie de carapato monoxena (Bonilla, 1995). Tal

fase é iniciada quando as larvas infestantes se instalaram no hospedeiro. Ao longo da fase de vida parasitária, que dura, em média, de 18 a 26 dias (Rocha, 1997), ecdises marcam a mudança entre estádios do parasito. As ecdises ocorrem sobre o hospedeiro ao qual o carapato se mantém fixado pelo hipostômio por meio de um cone de cimento (Maruyama et al., 2010), e a alimentação é retomada em local muito próximo ao sitio de alimentação da fase anterior, mas sempre iniciada após nova laceração da epiderme e derme do hospedeiro. Em torno de 6 dias após a fixação, as larvas (3 pares de patas) realizam muda para ninfas (8 pares de patas) (Rocha, 1997). Após finalizar a alimentação, as ninfas dão início à ecdise que resulta em adultos imaturos, estádio no qual o dimorfismo sexual está presente, sendo fêmeas denominadas neóginas e machos denominados gonandros (Guaragna et al., 1998). Os adultos que recém sofreram a muda são sexualmente imaturos, e a gametogênese é iniciada durante o repasto sanguíneo (Sonenshine & Roe, 2013). Ao atingir a maturidade sexual, o macho percorre o hospedeiro em busca de fêmeas para o acasalamento. O processo de cópula e inseminação desencadeiam importantes modificações fisiológicas na fêmea, como: indução de rápido ingurgitamento, síntese de vitelogenina (proteína que será incorporada pelo oócito em desenvolvimento e transformada em vitelina, fonte de aminoácidos e energia para desenvolvimento do embrião), início da redução da glândula salivar, aumento do vestíbulo da vagina e crescimento do órgão de Gené (Sonenshine & Roe, 2013). Depois de fecundada, a fêmea aumenta a sua ingestão sanguínea e, ao fim do repasto, quando se desprende do hospedeiro e cai ao solo, contabiliza o consumo de cerca de 2 mL de sangue (Raikes, 1981). Considerando uma carga permanente de centenas, e às vezes milhares, de carapatos, o hospedeiro fica debilitado e pode chegar a morrer.

No solo, a fêmea inicia a fase de vida livre, onde ocorre o processo de oviposição. A oviposição é antecedida por um período pré-postura de três dias quando a fêmea procura locais abrigados pela vegetação. A postura dura em torno de 14 dias. Os ovos demoram em torno de 20 dias para eclodir e, em cerca de 10 dias, as larvas estão aptas a iniciarem o ciclo de vida parasitário. É importante ressaltar que os períodos aqui descritos para cada etapa da fase de vida livre são determinados em condições ótimas de umidade e temperatura (85% umidade e 28°C). Em situações ambientais desfavoráveis, a duração do ciclo pode se estender por vários meses. A fase de vida parasitária, por sua vez, não é tão sensível às influências climáticas e dura cerca de 21 dias (Rocha, 1997).

A figura 2 mostra uma representação gráfica do ciclo de vida do carapato aqui descrito.



**Figura 2:** Representação gráfica do ciclo de vida do carapato *R. microplus*. L: Larva; N: ninfa; A: Adulto. Adaptado de <https://www.cdc.gov/dpdx/ticks>.

O longo período de alimentação possibilitado pela sua capacidade de evasão do sistema imune do hospedeiro confere ao *R. microplus* uma alta competência em atuar como vetor (Bowman & Nuttal, 2008), sendo os patógenos do gênero *Babesia* e

*Anaplasma* os principais agentes por ele transmitidos (Esteves et al., 2015; Giles et al., 2014; Lorusso et al., 2016). Uma vez que essa espécie é monoxena, é interessante que o patógeno seja capaz de se disseminar para a prole do vetor, característica presente em hemoprotzoários do gênero *Babesia sp*, onde a transmissão do patógeno à próxima linhagem de carapatos ocorre por via transovariana (Howell et al., 2007a; Howell et al., 2007b). A descrição do ciclo de vida deste hemoprotzoário está apesentada no tópico 1.4.

## **1.2 Controle do carapato bovino**

Dado o impacto econômico dos carapatos na pecuária, o uso de métodos de controle é essencial para melhora na produtividade da bovinocultura. Até hoje o uso de acaricidas é a principal forma de controle deste parasito (Maciel et al., 2015; Wyk et al., 2016). Entretanto, o uso desta metodologia traz consigo algumas consequências negativas, como presença de resíduos nos produtos destinados ao consumo humano (carne e leite) e também no ambiente, além de pressionar para selecionar populações de carapatos resistentes aos acaricidas utilizados (Benelli et al., 2016; Gupta et al., 2016).

Com relação à presença de resíduos na carne e leite, a presença de certos acaricidas é bastante alarmante principalmente para mulheres grávidas (Marangi et al., 2012), uma vez que a passagem de acaricidas ocorre via placenta (Doucet et al., 2009; Mariscal-Arcas et al., 2010). Além disso, a exposição de seres humanos a acaricidas está associada a diversos problemas de saúde (Kumar et al., 2010; Marangi et al., 2012).

Outro aspecto bastante relevante no uso de acaricidas, a seleção de populações de carapatos resistentes traz consigo a necessidade de desenvolvimento de novos princípios ativos à medida que aqueles em uso se tornam obsoletos. O tempo de uso de

um carrapaticida até o desenvolvimento de populações resistentes está relacionado a uma combinação de fatores genéticos, operacionais e biológicos (Abbas et al., 2014), o que torna difícil fazer previsão sobre a duração da eficiência de determinado produto químico. Independentemente do tempo necessário para o desenvolvimento de resistência, esse é um problema bastante complexo uma vez que envolve o desenvolvimento de novas moléculas capazes de atuar no controle do carapato e que simultaneamente apresentem baixa toxicidade ao animal.

Os primeiros produtos utilizados como acaricidas, no início do século XX, foram derivados arsenicais, e as primeiras populações de carapatos a eles resistentes no Brasil foram descritas em 1950 (Lovis et al., 2013). Tais substâncias foram substituídas por organoclorados e posteriormente por organofosfatos (George et al., 2004). A resistência às moléculas citadas inviabilizou sua utilização (Kunz & Kemp, 1994). Hoje, estão em uso amidinas, piretrinas/piretróides e lactonas macrocíclicas (Abbas et al., 2014), já sendo descritas populações de carapatos resistentes a estes princípios ativos.

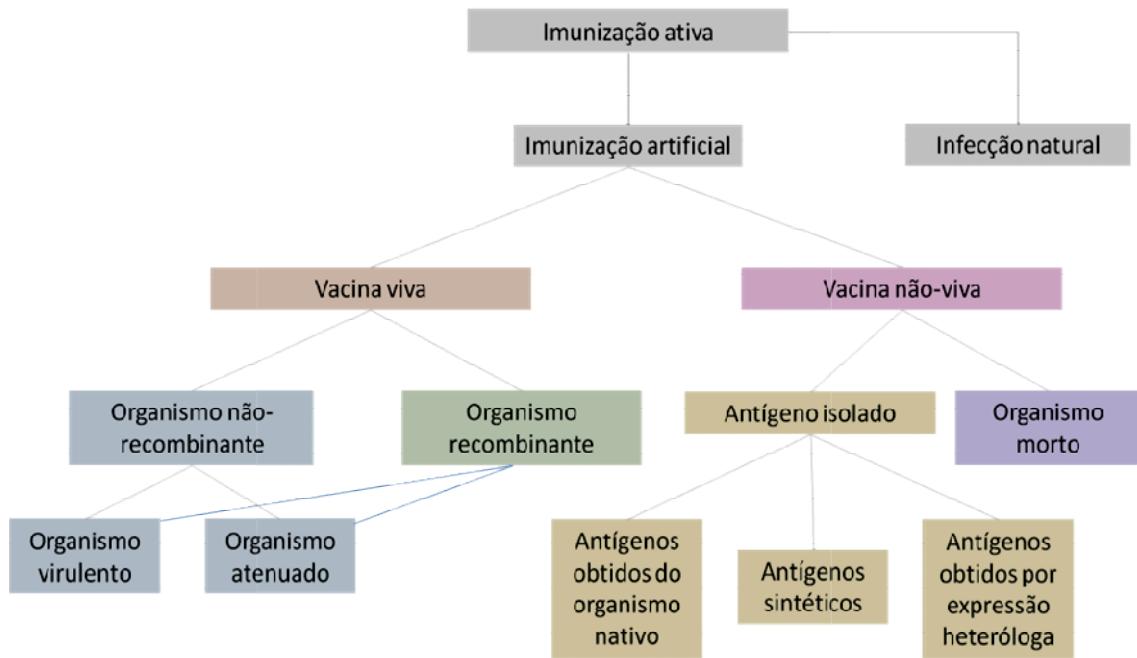
Alternativas ao uso de acaricidas para o controle de carapatos já foram propostas, e temos entre elas o controle biológico através de fungos entomopatogênicos (Murigu et al., 2016) e nematódeos (Monteiro et al., 2012), o uso de estratégias físicas de remoção dos carapatos (Manjunathachar et al., 2014) e as vacinas (de la Fuente & Contreras, 2015). No início da década de 90, vacinas contra o carapato, baseadas no antígeno BM86, foram disponibilizadas comercialmente (de la Fuente et al., 2007). O efeito de reduzir o número, peso e capacidade reprodutiva das fêmeas de carapato mostrou que as vacinas são uma alternativa viável ao uso de acaricidas, sendo a eficiência das vacinas comerciais acima citadas baseadas na capacidade do bovino de produzir anticorpos capazes de se ligar à proteína nativa do parasito, afetando sua

função e consequentemente a viabilidade do parasito (de la Fuente et al., 2016; de la Fuente & Contreras, 2015).

### **1.3 Vacinas**

São chamadas de vacinas os produtos que, quando administrados ao humano/animal, estimulam o sistema imune de forma a proteger o indivíduo vacinado contra alguma doença (Centers for Disease Control, 2014). A introdução das vacinas teve um grande impacto na saúde humana, uma vez que reduziu dramaticamente morbidade e mortalidade causadas por doenças infecciosas, sendo a vacinação considerada a segunda intervenção na saúde com melhor relação custo-benefício, ficando atrás apenas da disponibilização de água potável (Kallerup & Foged , 2015). As vacinas veterinárias têm papel muito importante no controle de zoonoses e na proteção de animais domésticos contra doenças, permitindo uma produção mais eficiente de derivados animais (Roth, 2011).

Independentemente de seu uso em humanos ou animais, as vacinas podem ser inseridas na classificação descrita na figura abaixo:



**Figura 3:** Classificação dos diferentes tipos de vacinas. Adaptado de Tizard (2012).

O advento da tecnologia do DNA recombinante, no início da década de 1980, abriu novas possibilidades para o desenvolvimento de vacinas, uma vez que daquele momento em diante tornou-se possível produzir vacinas a partir da expressão de antígenos de interesse nas quantidades necessárias por meio da clonagem em vetores heterólogos. Além disso, fez-se possível também a manipulação genética de organismos, tornando-os mais adequados para a utilização como agentes em vacinas (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012; Plotkin et al., 2012). As vacinas desenvolvidas através da manipulação genética de organismos podem ser classificadas conforme a tabela 1 abaixo:

Classificação de vacinas geneticamente modificadas	
Categoria	Descrição
I	Vacinas que contém organismos recombinantes inativados ou antígenos purificados derivados a partir de organismos recombinantes
II	Vacinas que contém organismos que apresentam deleções ou marcadores heterólogos
III	Vacinas que contém organismos recombinantes vivos atuando como vetores para expressão de genes heterólogos que atuem como antígenos durante o processo de imunização
IV	Outras vacinas geneticamente construídas, como vacinas de DNA

**Tabela 1:** Classificação dos diferentes tipos de vacinas geneticamente modificadas de acordo com o United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Adaptado de Tizard (2012).

Dentre as categorias acima descritas ressaltamos a I e a III. No primeiro caso, o uso da biologia molecular no desenvolvimento de vacinas de subunidade superou um aspecto bastante importante na obtenção dos antígenos de interesse: a limitação imposta pela disponibilidade de material. Essa característica, que muitas vezes podia se tornar um impasse para a produção de vacinas em nível comercial, foi superada pela possibilidade de uso de vetores heterólogos de expressão de proteínas (Knox et al., 2001). A categoria I é bastante importante na história das técnicas de controle do carapato bovino, uma vez que foi esse o tipo de tecnologia usado na produção das vacinas comerciais utilizadas no controle deste ectoparasito. O desenvolvimento de vacinas de vetor vivo (vacina geneticamente modificada do tipo III), por sua vez, será o foco do presente trabalho. Neste tipo de vacina, um organismo é geneticamente modificado de forma a expressar um antígeno heterólogo com atividade protetora

proveniente de um outro organismo, de forma que o organismo geneticamente modificado, vivo, atua como carreador do antígeno protetor muitas vezes capaz de se multiplicar no hospedeiro (European Medicines Agency Veterinary Medicines and Inspections, 2003; Tizard, 2012).

As vacinas utilizadas no controle do carrapato bovino (previamente citadas na página 20), se encaixam na categoria I da Tabela 1. São vacinas de subunidades que se tornariam inviáveis sem a expressão das mesmas em um organismo heterólogo. O presente trabalho aborda o desenvolvimento de uma vacina contra o carrapato que, diferentemente das vacinas comerciais e das experimentais já descritas para controle do carrapato, se trata de uma vacina de vetor vivo (categoria III Tabela 1). Para tanto, foi utilizado o protozoário intraeritrocítario *B. bovis* como vetor para produção e entrega de um antígeno de carrapato que previamente já havia mostrado níveis de proteção quando utilizado para imunização. Desta forma, a seguir será discutido o parasita intraeritrocítario a ser utilizado como vetor na formulação vacinal aqui sugerida.

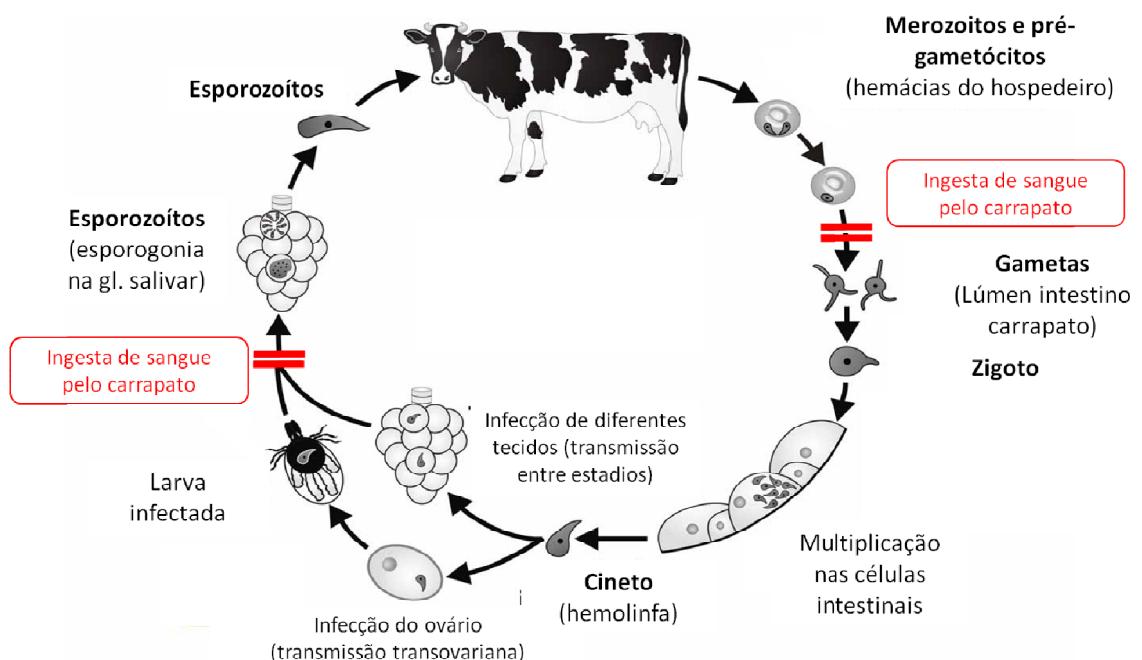
#### **1.4 O gênero *Babesia***

A babesiose é uma doença causada por parasitos intraeritrocítários do gênero *Babesia* que acomete várias espécies de animais, de forma a ser considerada uma das mais frequentes infecções sanguíneas em animais (Homer et al., 2000). Seres humanos também estão sujeitos ao desenvolvimento de babesiose (Rigaud et al., 2016), sendo esta considerada uma doença emergente devido ao aumento na sua incidência a partir de 1990 (Lobo et al., 2013). A babesiose humana é um problema para os bancos de sangue, uma vez que os indivíduos submetidos a processos de transfusão de sangue se

encontram em condições que favorecem o desenvolvimento dos parasitos (indivíduos com extremos de idade, imunossuprimidos, com hemoglobinopatias ou esplenectomizados) (Lobo et al., 2013; Ngo & Civen , 2009). No fim do século XIX, Babes verificou a presença de microorganismos em eritrócitos de bovinos afetados pela *red water fever* e relacionou pela primeira vez os parasitos que hoje conhecemos como *Babesia* spp à sintomatologia denominada hemoglobinúria dos bovinos (Uilenberg, 2006). Entre 1889 e 1893, Theobald Smith e Frederick L. Kilbourne verificaram que a transmissão da febre do texas (*texas fever*) ocorre via carapatos, e alguns anos depois foi descoberto que o agente etiológico da doença se trata também de um microorganismo do gênero hoje denominado *Babesia* (Assadian & Stanek , 2002). Tal relato de transmissão do microrganismo através de carapatos infectados foi o primeiro relato da transmissão de um protozoário por um artrópode, fato interessante para o gênero *Babesia*, onde a transmissão natural de todas as espécies até então descritas está vinculada ao carapato como vetor (Uilenberg, 2006; Assadian & Stanek, 2002).

Embora a babesiose afete uma ampla gama de animais domésticos e selvagens, a modalidade bovina tem maior relevância devido ao impacto da perda econômica (Bock et al., 2004). As principais espécies capazes de infectar bovinos são *Babesia bovis*, *Babesia bigemina* e *Babesia divergens*, entretanto as espécies *Babesia major*, *Babesia ovata*, *Babesia occultans* e *Babesia jakimovi* também podem infectá-los (World Organization for Animal Health, 2014). O ciclo de vida de *B. bovis*, organismo alvo do presente trabalho, consiste em três fases: merogonia, gamegonia e esporogonia. As fases de desenvolvimento estão esquematizadas na figura 4. A primeira fase, assexuada, gera merozoítos haploides a partir dos esporozoítos injetados na circulação do hospedeiro pelo carapato. Os merozoítos se multiplicam assexuadamente gerando os sintomas clínicos característicos da doença: febre, redução no hematocrito e apatia. Os

merozoítos podem também se diferenciar a gametócitos/gametas para iniciar a fase de gamegonia ao serem ingeridos pelo carrapato. Durante a fase de gamegonia, sexuada, gametas macho e fêmea são formados e se fusionam para a formação de um zigoto diplóide no intestino do carrapato que se desenvolve para a forma cineto, que migra para a hemolinfa infectando diversos tecidos do carrapato, entre eles ovário e glândula salivar. A invasão do ovário está relacionada com a transmissão vertical, enquanto a invasão da glândula salivar leva à esporogonia. A fase de esporogonia, assexuada, se inicia quando o cineto invade a glândula salivar do carrapato, se desenvolvendo a uma forma multinucleada chamada esporoblasto, que, por sua vez, se desenvolve a esporozoíto, haploide, o qual é injetado no hospedeiro bovino durante o processo de repasto sanguíneo, dando continuidade ao ciclo (Florin-Christensen et al., 2014; Hajdusek et al., 2013; Hunfeld et al., 2008). A figura 4 mostra uma representação gráfica do ciclo de vida de *B. bovis*.



**Figura 4:** Representação gráfica do ciclo de vida de *B. bovis* (adaptado de Hajdusek et al, 2013).

Excetuando algumas espécies, como *Babesia microti*, as demais do gênero *Babesia* são transmitidas transovarianamente, de forma que todas as fases do carrapato (larva, ninfa e adulto) são potencialmente infectivas (Howell et al., 2007a; Howell et al., 2007b; Schnittger et al., 2012). No caso de *B. microti*, a transmissão ocorre apenas transestadalmente, de forma que larvas não são potencialmente infectivas, mas como estes protozoários são transmitidos por carapatos heteroxenos (precisam de mais de um hospedeiro para completar o seu ciclo), ocorre disseminação do hemoprotzoário por meio do carrapato vetor (Hajdusek et al., 2013).

Apesar de ter sido erradicada nos Estados Unidos da América, no resto do mundo, grande parte dos 1-2 bilhões de bovinos estão expostos à babesiose bovina (Schnittger et al., 2012). Animais jovens, devido à proteção conferida pelas imunoglobulinas presentes no colostro, costumam ser mais resistentes do que animais adultos à infecção, desenvolvendo a doença de forma muito mais branda e apresentando uma taxa de recuperação mais alta, além de se tornarem resistentes às infecções por este protozoário no futuro. Em áreas onde há exposição contínua ao carrapato infectado com *B. bovis*, grande parte dos animais entra em contato desde jovem com o hemoprotzoário e desenvolve imunidade, que é reforçada a cada nova infestação por carapatos. Dessa forma, o rebanho fica protegido da doença ao longo de toda a vida. Tais regiões são denominadas "áreas de estabilidade enzoótica", definidas como regiões onde há exposição à babesia mas poucos animais apresentam sinais clínicos decorrentes do desenvolvimento da doença (Mahoney & Mirre, 1974; Smith et al., 2000). Apesar de o desenvolvimento de regiões de estabilidade enzoótica constituir uma situação interessante para a manutenção de animais, uma vez que estes são naturalmente imunizados e não desenvolvem a doença, ela apresenta alguns aspectos conflitantes,

como a impossibilidade de inserção de animais adultos não infectados no rebanho ou de inserção de um indivíduo de uma área de estabilidade enzoótica em um rebanho livre de *Babesia spp* (Florin, 2014). Regiões em que há estabilidade enzoótica podem se tornar áreas de instabilidade enzoótica, caracterizadas como regiões onde parte dos animais do rebanho não são infectados quando jovens, mesmo estando em uma região com presença de carapatos, podendo desenvolver a doença no futuro. Este último conceito é importante pois surtos de babesiose que podem acontecer em função de condições que afetem o ciclo de vida do carapato vetor, uma vez que a ausência do carapato, ou mesmo sua redução a uma quantidade que inviabilize a infecção dos animais quando estes apresentem de 3 a 9 meses de idade, torna os não infectados suscetíveis à doença (de Vos, 1979; de Waal & Combrink, 2006). A última região a ser definida é a área livre de carapatos, onde a ausência do vetor impede a circulação do patógeno (*babesia*) entre os animais, mas que estão sujeitas a surtos de babesiose caso o vetor infectado passe a circular no rebanho.

Tanto em regiões de instabilidade enzoótica como em casos de animais relocados de áreas livre de carapatos, o controle da babesiose é bastante importante, uma vez que a doença em animais adultos muitas vezes leva à morte do animal (De Vos, 1979). Para tais situações as alternativas são: o tratamento de animais que apresentem algum sinal clínico com babesiacidas (algo muitas vezes inviável em grandes rebanhos), ou a imunização profilática com microrganismos vivos (Florin-Christensen et al., 2014). Os protocolos de imunização foram iniciados com inoculação do sangue de animais infectados nos animais a serem protegidos e controle da doença desenvolvida com uso de babesiacidas (técnica denominada premunição), e hoje se baseiam no uso de vacinas vivas atenuadas, onde é mimetizada uma condição de

estabilidade enzoótica no rebanho. Abaixo, o tópico sobre uso de vacinas no controle de *B. bovis* será abordado.

#### **1.4.1 Vacinas vivas no controle de *B. bovis***

A observação de que bovinos que se recuperavam de uma infecção natural apresentavam uma proteção de longo prazo contra a doença trouxe à tona, já em fins de 1800, a ideia do desenvolvimento de vacinas utilizando o sangue de animais contendo o microrganismo vivo (Connaway & Francis, 1899). As primeiras vacinas consistiam em sangue proveniente de um bovino doador que se recuperou da doença (de Waal & Combrink, 2006). Para isso, animais que se recuperavam da doença eram mantidos separados de outros animais por várias semanas antes de seu sangue ser coletado para distribuição ou o animal todo vendido a fazendeiros que fariam a coleta de sangue em suas propriedades (Callow, 1977).

Um grande marco no desenvolvimento de vacinas para o controle de *B. bovis* ocorreu quando foi observado que a passagem rápida e sucessiva de sangue de um animal infectado para animais esplenectomizados resultava em uma progressiva redução na virulência do hemoparásita (Callow et al., 1979), levando ao desenvolvimento de uma doença mais branda. As vacinas vivas presentes em vários mercados se baseiam no uso de cepas de *B. bovis* e *B. bigemina* que foram submetidas a processos de atenuação (Florin-Christensen et al., 2014). É também descrito um procedimento de atenuação pela propagação da babesia em cultivo, mas este não é industrialmente utilizado (Shkap et al., 2007; Yunker et al., 1987). Independente do procedimento utilizado para atenuação o mecanismo responsável pelo desenvolvimento do fenótipo menos patogênico ainda é desconhecido (Lau et al., 2011). Com o uso de cepas menos

patogênicas é possível realizar a imunização de animais adultos, entretanto, a imunização deve ser preferencialmente feita em animais jovens (Bock et al., 2004).

O uso corriqueiro do microrganismo *B. bovis* em uma vacina viva faz com que este seja um candidato como plataforma para a implementação de uma vacina de vetor vivo, uma vez que os animais serão submetidos a uma infecção por uma espécie já tradicionalmente utilizada em procedimentos de vacinação. O desenvolvimento de técnica de transfecção de material genético exógeno estável no genoma de *B. bovis* (Suarez & McElwain, 2009) trouxe uma ferramenta para a produção de cepas vacinais geneticamente modificadas para produção de vacinas atenuadas (já que reduziria o risco de reversão da patogenicidade), bem como para a produção de cepas vacinais capazes de expressar proteínas heterólogas que possam ser utilizadas como antígenos vacinais protetores contra outros parasitos parasitos (Suarez & Noh, 2011).

De qualquer forma, independentemente do tipo de vacina que se deseje desenvolver (vacina viva atenuada recombinante ou vacina de vetor vivo recombinante) é importante que a característica recebida seja mantida e propagada à progênie. Desta forma, a técnica a ser utilizada deverá levar à integração recombinação homóloga do material exógeno ao DNA hospedeiro. Evento que efetivamente ocorre ao se utilizar a técnica de transfecção estável desenvolvida por Suarez & McElwain (2009). No presente trabalho, parasitos em cultura foram submetidos a esta técnica de transfecção por eletroporação em busca da obtenção de organismos onde o processo de recombinação homóloga do DNA exógeno (codificando o antígeno protetor) ao genoma de *B. bovis* tenha ocorrido.

#### **1.4.2 Transfecção em *B. bovis***

O procedimento de transformação/transfecção é uma importante ferramenta para o estudo da análise funcional de genes. Este processo pode ser classificado em transintório ou estável (Morgenstem & Land, 1990). No primeiro caso, o novo material genético não é replicado pelo organismo hospedeiro, de forma que a capacidade de produzir o produto estipulado por este gene ocorre por um período finito de tempo, uma vez que o DNA exógeno é perdido nas divisões celulares. Apesar de ser uma técnica bastante interessante para o estudo de função gênica, ela não é vantajosa em se tratando de desenvolvimento de um organismo com intuito vacinal, onde é necessário que a característica adquirida se perpetue para as células-filha. Nesta situação, o ideal é a utilização do processo de transfecção estável, onde o gene exógeno passa a fazer parte do genoma hospedeiro e desta forma é também replicado (Smith, 2013). No processo de transfecção estável a inserção do DNA exógeno no DNA genômico pode ocorrer via recombinação homóloga. Esse mecanismo permite o intercâmbio de informação genética entre duas sequências de DNA quase idênticas, e apresenta um papel evolutivo importante na evolução, conferindo variabilidade ao genoma (Kong et al., 2013). O mecanismo de recombinação homóloga atua também como um importante mecanismo de reparo de danos ao DNA (Li & Heyer, 2008). Em ambos os casos acima descritos o processo de recombinação traz importantes vantagens ao organismo, entretanto, este processo pode também levar a translocações cromossomais, deleções e inversões (Carvalho & Lupski , 2016).

Manipular o genoma de um parasito intracelular é complexo, uma vez que várias membranas precisam ser transpostas para se ter acesso ao DNA genômico (Carvalho & Menard, 2005). Em apicomplexa, foram desenvolvidos sistemas de transfecção para algumas espécies de quatro gêneros distintos (Hakimi et al., 2016): *Plasmodium* (Skinner-Adams et al., 2003), *Toxoplasma* (Weiss & Kim, 2013), *Theileria* (De Goeyse

et al., 2015) e *Babesia* (Suarez & McElwain, 2010). Com relação à *Babesia* sp, são poucos os relatos de utilização da transfecção estável, quatro no total, apresentados na tabela 2 abaixo.

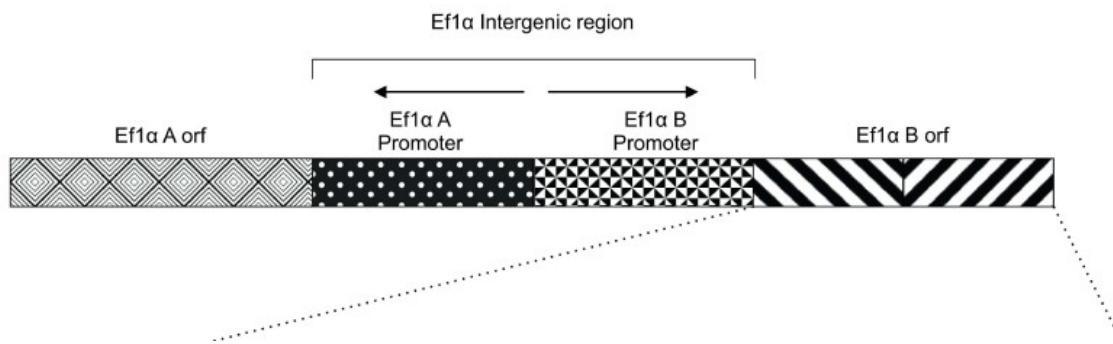
**Tabela 2:** Uso da técnica de transfecção estável em *Babesia* sp.

Espécie	Sistema de seleção	Sítio de direcionamento da inserção	Autor e ano de publicação
<i>B. bovis</i>	Blasticidina Deaminase	Fator de alongamento	Suarez et al., 2009, 2012, 2015
<i>B. bovis</i>	Duplo Blasticidina Deaminase + Dihidrofolato redutase	Tioredoxina peroxidase	Asada et al., 2015
<i>B. bovis</i>	Blasticidina Deaminase	Fator de alongamento	Laughery et al., 2014
<i>B. ovata</i>	Dihidrofolato redutase	Fator de alongamento	Hakimi et al., 2016

A técnica de transfecção é bastante recente para *B. bovis* e pode ser uma ferramenta-chave para o estudo de genes cuja função ainda é desconhecida e que foram identificados com base no sequenciamento do genoma deste microrganismo (Suarez & McElwain, 2010), a translocação permite a caracterização funcional de genes e de seus mecanismos de regulação via estratégias de *knock out* e análise de fenótipos de perda de função com ou sem posterior complementação do gene deletado. Desta forma, o processo de transfecção pode ser uma ferramenta de grande valia para o desenvolvimento de novas técnicas de controle de *B. bovis*, seja pelo desenvolvimento de novas vacinas a partir de linhagens atenuadas por meio de *knock out* de fatores de virulência, ou mesmo para o desenvolvimento de vacinas de subunidades (Suarez & McElwain, 2010). Outros potenciais usos da técnica de transfecção são a adição de marcadores genéticos que permitam a diferenciação de animais vacinados de animais naturalmente infectados, e o uso de *Babesia* spp como vetores para antígenos heterólogos como vacina de vetor vivo, visando a uma estimulação de longo prazo ao sistema imune do bovino (Suarez & McElwain, 2010). Esse último caso é tratado no

presente trabalho, onde foi desenvolvida uma vacina de vetor vivo contra o carrapato *R. microplus*, utilizando uma linhagem recombinante de *B. bovis* como plataforma de entrega de um antígeno protetor.

Considerando que para o desenvolvimento de uma linhagem recombinante é necessário que a inserção não seja deletéria, o sítio de inserção deve ser cuidadosamente selecionado. Nos trabalhos de Suarez e colaboradores (2009, 2012, 2015), o sítio de inserção selecionado para a expressão de moléculas heterólogas é a região decodificadora do fator de alongamento 1 alfa (*elongation factor 1 alfa* – EF-1 $\alpha$ ). EF-1 $\alpha$  é uma proteína altamente expressa em células eucarióticas (Slobin, 1980), sendo constitutivamente transcrita por ser uma proteína chave no mecanismo de tradução (Merrick, 1992). A estrutura da região codificadora de *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  locus consiste em duas fases abertas de leitura (*open reading frame* – ORF) arranjadas de forma cabeça-cabeça e separadas por uma região de 1,4 kb que constitui o promotor para ambas as ORFs (Suarez et al, 2006). A estrutura do locus *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  está esquematizada na figura um do artigo “*Transfected Babesia bovis expressing a tick GST as a live vector vaccine*”, incluído como parte desta tese, e será reproduzida aqui como figura 5 de forma a facilitar a compreensão da estrutura do locus *EF-1 $\alpha$* . A inserção é direcionada para a região B (Figura 5), e mesmo com a eficiente integração no genoma, a região idêntica A supre a necessidade de expressão do fator de alongamento, gerando parasitos viáveis, capazes de se multiplicar em cultura e de causar infecção em bovinos (Suarez et al., 2012).



**Figura 5:** Representação gráfica dos locais de inserção para o processo de recombinação. O promotor bidirecional e as ORFs de EF1 $\alpha$  e EF1 $\beta$  estão representadas na parte superior da imagem. As linhas pontilhadas representam o local onde se direciona a inserção do DNA exógeno. Setas indicam o sentido da transcrição. Figura adaptada do artigo anexado à presente tese de doutorado.

**Fig 1. Map of the *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  gene structure and the *pMSASignal-HGST-GFP-BSD* plasmid.** The bidirectional promoter and orfs of *Ef1 $\alpha$ -A* and *B* are represented in the upper part of the panel. The dotted lines indicate the targeted site for insertion of the transfected sequences into the genome of the *B. bovis*. Arrows indicate the direction of transcription. The location of restriction sites of interest are also described in the figure.

#### 1.4.3 Seleção do antígeno

No presente trabalho a proteína escolhida para expressão pelo vetor vivo e atuação como antígeno no bovino é uma glutationa S-transferase (GST) de *Haemaphysalis longicornis*. As GST são um grupo de enzimas que participam de processos de detoxificação intracelular (Hayes et al., 1992; Sheehan et al., 2001), onde catalisam a conjugação de glutationa reduzida (GSH) a uma ampla gama de moléculas xenobióticas ou fisiologicamente produzidas (Fang, 2012). GST de diversas espécies já foram testadas em formulações vacinais para controle de vários parasitos, entre eles *Necator americanus* (Bottazzi, 2015), *Schistosoma japonicum* (Zhu et al., 2012), *Schistosoma mansoni* (Xu et al., 1993), *Trichinella spiralis* (Li et al., 2015), *Wuchereria bancrofti* (Veerapathran et al., 2009) e também contra o carapato *R. microplus* (Parizi et al., 2011; Parizi et al., 2012), gerando diferentes graus de proteção. Para formular uma vacina contra o carapato *R. microplus* foi escolhida uma

GST de *H. longicornis* (HlGST) pois a GST ortóloga de *R. microplus* (rBmGST) foi menos imunogênica quando testada em camundongos (Comunicação pessoal).

Bovinos vacinados com rHlGST apresentaram uma proteção de 57% em comparação com o grupo controle (Parizi et al., 2011) quando desafiados contra larvas de *R. microplus*. Em outro trabalho uma vacina contendo rHlGST e outros 2抗ígenos foi responsável por conferir uma diminuição de 58% no número de carrapatos que se desenvolveram nos animais imunizados (Parizi et al., 2012). Um achado importante desse trabalho foi que os bovinos imunizados tiveram um ganho de peso maior do que o ganho de peso dos animais controle (Parizi et al, 2012). Essas demonstrações de que a rHlGST confere proteção suportam a decisão de inserir a região codificadora desse antígeno em *B. bovis* para desenvolver uma vacina de vetor vivo para proteção de bovinos contra *R. microplus*.

## **2. OBJETIVOS**

O presente trabalho teve como objetivo desenvolver uma linhagem de *B. bovis* atenuada capaz de expressar um antígeno heterólogo protetor para uso como vacina de vetor vivo contra o carrapato bovino *R. microplus*. Neste contexto, os objetivos específicos foram:

- Construir um vetor contendo a sequência codificadora do antígeno protetor contra *R. microplus* para transfecção estável em *B. bovis*;
- Obter uma linhagem clonal de *B. bovis* capaz de expressar o antígeno protetor, *in vitro*;
- Verificar se a linhagem clonal obtida é capaz de infectar o hospedeiro (bovino);
- Verificar se as características da linhagem clonal obtida são mantidas após a multiplicação do parasito *in vivo* (no bovino);
- Verificar se há produção de anticorpos reativos contra o antígeno protetor no soro de animais imunizados com a linhagem clonal capaz de expressar o antígeno protetor;
- Verificar se animais imunizados com a linhagem clonal capaz de expressar o antígeno protetor apresentam proteção contra a infestação por *R. microplus*.

### **3. PARTE EXPERIMENTAL & RESULTADOS**

Esta seção está organizada na forma de um artigo científico que compreende a descrição do trabalho experimental da tese desenvolvida durante o período de execução do doutorado. O artigo apresentado a seguir descrito foi publicado no periódico PLOS Neglected Diseases.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Transfected *Babesia bovis* Expressing a Tick GST as a Live Vector Vaccine

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## Abstract

The *Rhipicephalus microplus* tick is a notorious blood-feeding ectoparasite of livestock, especially cattle, responsible for massive losses in animal production. It is the main vector for transmission of pathogenic bacteria and parasites, including *Babesia bovis*, an intraerythrocytic apicomplexan protozoan parasite responsible for bovine Babesiosis. This study describes the development and testing of a live *B. bovis* vaccine expressing the protective tick antigen glutathione-S-transferase from *Haemaphysalis longicornis* (HIGST). The *B. bovis* S74-T3B parasites were electroporated with a plasmid containing the bidirectional *Ef-1α* (*elongation factor 1 alpha*) promoter of *B. bovis* controlling expression of two independent genes, the selectable marker *GFP-BSD* (*green fluorescent protein–blasticidin deaminase*), and *HIGST* fused to the *MSA-1* (*merozoite surface antigen 1*) signal peptide from *B. bovis*. Electroporation followed by blasticidin selection resulted in the emergence of a mixed *B. bovis* transfected line (termed HIGST) in *in vitro* cultures, containing parasites with distinct patterns of insertion of both exogenous genes, either in or outside the *Ef-1α* locus. A *B. bovis* clonal line termed HIGST-Cln expressing intracellular GFP and HIGST in the surface of merozoites was then derived from the mixed parasite line HIGST using a fluorescent activated cell sorter. Two independent calf immunization trials were performed via intravenous inoculation of the HIGST-Cln and a previously described control consisting of an irrelevant transfected clonal line of *B. bovis* designated GFP-Cln. The control GFP-Cln line contains a copy of the *GFP-BSD* gene inserted into the *Ef-1α* locus of *B. bovis* in an identical fashion as the HIGST-Cln parasites. All animals inoculated with the HIGST-Cln and GFP-Cln transfected parasites developed mild babesiosis. Tick egg fertility and fully engorged female tick weight was reduced significantly in *R. microplus* feeding on HIGST-Cln-immunized calves. Collectively, these data show the efficacy of a transfected HIGST-Cln *B. bovis* parasite to induce detectable anti-glutathione-S-transferase antibodies and a reduction in tick size and fecundity of *R. microplus* feeding in experimentally inoculated animals.

study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

**Competing Interests:** The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

## Author Summary

The cattle tick *Rhipicephalus microplus* is a hematophagous ectoparasite, responsible for the transmission of lethal parasites such as *Babesia* sp, limiting cattle production in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. There is an urgent emerging need for improved methods of control for these currently neglected tick and tick borne diseases. It is hypothesized that a dual attenuated-live vector vaccine containing a stably transfected tick antigen elicits protective immune responses against the parasite and the tick vector in vaccinated cattle. Live *Babesia* vaccines based on attenuated parasites are the only effective method available for preventing acute babesiosis. On the other hand, glutathione-S-transferase from *Haemaphysalis longicornis* (HlGST) is a known effective antigen against *Rhipicephalus microplus*, the most common vector for *B. bovis*. This study describes the development and testing of a transfected, *B. bovis* vaccine expressing HlGST against the tick *R. microplus*. A *B. bovis* clonal line designated HlGST-Cln expressing HlGST and GFP/BSD, and separately a control transfected *B. bovis* clonal line expressing only GFP/BSD was used to vaccinate calves in two independent experiments. All immunized calves developed mild babesiosis, and only calves immunized with the HlGST-Cln parasite line generated anti-HlGST antibodies. Tick egg fertility and fully engorged female tick weight were reduced significantly in *R. microplus* feeding on HlGST-Cln-vaccinated calves. Taken together, these data demonstrates the ability of transfected *B. bovis* to elicit antibodies against a heterologous tick antigen in cattle and to induce partial protection in the vaccinated animals against the cattle tick for the first time, representing a step toward the goal to produce a live vector anti-tick vaccine.

## Introduction

The cattle tick *Rhipicephalus microplus* is a hematophagous ectoparasite limiting cattle production in tropical and subtropical regions of the world [1–4]. Methods to lessen the impact of *R. microplus* are based almost exclusively on the use of several chemical acaricides, including arsenics, organophosphorus, carbamates, chlorinated hydrocarbons, pyrethroids, macrocyclic lactones and benzoyl phenyl ureas [5]. However, this approach generates undesired consequences such as the selection of acaricide resistant tick populations and contamination of the environment and animal products [6,7]. In this scenario, alternative tick control methods, such as vaccination, are increasingly needed [8,9].

Tick vaccines for the control of cattle tick infestations such as TickGARD and Gavac [10,11] became commercially available in the early 1990's, and are both derived from the *R. microplus* midgut membrane-bound recombinant protein Bm86. However, none of the Bm86 derived vaccines are consistently efficient worldwide and the need for new tick vaccines remains [12,13]. Consequently, a growing number of *R. microplus* vaccine candidate tick proteins have been identified and evaluated, including Bm86 orthologues and homologs [14–16], tick salivary proteins [17], embryo enzymes [18,19], ribosomal protein [20], and detoxification molecules [21,22], among others.

The glutathione-S-transferases are a class of enzymes involved in detoxification of electrophilic substrates by their conjugation with glutathione [23]. GSTs from distinct species have been investigated as vaccine candidates against several parasites, such as *Necator americanus* [24], *Schistosoma japonicum* [24,25], *Schistosoma mansoni* [26], *Trichinella spiralis* [27], and *Wuchereria bancrofti* [28]. The use of GST in experimental vaccines resulted in variable degrees of protection against the targeted parasites, demonstrating their potential for

generating protective immunity [29]. Furthermore, an experimental tick vaccine based on recombinant *Haemaphysalis longicornis* glutathione-S-transferase (HlGST) [30] elicited partially protective responses in bovines against *R. microplus* [21,22]. An additional striking and positive feature of HlGST vaccination was an increase in cattle weight gain in comparison to control animals [22].

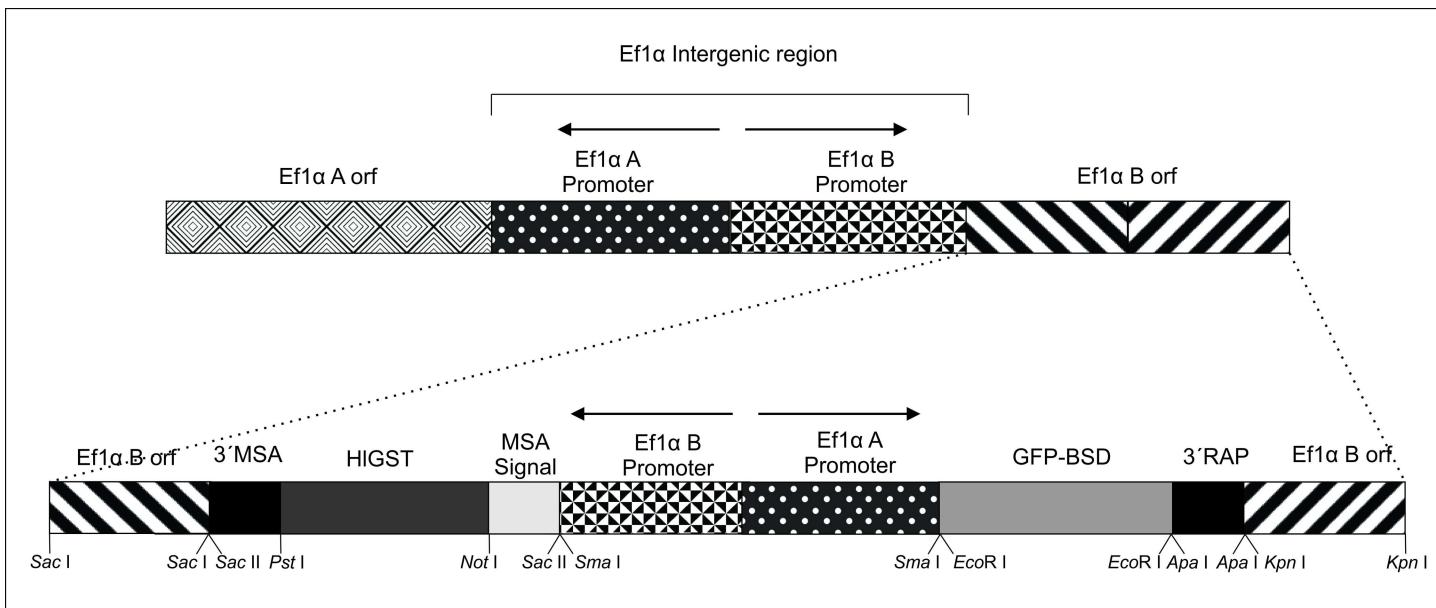
The impact generated by *R. microplus* on cattle health is dual, in part due to a direct effect of attachment and blood ingestion [31], and due to the high morbidity and mortality caused by the numerous pathogens transmitted by this tick, including *Babesia* spp. and *Anaplasma* spp [7,32]. Bovine babesiosis is an acute and chronic disease caused by protozoan parasites of the genus *Babesia*, including *B. bovis* and *B. bigemina* [33]. If natural exposure to *Babesia* occurs at an early age, cattle normally develop subclinical disease and become immune to subsequent homologous parasite challenge as adults [34]. In contrast, exposure of *Babesia*-naive adult animals usually results in fatal acute disease [35]. Several vaccination procedures based on attenuated strains are available and commonly used as control methods to prevent acute *Babesia* infections in several countries [2,36]. Vaccination with live attenuated *B. bovis* strains usually results in mild acute and persistent infections in vaccinated calves, and the elicitation of strong immune responses conferring long-term protection against challenge with homologous and heterologous strains of the parasite [2]. Despite the risk of reversion of virulence, an important safety issue in live vaccines, *B. bovis* live attenuated vaccines have now been safely used as field vaccines, without reversion to virulence [37,38].

Efficient transfection methods, which allow the incorporation and expression of foreign DNA into a parasite host genome, have been developed for *B. bovis*, and can also be applied to vaccine development. It was previously proposed that a transfected *B. bovis* expressing heterologous parasite proteins can be used as carriers to deliver selected antigens to the bovine immune system [39]. Clearly, transfection methods together with other related gene editing tools allow production of specifically designed strains for developing alternative and better defined attenuated *B. bovis* strains [1], and live vector vaccines effective against other parasites [2]. Ideally, such foreign antigen delivery platforms could be applied for developing dual *Babesia* and tick vaccines by producing a *B. bovis* strain able to synthesize a tick protein that induces anti-tick immune responses during cattle infection as well as the expected anti-babesia immune response [2,39]. However the ability of transfected *B. bovis* parasites to serve as vaccine delivery platforms remains so far an untested approach. This study describes the development and testing of a recombinant *B. bovis* strain able to express the tick protein HlGST and its ability to protect against a tick challenge. The results represent a step toward the goal of producing a live vectored anti-tick vaccine.

## Results

### *B. bovis* transfection and molecular characterization of transfected parasites

The transfection plasmid *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* is represented in Fig 1. The “B” expression site of plasmid *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* contains a chimeric gene *MSA1-HlGST* encoding a 21 amino acid fragment of the *B. bovis* MSA-1 protein corresponding to the signal peptide fused to a 672-bp fragment encoding the 222 amino-acids of the full size HlGST protein of *H. longicornis* (Fig 1). Plasmid *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* also includes the *GFP-BSD* selectable marker fusion gene cloned upstream of the *Ef-1α* IG region on the “A” promoter side, and flanking 5' and 3' *Ef-1α* ORF sequences to facilitate integration of the two exogenous genes and the bidirectional *Ef-1α* promoter into the *Ef-1α* locus of the *B. bovis* genome [45,49] (Fig 1).

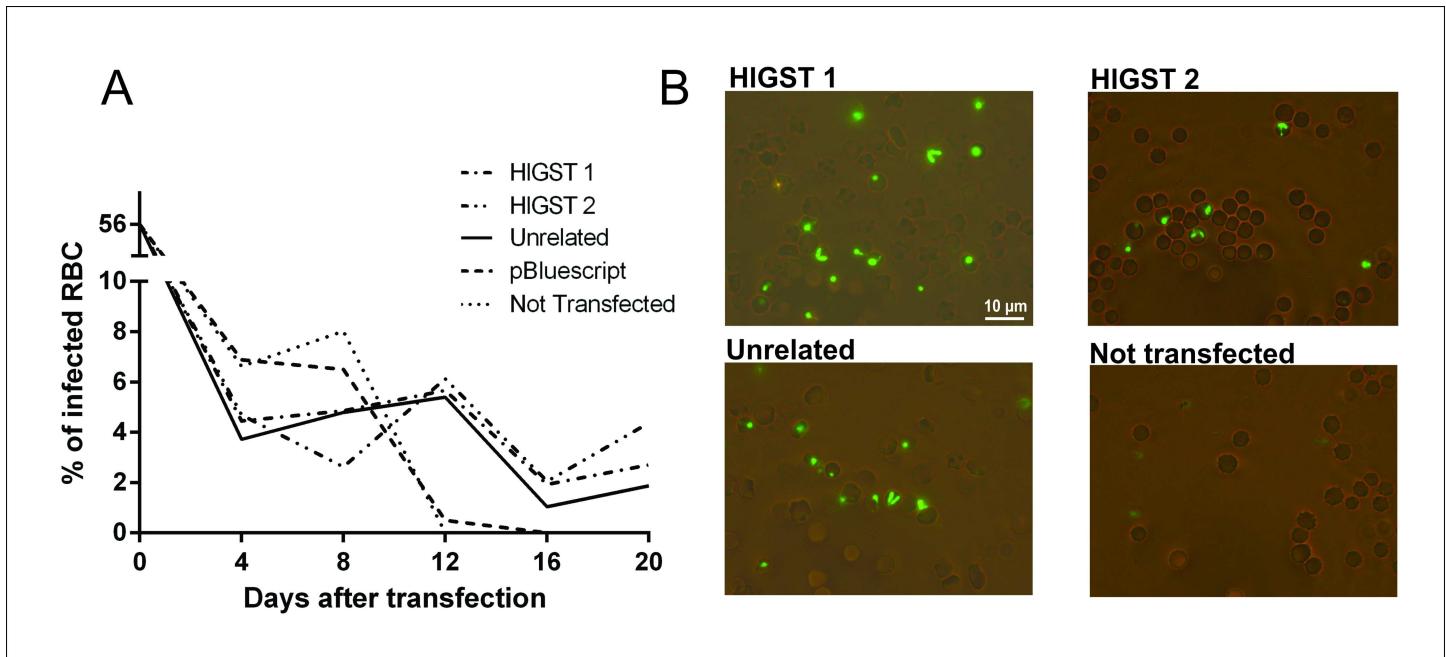


**Fig 1. Map of the *Ef-1α* gene structure and the *pMSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD* plasmid.** The bidirectional promoter and orfs of *Ef-1α*-A and B are represented in the upper part of the panel. The dotted lines indicate the targeted site for insertion of the transfected sequences into the genome of the *B. bovis*. Arrows indicate the direction of transcription. The location of restriction sites of interest are also described in the figure.

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*Babesia bovis* T3B parasites were electroporated with plasmids *pMSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD*, and control plasmids *pEf-msa-1-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd* [39] or *pBlueScript* (*pBS*). Blasticidin resistant parasites electroporated with plasmid *pEf-msa-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd*, designated Tf-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd, or plasmid *pMSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD*, termed HIGST, emerged in *in vitro* cultures starting 16 days after electroporation (Fig 2A). Expression of green fluorescent protein (GFP) was evident upon fluorescence microscopy in both emerging blasticidin-resistant parasite lines (Fig 2B). Transfected fluorescent parasites were also used to verify evasion of parasites from infected RBCs (S1 video). In addition, simultaneous production of the reporter (GFP) and the tick protein (HIGST) by the *pMSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD* transfected parasites, termed HIGST, was confirmed by RT-PCR and Western blot analysis (Fig 3A and 3B). The RT-PCR amplifications demonstrated transcription of both *GFP-BSD* and *HIGST* genes in the HIGST parasites maintained in culture (Fig 3A, line 1 and 2). Consistently, *GFP-BSD* but not *HIGST* transcripts were detected in the transfected control parasite line Tf-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd (Fig 3A, line 3 of GFP-BSD and GFP boxes), and no *GFP-BSD* nor *HIGST* transcripts were detectable in non-transfected, non-blasticidin selected parasites (Fig 3A, line 4 of GFP-BSD and HIGST boxes). Also, *RAP-1* (rhoptry-associated protein 1) transcripts were detected in all parasite lines tested, and no transcripts were detected when transfection plasmids were used as template in the RT-PCR reactions (Fig 3A). Additionally anti-HIGST rabbit antibodies specifically recognize a protein of approximately 30 kDa, a size which is consistent with the predicted size of the MSASignal-HIGST chimera, only in the HIGST transfected parasites in immunoblots (Fig 3B, lines 1 and 2). An approximately 42 kDa band was detected in all *B. bovis* culture lysates when the blots were incubated with a control monoclonal antibody against the merozoite surface antigen-1 (MSA-1) from *B. bovis* (Fig 3B).

Integration into the *Ef-1α* locus was tested by sequencing PCR amplicons derived from HIGST-transfected parasite gDNA. The PCR primers for these experiments were designed to amplify regions that include both exogenous DNA insert and a *B. bovis* genomic region lying



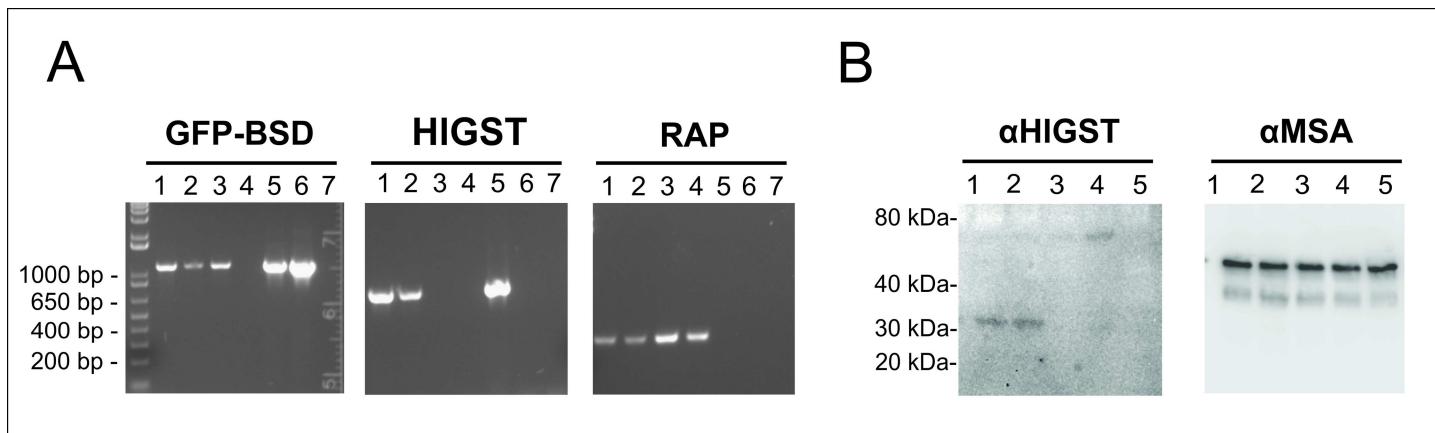
**Fig 2. Characterization of transfected parasites.** Two lines of transfected parasites HIGST1 and HIGST2 were generated by transfection of the T3B strain of *B. bovis* with plasmid *pMSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD* and analyzed in these experiments A) Comparison of the growth curves of non-transfected, control transfected (negative control electroporated with plasmid *pBS*, and unrelated positive control electroporated with plasmid *pEf-msa-1-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd*), and two lines of parasites electroporated with *pMSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD* (HIGST1 and HIGST2) after electroporation in the presence inhibitory doses of blasticidin. Blasticidin resistant parasites emerge ~16 days after the onset of selection only in the wells containing parasites electroporated with the *pMSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD* and *pEf-msa-1-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd* plasmids. B) Fluorescence microscopy of transfected parasites of the HIGST line (HIGST1 and 2, Upper panels), control GFP-*B. bovis* line (Unrelated) and non-transfected parasites (Lower panels).

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adjacent to the *Ef-1α* locus (Fig 4, EF-GST and GFP-EF boxes). Identical PCR reactions performed on gDNA from non-transfected *B. bovis* or transfection plasmid *pBm86ep-gfp-bsd* did not result in the production of any amplification product. Sequence analysis of the PCR products demonstrated insertion of the foreign transfected genes in the targeted *Ef-1α* locus (GenBank accession number: KX021742).

### Cloning of transfected parasites

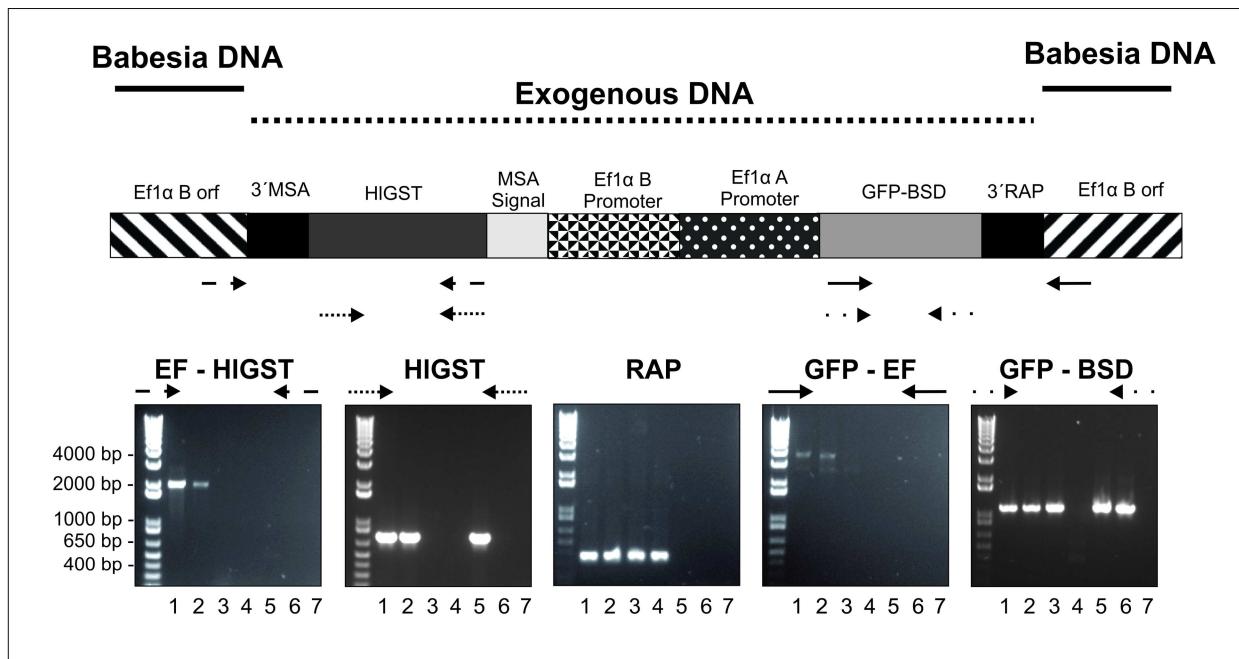
Stable transfection experiments using a transfection plasmid containing the *RFP* and *eGFP* genes (*pEf-eGFP-RFP-BSD*, S1 File) using identical plasmid architecture as plasmid *pMSA-Signal-HIGST-GFP-BSD* (S1A Fig), indicated that the plasmid design used to obtain the transfected HIGST parasites can be stably incorporated into the *Ef-1α* locus of transfected parasites using distinct alternative patterns of insertion. Fluorescence analysis indicates that some of the distinct patterns of insertion preclude the expression of both transfected genes (*GFP* and *RFP-BSD*) by all transfected parasites (S1 Fig). These data confirmed that the stably transfected parasite line HIGST is composed by a mix of parasite subpopulations containing distinct pattern of exogenous gene integration, with some transfected parasites lacking or unable to express the *MSA-1-HIGST* gene. The presence of such a heterologous parasite line composition can interfere with further *in vivo* infection studies, which ideally requires of a homogeneous parasite population expressing both exogenous genes. Based on these observations, the HIGST-transfected culture was then submitted to a cloning procedure using a FACS method [41] in order to obtain a transfected clonal line containing and expressing both, the *GFP-BSD*



**Fig 3. HIGST expression in transfected parasites.** A) RT-PCR to detect transcripts of GFP-BSD, GST, and RAP as constitutive control. Lane 1: HIGST1 transfected *B. bovis*. Lane 2: HIGST2 transfected *B. bovis*. Lane 3: unrelated (GFP) transfected control *B. bovis*. Lane 4: non-transfected control *B. bovis*. Lane 5: MSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD plasmid. Lane 6: unrelated transfection control plasmid. Lane 7: negative control. B) Western Blot analysis on transfected parasites using αGST and αMSA-1 antibodies. Lane 1: HIGST1 transfected *B. bovis*. Lane 2: HIGST2 transfected *B. bovis*. Lane 3: unrelated transfected control *B. bovis*. Lane 4: unrelated (GFP) transfected control *B. bovis*. Lane 5: non-transfected control *B. bovis*.

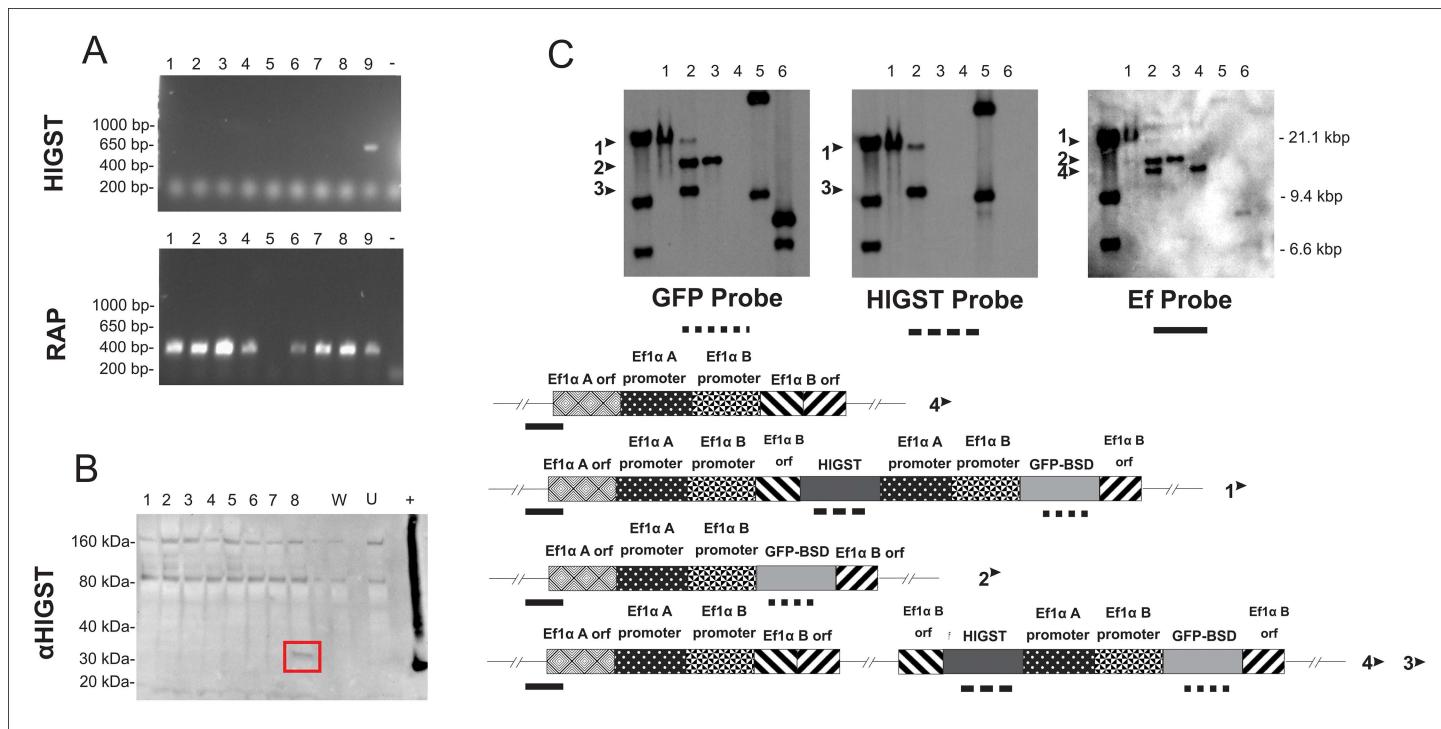
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and *HIGST* genes. Screening of *in vitro* cultures derived from FACS separated cells using a PCR based on the amplification of the *rap-1* gene, identified eight *rap-1* positive culture wells out of the total of 192 wells analyzed (S2 Fig). However, whereas RT-PCR analysis was performed on RNA extracted from the eight *rap-1* positive wells, *rap-1* transcripts were detected



**Fig 4. Integration PCR analysis.** Upper panel: Representation of the genome area including the transfected genes integrated into the genome of HIGST-Cln *B. bovis*. The localization of the regions hybridizing with the primers used in PCR is represented in the map by arrows. Primers were used for the amplification of EF-GST, HIGST, RAP-1, GFP-EF and GFP/BSD. Lower Panel: Agarose gel analysis of the PCR amplification products: Lane 1: HIGST 1 transfected *B. bovis* line; lane 2: HIGST 2 transfected *B. bovis*; lane 3: unrelated (GFP) transfected control *B. bovis*; lane 4: non-transfected *B. bovis*; lane 5: MSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD plasmid; lane 6: unrelated transfection control plasmid; lane 7: negative no DNA control.

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**Fig 5. Analysis of the *B. bovis* transfected clonal lines.** Panel A: RT-PCR amplifications designed for the detection of HIGST and RAP transcripts. A single clonal line (#9) termed HIGST-cln, was able to produce both GST and RAP transcripts. Line 1 to 8: *B. bovis* cloned strains, -: negative control, +: positive control. B) Western blot using rabbit serum anti-HIGST to confirm HIGST expression by cloned parasites, confirming the presence of HIGST expression by cell line HIGST-cln (#9) (Red box). Line 1 to 8: cloned *B. bovis* strains, W: not transfected parasites, U: unrelated control, +: positive control with recombinant protein produced in *E. coli*. C) Southern blot analysis performed on *B. bovis* gDNA extracted from HIGST-Cln, HIGST and GFP-Cln *B. bovis*. Line 1: GST clonal strain; line 2: GST parent (mixed) population; line 3: GFP control strain; line 4: not transfected parasites; line 5: MSASignal-HIGST-GFP-BSD plasmid; line 6: GFP control plasmid. The arrows marked 1, 2, 3 and 4 represent the distinct hybridizing fragments identified. These fragments are graphically represented in the lower part of the panel C. Each fragment is described in a simplified map of the sequence, and an identifying number on their sides. The parallel bars showed on the sides of each fragment map represent the region digested by *Bgl*II. Lines under the maps in panel C represent the probes used, and the site of binding of the probe on the tested DNA. The dotted line represents the GST probe, the dashed line the GFP-BSD probe, and the continuous line, the EF probe.

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in seven of the eight wells (Fig 5A), while HIGST transcripts concurrent with *rap-1* transcripts, were detectable in just a single FACS-separated parasite clonal line (Fig 5A), which was expanded and termed HIGST-Cln. Analysis of Clone 5 was not included on Fig 5B, since the cultured parasites were lost before characterization. Importantly, expression of HIGST in HIGST-Cln parasites was also confirmed by Western blot analysis using anti-HIGST antibodies (Fig 5B). Taken together, these results confirmed the occurrence of a mixed parasite population in the transfected parasite line HIGST which was submitted to FACS sorting, and the ensuing isolation of the clonal line HIGST-Cln able to express the GFP-BSD and the HIGST genes simultaneously.

Analysis of the pattern of insertion of the transfected HIGST and GFP-BSD genes in the HIGST-Cln line was performed by Southern blot and PCR. Intact and *Bgl*II digested gDNA extracted from the lines HIGST, HIGST-Cln, GFP-Cln [41] and non-transfected, were analyzed by Southern blots hybridized with GFP, HIGST, and *Ef-1α* specific dig-labeled probes. The Southern blot data, shown in Fig 5C, indicates that there is only one fragment recognized by all tested probes in the HIGST-Cln line, suggesting the presence of a homogenous parasite population containing a single copy of the exogenous HIGST and GFP-BSD genes inserted into the expected *Ef-1α* locus. Both GFP and HIGST probes hybridized with the transfection

plasmid but did not hybridized with any *Bg*III digested DNA from non-transfected parasites, confirming the specificity of the probes to the exogenous DNA. However, the GFP probe recognized at least three distinct types of DNA fragments derived from gDNA of the HIGST parasite line. These three distinct patterns of hybridization, named 1, 2, and 3, may be due to the presence of a homogeneous population with multiple insertions, or from a mixed population containing distinct types of insertion. Importantly, the expected 19.3 kb fragment equivalent to the insertion of the exogenous material to the elongation factor region (fragment 1) was also present. Yet, the HIGST labeled probe recognized only two DNA fragments, named 1 and 3, in the *Bg*III digested gDNA derived from the HIGST parasites (mixed population), suggesting the presence of at least one subpopulation of transfected parasites containing only the *GFP-BSD*, but not the *HIGST* gene.

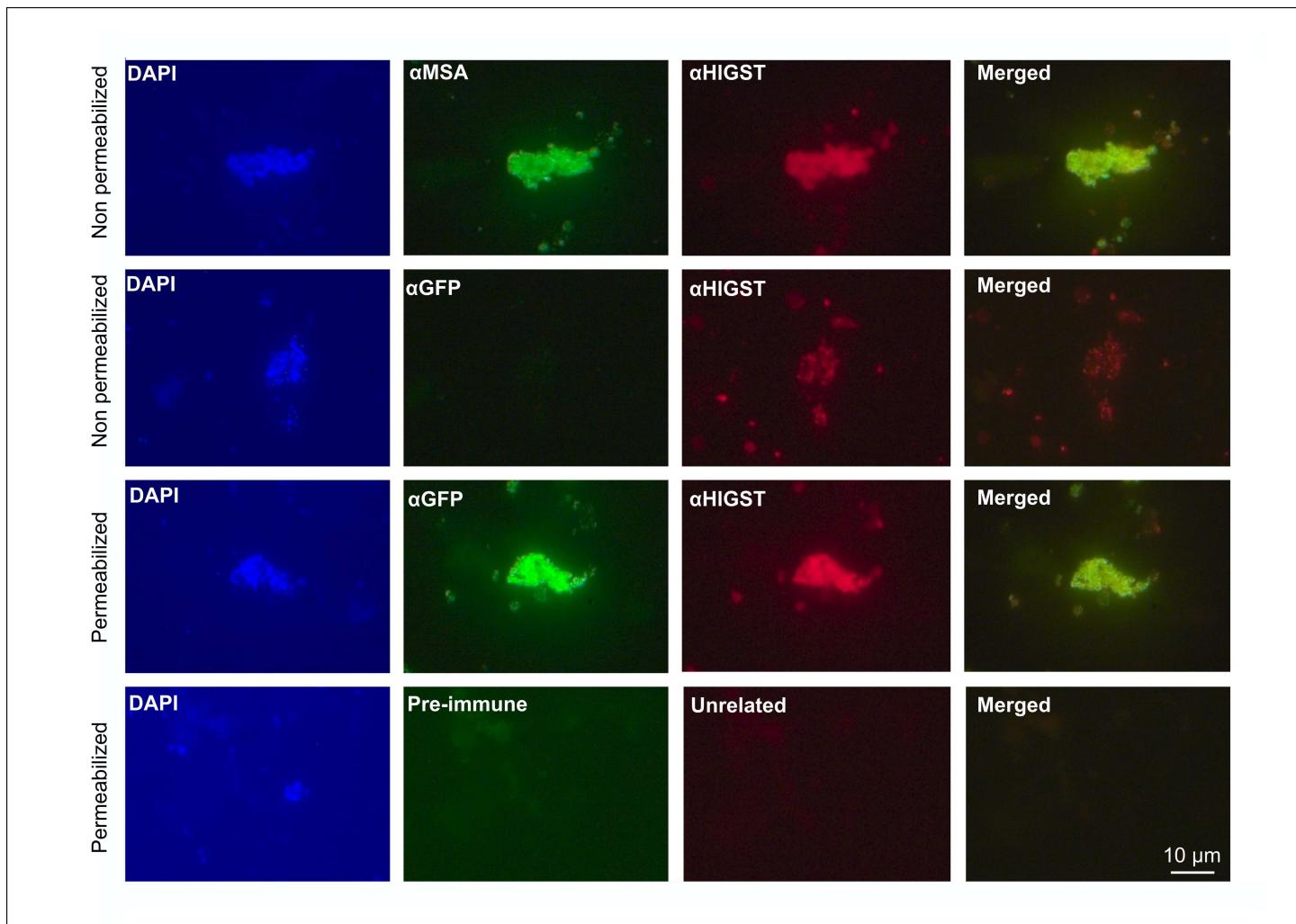
In addition, an *Ef-1α*-specific probe was also used in order to confirm integration of transfected genes into the expected *Ef-1α*-locus. This probe hybridized with several restriction fragments derived from the HIGST parasite line, designated as 1, 2 and 4 in Fig 5C. Fragment 4 is of the same size as the fragment hybridizing in the non-transfected parasites; fragment 2 has a similar size as the fragment hybridizing with the GFP probe in the clonal line, while fragment 1 is larger than the fragments 2 and 4. Because fragment 1 co-localizes with the single hybridizing fragment of the HIGST-Cln parasite line, it suggests that this DNA is derived from the subpopulation of parasites that integrated the full set of *GFP-BSD* and *HIGST* genes in the expected pattern of integration. Fragment 2 is likely derived from parasites integrating only a part of the exogenous transfected DNA, only the *GFP-BSD* side of the plasmid. Whilst the presence of parasites lacking the *GFP-BSD* genes is unlikely since all parasites recovered from cloning technique were green fluorescent and resistant to blasticidin, the presence of parasites containing only the reporter/resistance gene occurs, as represented in fragment 2. Regarding fragment 4, it is likely that it might have originated from a subpopulation of parasites with *GFP-BSD* insertions occurring at an alternative site, different than the *Ef-1α* locus, or derived from wild-type parasites still present in the transfected population. Finally, *Bg*III digested gDNA derived from the GFP-Cln parasites were not recognized by the GST probe, confirming the specificity of the tested probes.

Interestingly, and consistent with previous observations [41], the results collectively, confirmed exclusive stable integration of the transfected genes into the *Ef-1α* ORF gene/locus of *B. bovis*. Also, the absence of co-localization of fragments in the same size of the control containing only plasmid DNA confirms the lack of free transfection plasmid or transfection-derived episomal DNA in the HIGST-Cln parasites.

Together, the data confirmed the isolation of a *B. bovis* transfected clonal line, termed HIGST-Cln able to express both transfected *GFP-BSD* and *HIGST* genes. Furthermore, the demonstration of co-migrating unique bands with probes EF, GST and GFP in the Southern blots is consistent with a single site of integration of the exogenous transfected genes in HIGST-Cln. We thus conclude that stable insertion of the transfected genes in the genome clonal line HIGST-Cln likely occurred as a single copy in the expected *Ef-1α* locus.

The ability of the clonal line HIGST-Cln to effectively express the HIGST in the external membrane of the transfected *B. bovis* merozoites was tested by immunofluorescences (IFA) (Fig 6). The IFA data using non-permeabilized HIGST-Cln free merozoites demonstrates that HIGST, as well as MSA-1, are effectively targeted to the merozoite surface. In contrast, the data strongly suggests that GFP, which lacks a signal peptide, is not localized in the surface layer of the non-permeabilized HIGST-Cln merozoites by specific antibodies (Fig 6).

Collectively, these data indicates that the HIGST-Cln line is an appropriate candidate for testing whether transfected parasites are able to cause acute and persistent infection in bovines while eliciting antibody responses against the HIGST protein.

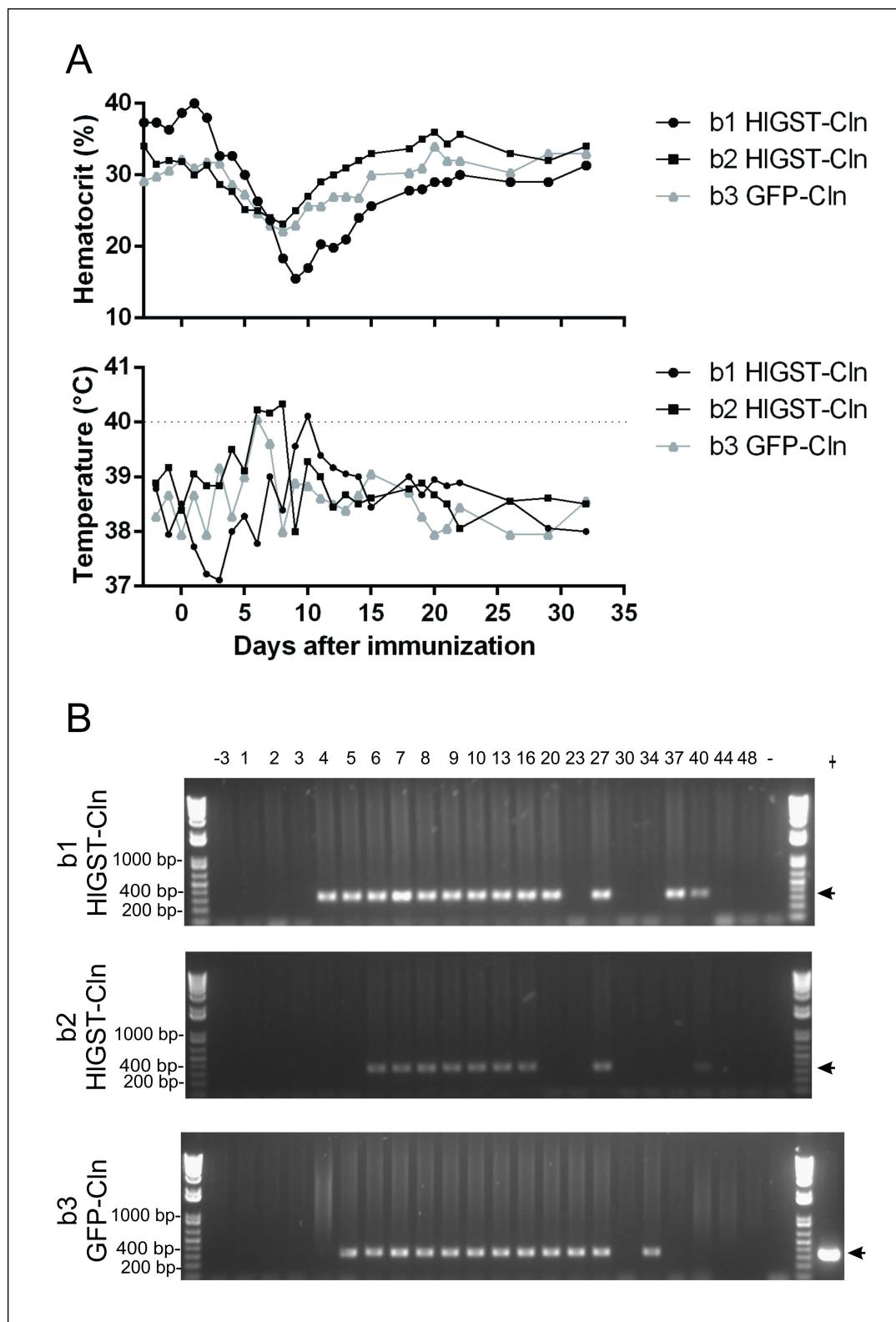


**Fig 6. HIGST parasites immunofluorescence.** Immunofluorescence assays using DAPI stained permeabilized or non-permeabilized free merozoites derived from HIGST-Cln *B. bovis* cell line. Non-permeabilized free merozoites were incubated with anti-MSA-1 (Alexa Fluor 488) and anti-HIGST (Alexa Fluor 555). Non-permeabilized free merozoites were also incubated with anti-GFP (Alexa Fluor 488) and anti-HIGST (Alexa Fluor 555). Permeabilized merozoites were incubated with anti-GFP (Alexa Fluor 488) and anti-GST (Alexa Fluor 555), pre-immune rabbit serum (Alexa Fluor 488), control anti-Tryp unrelated (Alexa Fluor 555). Columns represent DAPI, green (488nm), red (555nm) and green/red merged (488nm+555nm). The size bar is indicated on lower right image.

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### Bovine immunization and tick challenge

Two independent immunizations were performed. The first experiment was aimed to demonstrate that infection of cattle with the HIGST-Cln parasite lines cause acute and persistent infection, remaining genetically stable, and elicit antibodies reactive with recombinant HIGST. In this experiment, two calves were experimentally infected with  $5 \times 10^7$  infected erythrocytes of the parasite HIGST-Cln line (calves b1 and b2) and one control animal was experimentally infected with the same amount of *B. bovis* T3B-derived clonal line GFP-Cln parasites [41] (calf b3). All animals presented an increase in rectal temperatures above 40°C at some point during the acute stage of the disease, and reduction in hematocrit 7 days after immunization (Fig 7A). The presence of *B. bovis* in the blood of experimentally infected animals was confirmed by PCR (Fig 7B). While PCR revealed the presence of circulating merozoites in the blood in all



**Fig 7. Infection of animals with clonal parasites.** Panel A: Daily clinical parameters (PCV and Rectal temperature) of the experimentally infected calves b1, b2 and b3. The dotted line in temperature graphic represents the threshold that indicate fever. Panel B: RAP-1 PCR amplification performed on daily total gDNA samples generated from blood

of calves b1, b2 and b3. The expected 387 bp PCR fragment of the *rap-1* gene using DNA isolated from washed RBC of infected animals is marked by arrows. The numbering over the lanes represent the day of blood collection after animals immunization. Size markers are shown on the left ends of the figures.

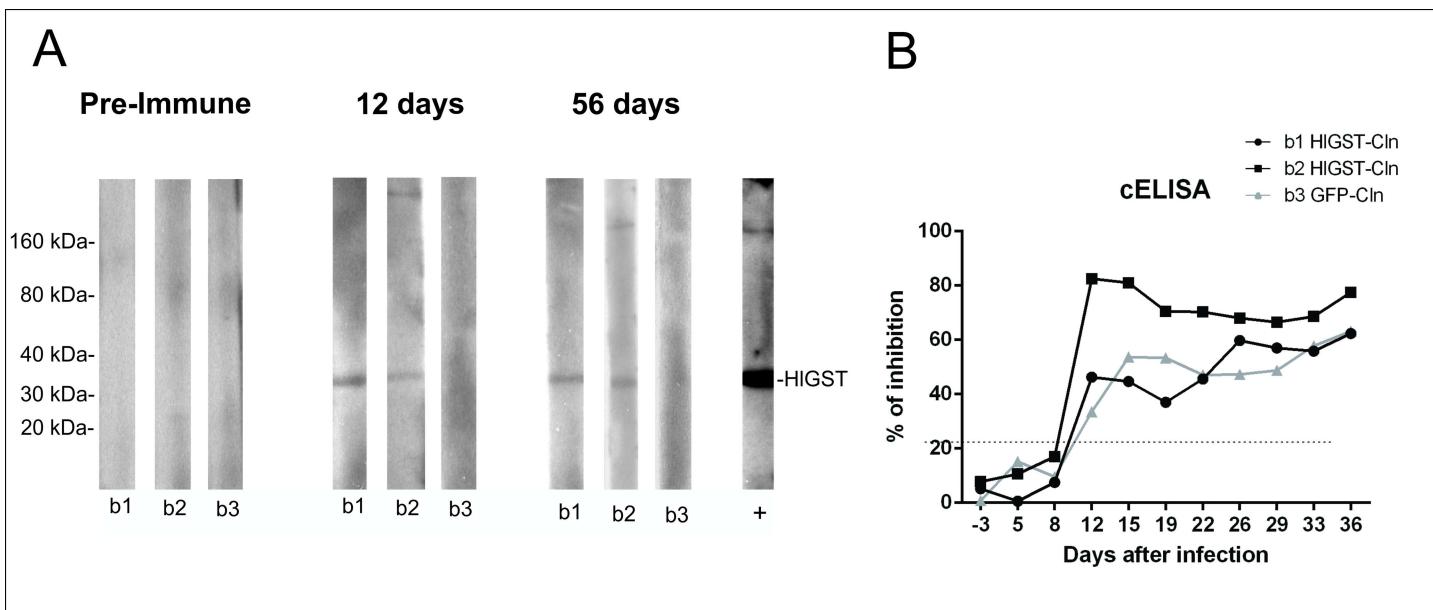
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animals (Fig 7B), no parasites were visualized in blood smears from jugular blood samples. Overall, these data suggests that all three experimentally infected calves developed similar clinical symptoms of mild babesiosis.

Both *B. bovis* strains used in immunization were culture-recovered from the blood of animals 8 days after immunization and analyzed (S3 Fig). Blasticidin-resistant fluorescent parasites were detected 10 days after the establishment of the *in vitro* cultures from all animals. RT-PCR, gDNA PCR, western and southern blot were performed with the recovered parasites, showing that the recovered HIGST-Cln-recovered parasites remain genetically stable, retain the ability to express the GFP-BSD and HIGST genes, and the clonal characteristic of cell lineages (S3 Fig), and thus they appear to be similar to the inoculated HIGST-Cln parasites.

Serological detection of anti-HIGST antibodies was performed using bovine sera from vaccinated and control groups. Western blot analysis show the specific recognition of recombinant HIGST by antibodies in the bovine sera from both calves (b1 and b2) experimentally inoculated with the HIGST-Cln line (Fig 8A) beginning at day 12 post-inoculation, at a 1:10 dilution which was verified until day 56 post-inoculation. Presence of antibodies reactive with HIGST confirmed expression of the transfected protein during the infection. In addition, the production of antibodies against RAP-1 was also determined routinely for each animal using a cELISA [47,48]. Anti-RAP-1 antibodies were also detected starting at 12 days post-inoculation (Fig 8B).

Once it was demonstrated that the transfected parasites were able to elicit mild acute and persistent infection, remain genetically stable, and generate anti-HIGST antibodies, we



**Fig 8. Detection of antibodies in calves experimentally infected with HIGST-Cln and GFP-cln parasites by cELISA and western blot analysis.** (A): Western blot analysis of recombinant HIGST incubated pre-immune and immune (12 and 56 days post immunization) sera from calves' b1, b2, and b3 diluted 1:10. +: positive control, recombinant HIGST incubated with anti-HIGST serum, in a 1:1000 dilution. (B) Kinetics of antibody detection of the rhoptry-associated protein 1 (RAP-1) of *B. bovis* by cELISA. Samples obtained from each animal before and 10 days after experimental intravenous inoculation of the parasites. The threshold of inhibition is 21%, above which samples are considered positive is represented by the dashed line.

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investigated whether calves infected with the parasite line HlGST-cln are able to interfere with tick development upon tick challenge in a separate experiment. To test this, we infected a group of three age-matched Hereford calves with the transfected strain HlGST-Cln (animals B1, B2 and B3) and three age-matched calves with the GFP-Cln transfected control strain (animals B4, B5 and B6). All infected animals received a  $5 \times 10^7$  parasite inoculum. Similar as in the previously described immunization experiment, hematocrit and the rectal temperature were measured every day during the first 10 days after immunization. All animals had a gradual reduction in hematocrit after immunization, a clinical characteristic signal of acute babesiosis ([S4A Fig](#)). Rectal temperatures were measured in the same period and according to the threshold for fever determination, only one of the six animals showed increased rectal temperature above 40°C ([S4B Fig](#)). Interestingly, upon comparison to the 3 Holstein calves used in the first immunization experiment, the 6 Hereford calves of the vaccination trial presented a lighter response to *B. bovis* infection. Fibrinogen, an important acute phase protein [50], was also measured daily during the 10 days after immunization as an indicator for the presence of acute infection. All animals presented significant increase in fibrinogen levels during days 3 and 4 ( $p < 0.01$ ) post-infection, compared with pre-vaccination levels ([S4C Fig](#)), but fibrinogen levels were reduced thereafter.

The six animals used in the vaccination trial experiment were also subjected to additional biochemical and hematologic exams prior to vaccination and 5 and 10 days after vaccination. This intensive clinical following was done in order to check the possibility of other *Babesia*-unrelated clinical conditions in the animals subjected to vaccination with the recombinant parasite. Urea, creatinine, aspartate aminotransferase, alkaline phosphatase, albumin, total protein and total globulin were tested using immunized animals serum. None of those assays presented a significant clinical change after vaccination ([S1 Table](#)). For hematological parameters a reduction in total leukocytes was verified in day 5 after immunization ( $P < 0.05$ ), but all animals already recovered at day 10 after immunization and by then, their leukocyte levels were indistinguishable from the levels prior to immunization ( $P > 0.05$ ) ([S2 Table](#)). Despite total leukocyte reduction, it was not possible to evaluate any specific reduction among neutrophils, lymphocytes, monocytes, eosinophils or basophils (Repeated measures ANOVA  $P > 0.05$ ). All hematologic values are described in [S2 Table](#). Importantly, even with the reduction at day 5, the leukocyte total counting stayed at levels considered similar to the normal reference value determined for bovines ([S2 Table](#)).

Serological analysis on the HlGST-Cln vaccinated animals showed presence of detectable anti-HlGST antibodies in immunoblot analysis, corroborating with the previous immunization experiment ([S5 Fig](#)). All experimental animals were subjected to a tick challenge for further collection of engorged females thirty days after immunization. Evaluation in the number and weight of fully engorged females demonstrated a significant reduction in individual tick weight among ticks derived from the three animals experimentally infected with the HlGST-Cln line ( $p < 0.05$ ) ([Table 1](#)), even though no difference in total weight or tick number was detected ( $p > 0.05$ ) ([Table 1](#)). In addition, egg fertility was reduced in ticks obtained from the calves vaccinated with transfected parasites expressing HlGST ( $P < 0.05$ ) ([Table 1](#)) compared with the GFP-control group.

## Discussion

The *B. bovis* protozoan presents a highly complex life cycle that includes a bovine host and *Rhipicephalus microplus* tick vector. The ability of the tick to perform a transovarian transmission to the new generation represents an effective mechanism for babesial dissemination and reinforces the critical role of the tick as a vector. As a result, efficient tick vector control is an essential strategy for eradication of this disease [51].

**Table 1.** Biological parameter of detached *R. microplus* from vaccinated and control cattle groups

		Fully engorged females <sup>a</sup>			Index	
	Animal	Number	Weight (g)	Individual weight (g)	Eggs laying capacity <sup>b</sup>	Eggs fertility <sup>c</sup>
<b>HIGST-Cln</b>	B1	1443.00	270.53	0.25	0.47	0.33
	B2	2051.00	468.77	0.27	0.41	0.31
	B3	2329.00	549.26	0.26	0.45	0.33
	Total	5823.00	1288.56	0.79	1.33	0.97
	Mean	1941.00	429.52	0.26	0.44	0.32
	SEM	261.61	82.82	0.008	0.017	0.005
<b>GFP-Cln</b>	B4	4276.00	1156.20	0.30	0.38	0.37
	B5	1571.00	366.61	0.30	0.46	0.37
	B6	658.00	79.48	0.29	0.44	0.35
	Total	6505.00	1602.29	0.90	1.29	1.09
	Mean	2168.33	534.09	0.30	0.43	0.36
	SEM	1086.29	321.90	0.003	0.024	0.007
<b>Difference<sup>d</sup></b>		10.484	19.580	12.389 *	-3.333	10.593*

SEM: standard error of mean

<sup>a</sup> Female ticks detached during infestation period.<sup>b</sup>The eggs weight laid by sample of fully engorged tick during infestation period was used to calculate the proportion of the weight of ticks that was converted into eggs, named egg laying capacity.<sup>c</sup> Eggs fertility represent the laid eggs converted into larvae.<sup>d</sup> Difference (%) = 100 × (1 – mean value of vaccinated group/control group).\*Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

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Live vector vaccine approaches are well described using simple organisms such as virus and bacteria as delivery platforms [52–56]. This vaccine methodology has the potential advantage of presenting foreign antigen to the immune system in the context of an infection, which can induce a better immune response, and also be able to amplify the stimuli due to organism multiplication, which is different and potentially more effective than subunit vaccine approaches [56]. However, few studies using eukaryotes as live vectors are currently available in the literature. These include the use of *Toxoplasma gondii* as a live vaccine vector against *Eimeria tenella* infection in chickens [57], transgenic *Leishmania tarentolae* against the pathogenic strains *L. donovani* and *L. infantum* [58], and a construction of *Neospora caninum* stably expressing a *T. gondii* protein for further evaluation of its protective effects against *T. gondii* infection in mice [59].

A limiting step to achieve an efficient system for delivery of heterologous antigens via a recombinant live vector is the availability of a genetic modification tool that permits the modification of the desired vectors, such as transfection. For apicomplexan parasites as *Plasmodium* sp and *Toxoplasma* sp efficient transfection and gene editing methods have been developed [60–64]. Unfortunately, much less progress has been achieved for the genetic manipulation of *B. bovis*. Overcoming our limited ability to genetically manipulate this organism is vital to the better understanding of the biology of this parasite. A *B. bovis* transfection system was previously developed and can be useful for both vaccine development and study of the parasite biology. As shown in the S1 Video, fluorescent transfected parasites of the line HIGST allow direct visualization of specific parasite mechanisms of interest such as infected red blood cell lysis, and probably erythrocyte invasion, as previously showed [65], using fluorescent microscopy techniques. In addition, transfection techniques can be instrumental for developing novel vaccine approaches, including the development of a vaccine delivery system based on transfected

*Babesia* parasites. Ideally, such vaccines should be designed to contain a homogeneous population of parasites able to express a heterologous antigen of interest during the natural course of infection. Also, the gene coding for the heterologous antigen of interest should remain stably integrated to the genome of the vector parasite even after several replication cycles of the vaccine vector in the infected host.

It is also important to determine whether transfection results in fitness cost to the parasite. In previous papers [41] it was showed that the transfection targeting the *B. bovis ef-1 $\alpha$*  locus, such as performed in this study, do not alter the growth of parasites compared to the non-transfected control T3Bo parasites. In addition, *in vivo* infection studies comparing such transfected vs non-transfected parental parasites, [66] suggested the lack of apparent fitness costs to the parasite. These studies concluded that transfected parasites are genetically stable, and possess the characteristics required for a recombinant attenuated *B. bovis* vaccine.

Transfection of plasmid *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* into S74-T3B *B. bovis* parasites resulted in the stable integration of exogenous genes into the genome of the parasites. This plasmid was designed for the insertion into the *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  locus and for the expression of a chimera version of the HlGST gene driven by the *Ef-1 $\alpha$*  promoter “B”. The chimera gene included the signal peptide of the *B. bovis* MSA-1 fused to the full size *HlGST* orf. This fragment coding for the MSA-1 signal peptide was added to the 5' region of the gene coding for HlGST in order to facilitate surface expression of the protein, as previously demonstrated [39] a configuration likely resulting in improved immunogenicity.

The transfected plasmid encoding for HlGST was able to successfully integrate into the *B. bovis* genome. However, and likely as a result of the complexity of the transfection construct containing regions that can facilitate homologous recombination, not all transfected parasites have the same integration profile and not all of them were able to express both transfected proteins simultaneously, which became clearly evident when a similar dual fluorescent construction was tested (S1 Fig). This observation is relevant to vaccine development since, as mentioned before, ideally a live vaccine should be based on a single homogeneous population in order to avoid the possible occurrence of selection mechanisms for non-vaccine relevant parasite subpopulation during infection [67]. In this scenario, all parasites of the vaccine strain should also be able to constitutively express the antigen of interest during the infection in order to maximize antigen exposure to the immune system. In preliminary experiments using parasites transfected with the dual promoter controlling expression of the *RFP-BSD* and *eGFP* genes (S1 Fig), we found a majority of parasites growing in *in vitro* cultures selected with blasticidin only expressing RFP, likely because the plasmid can insert in the genome in alternative patterns, and the *RFP* gene is linked to the blasticidin resistance gene. Interestingly, this data is consistent with the genetic and expression analyses of several clonal lines derived from the HlGST transfected parasite lines indicating that a great proportion of the transfected parasites did not present insertion of the *HlGST* ORF and consequently were unable to express the heterologous protein, and thus, irrelevant components for a vaccine based on transfected parasites expressing heterologous antigens. Together, these findings emphasize the need for further parasite selection following transfection and blasticidin selection using parasite cloning methods.

The availability of a clonal line expressing both, the GFP-BSD and HlGST proteins allowed *in vivo* infection in bovines. The initial experimental infections study performed in Holstein calves showed that the HlGST-Cln parasites are able to cause mild acute and persistent infections in the bovine host, both desirable attributes of a live vaccine. Analysis of recovered parasites demonstrated that these parasites remained genetically stable, and able to express the heterologous protein. Importantly, the HlGST protein generated by the transfected parasites during infection was able to elicit humoral immune responses that recognize the recombinant HlGST protein. Thus, the data obtained in the first *in vivo* experiments supported further

testing of the experimental vaccine using a larger number of animals, and followed by tick challenge after immunization.

The second experimental immunization study included, in addition to the traditional hematocrit and temperature measurements, a more intensive and multifactorial panel of clinical studies, in order to verify if animals subjected to vaccination with parasites of the HIGST-Cln line developed additional clinical alterations. All infected animals presented the classical signs of babesiosis (temperature increase and hematocrit reduction) but none of the animals were prostrated and only one of them presented a temperature above of the threshold considered as fever. Consistent with the previous experiment involving Holstein calves, the Hereford calves also develop mild disease upon infection, but to a lesser degree. Difference in babesiosis susceptibility is well characterized between *Bos taurus taurus* and *Bos taurus indicus* cattle, the former being more susceptible to babesiosis [68]. It is also known that there are differences in the response to *Babesia* infection among cattle belonging to distinct *Bos taurus* breeds [69], which could be responsible for the differences observed in the response to infection among the two groups of animals tested in these studies. Taken the data of the second bovine trial together, none of the infected animals presented alterations in the biochemical parameters measured in the study (urea, creatinine, etc.) suggesting that vaccination with transfected parasites did not compromise the overall fitness of vaccinated calves.

Calves experimentally infected with the HIGST-cln parasites in both immunization experiments developed relatively low antibody titers against HIGST, and both serum presented recognition of recombinant HIGST only at a 1:10 dilution. However, the second vaccination experiment also demonstrated anti-tick activity for ticks feeding in vaccinated animals. These data indicates that the humoral response against HIGST expressed by transfected parasites was relatively weak and markedly lower in comparison with the response generated by animals immunized with recombinant protein in previous investigations [21,22]. This outcome is similar to the findings described by Zou et al [57] that used an engineered strain of *T. gondii* designed to express the yellow fluorescent protein (YFP) in the cytoplasm in order to test protection of vaccinated chickens against another engineered pathogen, a strain of *E. tenella* also expressing YFP [57]. They report that animals immunized with the transgenic apicomplexan also developed a partial protection, but anti-YFP antibody titers in chickens immunized with the transgenic parasites were markedly lower than those in animals immunized with recombinant YFP protein [57]. At least for the HIGST transfected *B. bovis* parasites, it is not possible to discard the possibility that the low humoral response was due to reduced levels of expression of HIGST during infection, which could be related to the transfection plasmid design used in this study.

In this work, A DNA fragment coding for the MSA-1 signal peptide was added to the 5' region of the gene coding for HIGST in order to facilitate surface expression of the protein, as previously demonstrated [39]. However, despite the confirmed expression of the HIGST in the surface of the transfected parasites of the clonal line in IFA experiments, poor immunogenicity was observed in our study. Collectively, these data suggests that surface exposure of the exogenous antigen might be a necessary but not per se a sufficient requirement for increased antigenicity. Consistently, other previous work using a live vector vaccine approach with a trypanosomatid-based delivery system [72] also showed that externalization of the antigen of interest in the outer membrane of the parasite was not sufficient to induce a strong humoral response. Only when the fusion of the antigen to the N-terminus of a protein responsible for extracellular secretion was done it was possible to see an increased humoral response. It is also possible that regulation of the expression of the *ef-1α* B promoter is different among cultured and *in vivo* developed parasites, but testing this possibility was beyond the scope of our study. Alternative solutions to this potential limitation include the use of alternative stronger blood

stage promoters, and/or the use of high-gene copy-number expression plasmids. However, the latter approach might be difficult to achieve since larger DNA inserts might be unstable and can potentially compromise the overall fitness of the live vector [70]. Alternatively, it is also possible to target expression of HlGST on the surface of infected erythrocyte, rather than in the merozoite surface. This mode of presentation could continuously potentially expose the antigen to the immune system and subsequently induce stronger immune responses. The *B. bovis* variant erythrocyte surface antigen (VESA) is known to be exported to the external membrane of erythrocyte [71]. However, further analysis of the mechanisms used by this protein for erythrocyte surface exposure is needed in order to test this alternative strategy in the transfected antigen of interest. Finally, another possible alternative is targeting secretion of desired antigen to the extracellular milieu [72], however further analysis of the mechanisms used for protein secretion in *B. bovis* are also necessary before this approach can be tested.

Remarkably, and despite the presence of relatively low amounts of anti HlGST antibodies, the animals immunized with HlGST-cln parasites in the second vaccination experiment presented a statistically significant reduction in egg fertility and in individual fully engorged female tick weight in comparison with GFP immunized control animals upon challenge with tick larvae. In contrast, it was previously found that vaccination of cattle with recombinant GST [21,22] resulted in a strong anti HlGST humoral immune response and effective protection likely due to a drastic reduction in the amount of eggs produced in ticks feeding on immunized animals. Although vaccination using these two procedures is based on a similar subunit antigen approach, they use different delivery strategies, which may result in dramatic differences in the outcomes upon tick challenge [73]. These differences include conformation of the antigen, the amounts and timing of antigen delivered, adjuvant effects, the possible involvement of different population of antigen-presenting cells, etc. Several vaccines work effectively through eliciting antibodies in serum or on mucosa in order to induce protection, and consequently the presence of antibodies correlates with effective infection blocking. However protective outcomes not only depend on the quantity of antibodies, but also of its functional characteristics [74] which can be influenced by the method of delivery and antigen presentation mechanisms.

Another hypothesis that should be tested in the future is the use of a *Babesia* based live vector vaccine as a dual vaccine. However, the focus of this study was limited to the development of an anti-tick vaccine, and consequently the ability of this vaccine to protect against further *B. bovis* challenge was not analyzed. In order to exploit this dual vaccine characteristic, further transfection assays should be done using *B. bovis* attenuated strains, such the ones used in live vaccines formulations.

In summary, we described a transfected *B. bovis* strain able to express HlGST, a previously demonstrated protective tick antigen that elicits immune responses in the bovine host. Also, we demonstrated that vaccination of calves with the recombinant vaccine caused mild acute disease and did not compromise their general fitness. However, vaccination with HlGST resulted in weak antibody responses against HlGST. Importantly, the vaccine was able to interfere with the life cycle of the tick vectors feeding in the vaccinated animals despite of low HlGST antibody titers. Regardless of the comparisons among recombinant and vectored antigen presentation, this work suggests that the hemoprotozoan *B. bovis* can be used as a live vector, but its ability to elicit strong humoral responses against the target antigen needs to be improved [75]. In addition, the design of transfection plasmids should be optimized for unambiguous insertion of the transfected genes into the genome.

In conclusion, these experiments provided important information as the basis to guide further transfection plasmid construction in order to obtain a more fitted and antigenic transfected parasite to be used in a dual live vector vaccine against *B. bovis*, ticks or even distinct parasites.

## Materials and Methods

### Parasites

*B. bovis* strain S74-T3B [40] and T3B-derived clonal line Tf-149-6 C6 [41] hereby renamed as GFP-Cln, were maintained as a cryopreserved stabilate in liquid nitrogen. Parasites were grown in long term at a stationary phase culture using 10% of bovine red blood cells (RBC) in HL-1 medium supplemented with bovine serum as described by Levy [42] and maintained at 37°C and 5% CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Plasmid constructions

The transfection plasmid *pEf-msa-1-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd* described by Laughery et al [39], was used as a backbone to construct the *pMSASignal-HlGST* plasmid for stable transfection. The *SacII* restriction fragment of plasmid *pEf-msa-1-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd* containing the MSA1-BM86 chimera gene was removed by restriction enzyme digestion with *SacII* and replaced by a DNA fragment coding for the *MSASignal-HlGST* fusion gene.

For *MSASignal-HlGST* insert construction the sequence of the *B. bovis* MSA1 signal peptide containing the restriction sites *BamHI* (Invitrogen), *NotI* (Invitrogen) and *SacII* (Invitrogen) was designed, synthesized (Integrated DNA Technologies) and amplified with primers described in Table 2 (MSA-SigBam F and MSA-SigNot/Eco R). The amplicon was cloned into pCR 2.1-TOPO (Thermo Fisher Scientific) cloning vector. The MSASignal fragment cloned in pCR TOPO 2.1 was digested with *BamHI* (Invitrogen), purified and then ligated in plasmid *pBlueScript* (*pBS*) vector previously digested with same enzymes, and named *pBlue-MSA* plasmid. The *HlGST* sequence was amplified using *HlGST-BamHI-SacII* F and *HlGST-PstI* R primers (Table 2) using the plasmid *pET43a-HlGST* [30] as template. This PCR product was cloned in pCR TOPO 2.1, and termed *p2.1-HlGST* plasmid. *p2.1-HlGST* was digested with *SacII* (Invitrogen) and *PstI* (Invitrogen) yielding a restriction fragment containing the *HlGST* gene, which was ligated into the plasmid *pBlue-MSASig* previously digested with the same restriction enzymes. The resulting plasmid, termed *pBlue-MSASig-HlGST* was then digested with *NotI* (Invitrogen) and *PstI* (Invitrogen) for ligation into the backbone transfection plasmid *pEf-msa-1-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd*, also digested with the same enzymes. All constructs prepared during these steps were sequenced in order to assure the absence of mutations. The final plasmid obtained was designated *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD*, and is represented in Fig 1.

**Table 2. Primers and MSA Signal Peptide template used in plasmid construction**

	Name	Sequences	Size (bp)
<b>Template</b>			
	MSA Signal Peptide Sequence	gcctaggatccggccgcatggctacgttgctttcatttcggcc tgctgttggcaattacatcgccgggtgaaccggccggatccgtgagac	104
<b>Primers</b>			
	MSASigBam F	gcctaggatccaaaaactaatggtagtgc	33
	MSASigNot/Eco R	gtctcaggccgcgaatttttattaaatgtcc	37
	HlGST-BamHI/SacII F	gcttaaggatccccggatggctctattctggctac	39
	HlGST-PstI R	cgtacactgcaggcttcttgtacgcgtgcc	36
	Tracer-EcoRV-gfp-F	cgtcgatatacatggccctccaaaggagaac	31
	EcoRV-bsd-R	taatgtatgcgcctccacacataaccagag	34
	Ef-Pr F8	gtcttataacttaaaaatgttcc	27
	UPS-Ef-probe-R	cacgcgcaatatacagttccatc	24
	BoN-F	tgttcgtgagccgtatctt	20
	BoN-R	cagcccatcacaggttt	20

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Plasmid *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* was purified using Plasmid Plus Maxi Columns (Qia-gen) for transfections.

### Stable transfection

Plasmid *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* together with control plasmids *pBlueScript* and *pEf-msa-1-Bm86ep-gfp-bsd* [39] were used for transfections. Twenty µg of each plasmid were suspended in 25 µL of cytomix buffer (120 mM KCl, 0.15 mM CaCl<sub>2</sub>, 10 mM K<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>/KH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, pH 7.6, 25 mM Hepes, 2 mM EGTA, and 5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, final pH 7.6). Parasites were obtained from a flask expansion. The infected red blood cells (iRBC) were centrifuged at 500 g for 5 min to sediment the cells that were washed once in cold filter sterilized cytomix buffer. The final washed cell pellet was re-suspended in volume/volume of cytomix solution to be further added to plasmid. Electroporation was performed in a Gene PulserII apparatus (Bio-Rad) using 0.2 cm cuvettes containing the plasmid/iRBC/cytomix solution, and settings used were 1.2 kV, 200 Ω and 25 fixed capacitance [43,44]. 20 µg of plasmid were suspended in 25 µL of cytomix buffer and electroporated with 75µL of bovine iRBC with a 56% parasitemia.

Following electroporation, iRBC were incubated in 24 well plates containing 1 mL of culture medium and 100 µL of RBC. Four hours after electroporation the medium was changed and selective agent, blasticidin (Invitrogen), added to a final concentration of 4µg/mL. Parasitemia was checked, twice a week, by counting of Diff-Quik (Dade Behring) stained blood smear slides in an optic microscope as described by Suarez and McElwain [44].

### Genetic analysis

Genomic DNA of transfected and control parasites was obtained from cultured parasites as described [45] and used as template for PCR assays designed for analysis of the insertion pattern of the foreign transfected genes into the *B. bovis ef-1α* locus (integration PCR). A PCR designed to determine the pattern of transfected sequences into the *B. bovis ef-1α* locus was performed using two pairs of primers: the first Ef-Pr F8 + GST-BamHI-SacII F and the second, UPS-Ef-probe-R + Tracer-EcoRV-gfp-F (Table 2). Both forward primers anneal in a sequence originally present in the plasmid used for transfection, and both reverse primers anneal in a *B. bovis* genome region located in the vicinity of the *B. bovis Ef-1α* locus. Amplification of GFP/GST ORF was performed with primers Tracer-gfp-EcoIF and EcoRV-bsd-R and HlGST was amplified using GST-BamHI-SacII F and GST-PstI R primers (Table 2). Amplification of RAP-1 transcript was used as a control for presence of gDNA and performed with primers BoNF and BoNR (Table 2). PCR products were analyzed in 1% agarose gels and cloned in Topo 2.1 vector (Invitrogen) for posterior sequencing.

Genomic DNA was also used for southern blot analysis. Digoxigenin-labeled probes representing the *HlGST* ORF (GST Probe), the *GFP* ORF (GFP probe) and a 300 bp region upstream of the *Ef-1α* locus (EF Probe), were prepared by PCR amplification using a PCR Dig-Probe Synthesis kit (Boehringer–Roche). The GST probe was prepared by PCR with GST-BamHI-SacII F and GST-PstI R primers (Table 2) using the *pHlGST-pET43* plasmid as template. The EF and GFP-BSR probes were prepared as described by Suarez and McElwain [45]. Total DNA from *B. bovis* merozoites was digested with *Bgl*II, electrophoresed during 16h at 20V, capillary transferred to ZetaProbe nylon membranes (Bio-Rad) and hybridized with dig-labeled GST, GFP and EF probes, as previously described by Suarez and McElwain [45]. *Bgl*II do not the cassette inserted into babesia genome. The gDNA extracted from a previously described *B. bovis* T3B-derived clonal line TF-149-6 C6 [41], and redenominated GFP-Cln in this work, and plasmid DNA obtained from *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSR* and *pGFP/BSR/Ef* (the plasmid used in TF-149-6 transfection) were all used as controls in the Southern blots.

## Expression analysis

Expression of the reporter gene *GFP* was analyzed by fluorescence analysis using a Zeiss Axioskop fluorescent microscope (Carl Zeiss Micro Imaging) on *in vitro* cultured transfected parasite as previously described [45].

Fluorescent parasites were analyzed by RT-PCR to check for the presence of GST, *GFP-BSD* and *RAP-1* transcripts. *B. bovis* merozoite total RNA was extracted from *in vitro* cultures by the standard TRIzol (Life Technologies) procedure as described previously [46], and treated with RNase-free DNase (Ambion). cDNA was generated using the Superscript First-Strand Synthesis System kit (Invitrogen) from 1 µg of total RNA. A fragment of the *GFP/BSD* ORF transcript was amplified from the cDNA either with the primers Tracer-gfp-EcoIF and EcoRV-bsd-R and the GST transcript was amplified using GST-BamHI-SacII F and GST-PstI R primers (Table 2). Amplification of *RAP-1* transcript, used as a wild-type and parasite-derived constitutive control, was performed with primers BoN-F and BoN-R [47] (Table 2). Products of RT-PCR were cloned into vector pCR TOPO 2.1 (Invitrogen) and sequenced.

Protein expression was determined by Western blot analysis using whole culture lysates as previously described [46]. Equal amounts of protein (5 µg) were applied per lane in a 4–20% pre packed gel (Bio-Rad) and submitted to SDS-PAGE. Immunoblots were developed in a nitrocellulose membrane with anti-HIGST rabbit serum at a dilution of 1:1,000, anti-GFP antibody (Invitrogen) at a dilution of 1:1,000 and goat anti-rabbit-immunoglobulin peroxidase conjugate (Life Biosciences). The anti-MSA1 monoclonal antibody BABB35 [39] was used as a positive control for the immunoblots at a concentration of 2 µg/ml. Purified recombinant protein produced from *pET43a-HIGST* [30] was used for anti HIGST antibody production. One rabbit was inoculated four times at 15 days intervals by subcutaneous route with 100 µg of recombinant protein. Protein concentration was determined according to the Bradford technique.

Immunofluorescence of extraerythrocytic merozoites was performed using the HIGST clonal line. Merozoites were isolated from HIGST-Cln parasite line with parasitemia over 30% by centrifugation two times at 400 RCF to remove the RBC with a final centrifugation at 2,000 RCF to pellet the merozoites and washed in 3% bovine serum albumin (BSA) PBS. Half of the isolated merozoites were then fixed for 10 minutes using 100% acetone and permeabilized by incubation with Triton X-100 0.1%. The remaining free non-permeabilized merozoites were incubated in 10% BSA with a combination of either 1) anti-GST (1/500) and anti-MSA-1 (mAb BABB35) (7 µg/ml) and 2) anti-GST (1/500) for one hour. The cells were then washed in PBS two times with a 400 RCF centrifugation and incubated with 1:1000 10% BSA dilutions of either 1) goat anti-rabbit Alexa Fluor 555 and goat anti-mouse Alexa Fluor 488 and 2) goat anti-rabbit Alexa Fluor 555 and anti-GFP conjugated with Alexa Fluor 488 for one hour. The cells were again washed two times, dried to a slide and mounted with Prolong Gold anti-fade with DAPI. The slides with permeabilized cells were incubated with either 1) anti-GST or 2) pre-immune rabbit, anti-Tryp, a non-relevant monoclonal antibody, for one hour, washed two times in PBS, and then incubated with 1) goat anti-rabbit Alexa Fluor 555 and anti-GFP conjugated with Alexa Fluor 488, or 2) goat anti-mouse Alexa Fluor 488 and goat anti-mouse Alexa Fluor for one hour. All slides were then analyzed with epifluorescence microscopy to produce merged images.

## Cloning of *B. bovis* transfected parasites

Flow cytometry was used to obtain a clonal line as described previously [41]. Briefly, 50 µL of a growing culture with 9% PPE was washed once in culture medium and diluted in medium to obtain a cell density suitable for single cell sorting with a FACSVantage cell sorter (Becton-

Dickinson) with Diva Software. Two 96 well plates were prepared with 200 µL of a 10% solution of RBC in culture medium. After sorting, individual infected cells were deposited into 96 well culture plates prepared with 200 µL of a 10% solution of RBC in culture medium, and cultured in a 3% oxygen atmosphere. Screening of individual culture wells for parasite DNA was performed using PCR with RAP (BoN-F and Bon-R) primers. Positive wells were transferred to a 48 well plate and RNA and protein collected for expression analysis.

## Experimental infection of calves

Holstein calves were obtained at 3–6 months of age from a Washington State dairy. Animal procedures were approved by the University of Idaho Animal Care and Use Committee (#2013–66) in accordance with institutional guidelines based on the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

Hereford calves obtained at seven-month old of age were acquired from a naturally tick-free area, housed in individual tick-proof pens on slatted floors and maintained at the Faculdade de Veterinária, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Animal care was in accordance with institutional guidelines. Animal procedures were approved by the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul ethics committee (#26247).

Two four to five months old spleen-intact Holstein calves (bovine 1 and 2 –b1 and b2) were experimentally infected with cultured *B. bovis* parasites of the clonal parasite line HlGST-Cln and one age-matched Holstein calf (bovine 3- b3) was experimentally infected with the parasite line control GFP-Cln. All experimentally infected animals were infected with  $5 \times 10^7$  infected erythrocytes, in a total volume of 3 mL, via intravenous route. All animals were monitored for signs of acute babesiosis: parasitemia, fever and hematocrit. Blood samples were collected daily after the infection for DNA extraction to monitor infection by PCR. Seven days after inoculation 250 mL of blood were collected, defibrinated and cultured in a 48 well culture plate, in a 3% oxygen atmosphere at 37°C, for recovery of parasites from the blood of infected animals.

Two weeks after immunization serum samples were collected to detect the presence of anti-GST or anti-MSA antibodies, using western blot (as described in expression analysis). A cELISA for the detection of *B. bovis* anti RAP-1 antibodies was performed using a kit provided by VMRD (Pullman, WA) on serum samples, as previously described [47,48]. cELISA was performed as described in [48]. 5ng of RAP-1 antigen was used for plate coating. Antigen-coated plates were blocked with PBS plus 0.2% Tween 20 containing 20% nonfat dry milk for 1 h at room temperature, followed by 100 µl of test sera in duplicate wells for 30 min. After the serum from each well was removed, 100 µl (50 ng/well) of BABB75A4 MAb was added, and the plates were incubated at room temperature for 15 min. The percent inhibition of the mean of test sample wells was computed as follows: 100 – [(the OD of the test sample/the mean OD of the normal control serum panel) × 100].

For the second animal trial involving tick challenge, six seven-month old Hereford animals were experimentally infected with  $5 \times 10^7$  infected erythrocytes, in a total volume of 3 mL, using the intravenous route. These calves were randomly divided into two groups of three test (HlGST-Cln parasites–B1, B2 and B3) and three control (GFP parasites–B4, B5 and B6) animals. The calves were monitored for signs of acute babesiosis including parasitemia, rectal fever, hematocrit and fibrinogen, daily, during 10 days after immunization, and also prior to the inoculation to check basal levels. All animals were also tested for serological levels of creatinine, urea, aspartate aminotransferase, alkaline phosphatase, albumin, total proteins and globulins, and a complete hemogram panel. Physiological data was statistically analyzed using repeated-measures analysis of variance with a post hoc Tukey-Kramer. Blood and serum

samples were collected before immunization and 5 and 10 days after the inoculation. Levels of GST-specific antibodies in the serum samples were assessed by dot-blot. Nitrocellulose membrane circles were coated with 3 µg of recombinant HlGST antigen. The membranes were dried and incubated for 1 hour with a 2.5% skim milk in PBST blocking solution prior to probing with sera from B1-B6 animals at a 1:10 dilution for 16h. Anti-IgG alkaline phosphatase (Sigma) conjugate was used as secondary antibodies and the results were visualized using NBT (Fermentas) and BCIP (Fermentas). Antibody binding was evaluated by membrane scanning using software Image J and used to compare the difference among pre-immune (day 1) and post-immunization (day 30) cattle sera from vaccinated and control groups. Color intensity difference data was statistically analyzed using repeated-measures analysis of variance with a post hoc Tukey-Kramer.

Thirty days after immunization, all six calves were infested with approximately 20,000 10-day-old tick larva (from 1g of *R. microplus* Porto Alegre strain hatched eggs) placed on the dorsal region of each calf. From day 20 after infestation until the end of adult tick feeding period, all tick females that had dropped from the host were collected, counted and weighed daily. A total of 5 g of engorged adult female ticks from each animal, per day, were kept in petri dishes at 28°C and 85% relative humidity to evaluate oviposition, through the calculation of egg laying capacity, egg hatching and calculation of egg fertility. Egg laying capacity was obtained by calculating the ratio between total weight of females placed for egg laying and the total weight of resultant eggs. Egg fertility was calculated as the ratio between total egg weight and weight of hatched larvae from those eggs. All data collected after infestation was analyzed using standard *t*-test.

## Supporting Information

**S1 Fig. Bidirectional promoter test in stable transfection procedure.** A) Schematic representation of the dual reporter plasmid *pEf-eGFP-RFP-BSD* which was generated using the *pMSA-Signal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* plasmid as backbone. The B, C, and D boxes show the same field in a fluorescence microscope of transfected parasites using different filters. B) Red filter, showing that the parasites are inside of RBC. C) Red filter, with less light, showing the red fluorescent parasites. D) Green filter, showing a reduced amount of green fluorescent parasites in comparison to red fluorescent ones.

(TIF)

**S2 Fig. Screening of *in vitro* cultures derived from FACS separated cells.** Plates 1 and 2 depict screening of clonal lines derived from the parasite line HlGST by FACS. The screening was performed by PCR amplification of a fragment derived from the *B. bovis* *RAP-1* gene. The eight *RAP-1* positive culture wells, out of the total of 192 wells analyzed, are marked with #.

(TIF)

**S3 Fig. Characterization of recovered parasites from infected animals.** Panel A: RT-PCR amplifications designed for the detection of HlGST, GFP and RAP transcripts. Lane 1: HlGST-Cln recovered from b1. Lane 2: HlGST-Cln recovered from b2. Lane 3: GFP-Cln recovered from b3. Lane 4: not-transfected *B. bovis* control. Lane 5: *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* plasmid. Lane 6: *pGFP/BSD/EF* GFP plasmid. Lane 7: negative control. B) Western blot using rabbit serum anti-HlGST to confirm HlGST expression by recovered parasites. Anti-GFP antibody and anti MSA were also used. Lane 1: HlGST-Cln recovered from b1. Lane 2: HlGST-Cln recovered from b2. Lane 3: GFP-Cln recovered from b3. Lane 4: not-transfected *B. bovis* control. C) Agarose gel analysis of the PCR amplification products from integration PCR using the group of primers described in Fig 4 and genomic DNA as template. Lane 1:

HlGST-Cln recovered from b1. Lane 2: HlGST-Cln recovered from b2. Lane 3: GFP-Cln recovered from b3. Lane 4: non-transfected *B. bovis* control. Lane 5: *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* plasmid. Lane 6: *pGFP/BSD/EFGFP* plasmid. Lane 7: negative control. D) Southern blot analysis performed on *B. bovis* gDNA using HlGST and GFP probes. Lane 1: HlGST-Cln recovered from b1. Lane 2: HlGST-Cln recovered from b2. Lane 3: GFP-Cln recovered from b3. Lane 4: not-transfected *B. bovis* control. Lane 5: *pMSASignal-HlGST-GFP-BSD* plasmid. Lane 6: *pGFP/BSD/EFGFP* plasmid.

(TIF)

**S4 Fig. Clinical responses of calves to vaccination.** Graphics presenting hematocrit (Panel A), temperature (Panel B) and fibrinogen (Panel C) of animals vaccinated with HlGST-Cln (Bovines 1, 2 and 3) or GFP-Cln (Bovine 4, 5 and 6). Data collected previously and 10 days after vaccination.

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**S5 Fig. Anti-GST response in calves during second animal trial vaccination.** Previously to tick challenge, animals were tested for the presence of anti-HlGST antibodies. Upper panel show dot blot assay result. Pre-immune and 30 day serum were probed against HlGST, and only HlGST-Cln vaccinated animals presented reaction (B1, B2 and B3). The graphics represent the the densitometric data obtained from the same assay showing that there is a statistical difference among immunized groups in response to HlGST recognition. Positive control is a bovine serum of an animal immunized 3 times with recombinant protein. \*Statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ )

(TIF)

**S1 Table. Biochemical parameters from immunized bovines.** Bovines 1 to 6 vaccinated with the GST-Cln (Bovines 1, 2 and 3) GFP-Cln (Bovine 4, 5 and 6) parasites.

(TIF)

**S2 Table. Hematological parameters from immunized bovines.** Bovines 1 to 6 vaccinated with the GST-Cln (Bovines 1, 2 and 3) GFP-Cln (Bovine 4, 5 and 6) parasites

(TIF)

**S1 Video. Video showing the erythrocyte evasion process by *B. bovis* parasites.** Expression of the reporter gene *GFP* was analyzed by fluorescence analysis using an Axioskop 40 fluorescent microscope (Zeiss Micro Imaging), connected to an Axiocam MR camera for image acquisition.

(MP4)

**S1 File. Transfection of *B. bovis* parasites using a dual reporter plasmid.**

(PDF)

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#### **4. CONCLUSÃO**

O presente trabalho traz como principal contribuição a demonstração de que é viável desenvolver uma vacina de vetor vivo utilizando *B. bovis*. Ainda que com baixa proteção, os resultados obtidos servem como prova de conceito e fornecem evidências de passos que podem ser alterados para desenvolver uma vacina mais eficiente. É também importante ressaltar que embora esse trabalho tenha sido voltado ao desenvolvimento de uma vacina de vetor vivo para proteção de bovinos contra infestação por *R. microplus*, a tecnologia desenvolvida pode ser utilizada para expressão de抗ígenos protetores contra outros organismos, tornando essa plataforma um mecanismo versátil de desenvolvimento de vacinas. Além disso, ao utilizar uma linhagem atenuada de *B. bovis* para a expressão do antígeno protetor contra outro parasita, *B. bovis* vai atuar como uma vacina dual, capaz de proteger tanto da infecção pelo organismo doador do gene do antígeno como da infecção pelo *B. bovis*.

Entretanto, para a efetiva utilização deste hemoparasito como um carreador eficiente de抗ígenos, ainda são necessários aprimoramentos no plasmídeo de forma a melhorar a capacidade de inserção apropriada de DNA exógeno no genoma do protozoário e da expressão das respectivas proteínas.

## 5. PERSPECTIVAS

Como discutido acima, é necessário melhorar o sistema de uso de *B. bovis* como um vetor vivo para obtenção de uma vacina mais eficiente. Deve-se lembrar que, além da proteína heteróloga usada como vacina, é necessário expressar também moléculas que sejam responsáveis pela diferenciação dos organismos transfectados (gene repórter) e moléculas que possibilitem a seleção dos indivíduos transfectados em meio a indivíduos não modificados (expressão de proteínas envolvidas com desenvolvimento de resistência a antibióticos, por exemplo). Além disso, embora seja de interesse que a proteína envolvida no desenvolvimento de proteção contra o carapato seja secretada, a enzima responsável pela resistência ao antibiótico deve permanecer no interior do protozoário para evitar que afete protozoários não transformados. Considerando o fato de que não são todas as proteínas heterólogas que devem ser secretadas, a construção de um simples plasmídeo monocistrônico contendo um promotor unidirecional não é apropriada. Em 2014, Laughery et al. desenvolveram um plasmídeo contendo um promotor bidirecional e demonstraram que é possível expressar uma proteína extracelular e uma proteína intracelular a partir de um mesmo plasmídeo em *B. bovis*. Este tipo de plasmídeo permite a síntese de mRNA sob controle de diferentes promotores, possibilitando que apenas as moléculas que contenham a sinalização responsável por sua externalização sejam secretadas, sendo a mesma estrutura do plasmídeo utilizado no presente trabalho.

A principal desvantagem envolvendo a estrutura do plasmídeo utilizado no trabalho aqui descrito é a ocorrência de maior quantidade de parasitos contendo a inserção apenas da região contendo o gene de repórter/resistência em comparação com parasitos contendo a inserção de ambas as regiões (em se tratando da inserção no locus

do *Ef1 $\alpha$* ). Uma das hipóteses a ser investigada para a melhora do plasmídeo já existente refere-se à possibilidade de que a posição do gene de resistência no plasmídeo interfere na inserção (inserção do plasmídeo completo ou de parte do plasmídeo) e isso, de alguma forma, confere vantagem aos parasitos com apenas parte do plasmídeo inserido no genoma. Por isso, devem ser construídos plasmídeos contendo diferentes combinações de genes repórteres. Outra alternativa para contornar o problema da inserção de apenas parte do plasmídeo seria a montagem de um plasmídeo unidirecional. Como não é de interesse exportar as proteínas repórter e de resistência ao antibiótico, mas apenas o antígeno protetor, a estrutura unidirecional deve ser bicistrônica. Para isso, duas alternativas na construção do plasmídeo podem ser levadas em consideração: a incorporação de IRES (*internal ribosome entry site* - sítios de acesso interno para o ribossoma) ou a utilização da sequência codificadora para os peptídeos 2A entre as sequências a serem transcritas (Kang et al., 1997; Kim et al., 2011; Levenson et al., 1998; Trichas et al., 2008).

Peptídeos 2A se tratam de sequências codificadoras para peptídeos entre 18 a 22 aminoácidos que são responsáveis pela obtenção de mais de um tipo de proteína a partir do mesmo RNAm maduro (Kim et al., 2011). Apesar de muitas vezes serem denominados sequências “*self cleaving*”, elas não são responsáveis pela hidrólise da ligação peptídica da cadeia crescente de aminoácidos durante a tradução, mas sim por fazer o ribossomo pular a formação da ligação peptídica entre os dois últimos aminoácidos de sua composição, uma glicina e uma prolina, gerando assim dois fragmentos proteicos a partir do mesmo RNAm (Donnelly et al., 2001a; Donnelly et al., 2001b; Wang et al., 2015). Um aspecto importante deste mecanismo, em comparação com IRES ou mesmo com o uso de um promotor bidirecional, é o fato de a expressão proteica ser equimolecular entre as proteínas que se encontram separadas pelo

peptídeo, uma vez que o sítio de ligação do ribossomo é o mesmo para ambas (Lewis et al., 2015).

A incorporação da sequência denominada IRES entre duas ORFs permite também o desenvolvimento de um gene policistrônico, mas neste caso a região IRES permite que o ribossomo seja capaz de iniciar a transcrição em um ATG sem a presença de uma sinalização CAP 5' no RNAm (Braunstein et al., 2007; Kang et al., 2009). É importante ressaltar que neste tipo de metodologia a proteína cujo ORF tiver o ATG mais próximo ao CAP 5' apresentará maiores níveis de tradução do que o ATG presente na ORF mais “*downstream*” (Bouabe et al., 2008). Desta forma, a montagem de um plasmídeo contendo a sequência codificadora para o antígeno protetor mais próxima à região 5' permitiria uma maior expressão dele em relação à proteína repórter/seleção. Tal característica poderia levar à produção de uma maior quantidade de antígeno, podendo aumentar a resposta humoral nos animais imunizados o que poderia contornar um segundo problema na metodologia de uso de *B. bovis* como vetor vivo: a baixa concentração de anticorpos anti-HIGST circulante nos animais imunizados.

Independente da estrutura a ser desenvolvida, não há como prever a maior eficiência de um ou outro plasmídeo, de forma que as diferentes frentes devem ser investigadas para aprimorar o uso de *B. bovis* como vetor em uma vacina viva.

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## **7. ANEXOS**

## **Anexo A**

Pedido de patente depositado junto ao Instituto Nacional de Propriedade Intelectual

## Anexo B

### Diane Patrícia Oldiges

Curriculum Vitae

### Dados pessoais

**Nome** Daiane Patrícia Oldiges  
**Filiação** Celso Inácio Oldiges e Cleone Aparecida Bandeira Oldiges  
**Nascimento** 24/03/1989 - Porto Alegre/RS - Brasil  
**Carteira de Identidade** 4426246 ssp - SC - 28/01/2008  
**CPF** 007.840.320-09

**Endereço residencial** Rua Nova Prata, 28 apto A  
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**Endereço profissional** Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Centro de Biotecnologia  
Av. Bento Gonçalves, 9500 - Prédio 43.431, Sala 217  
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### Formação acadêmica/titulação

**2012** Doutorado em Biologia Celular e Molecular.  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Brasil  
com período sanduíche em Washington State University (Orientador : Carlos E. Suarez)  
Orientador: Carlos Termignoni  
Co-orientador: Itabajara da Silva Vaz  
Bolsista do(a): Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico  
Histórico em anexo

**2011 - 2012** Mestrado em Programa de Pós-Graduação em Biologia Celular e Molecular - UFRGS.  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Brasil  
Título: Clonagem, expressão e caracterização da VTDCE de *Rhipicephalus microplus*, Ano de obtenção: 2012  
Orientador: Carlos Termignoni  
Co-orientador: CARACTERIZAÇÃO DA rVTDCE DE *Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) microplus*  
Bolsista do(a): Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico  
Histórico em anexo

**2007 - 2010** Graduação em Biomedicina.

Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre, UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil  
Título: Caracterização enzimática de uma cisteíno endopeptidase recombinante com atividade sobre vitelina  
Orientador: Carlos Termignoni  
Bolsista do(a): Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul

## Formação complementar

- 2015 - 2015** BIOC300.1x: Proteins: Biology's Workforce. .  
Rice University, RICE, Houston, Estados Unidos
- 2015 - 2015** Curso de curta duração em Biomolecular NMR Spectroscopy.  
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, PUCRS, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2015 - 2015** BFV101.1x: Science at the Polls: Biology for Voters, Part 1. .  
University of California, Berkeley, UC BERKELEY, Estados Unidos
- 2013 - 2013** Curso de curta duração em III Curso de Biologia de Artrópodes Vetores.  
(Carga horária: 80h).  
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, UFRJ, Rio De Janeiro, Brasil  
Bolsista do(a): Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior
- 2011 - 2011** Curso de curta duração em Curso de Sinalização Celular em Câncer.  
(Carga horária: 15h).  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2010 - 2010** Extensão universitária em 19o Programa de Bolsas de Verão. (Carga horária: 424h).  
Laboratório Nacional de Luz Sincrotron, LNLS, Brasil
- 2010 - 2010** Curso de curta duração em Operação e Manutenção do Sistema HPLC.  
(Carga horária: 16h).  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2010 - 2010** Curso de curta duração em Introdução à Ressonância Magnética nuclear Biomol. (Carga horária: 3h).  
Laboratório Nacional de Luz Sincrotron, LNLS, Brasil
- 2009 - 2009** Extensão universitária em V Jornada Acadêmica do Curso de Biomedicina.  
Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre, UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2009 - 2009** Curso de curta duração em Curso de Controle de Qualidade em Análises Clínica. (Carga horária: 20h).  
Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre, UFCSPA, Brasil
- 2009 - 2009** Curso de curta duração em I Ciclo de Palestras sobre Saúde e Meio Ambiente. (Carga horária: 10h).  
Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre, UFCSPA, Brasil
- 2009 - 2009** Curso de curta duração em Mini-curso de Capacitação de Jovens Cientistas da. (Carga horária: 3h).

Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre, UFCSPA,  
Brasil

- 2009 - 2009** Curso de curta duração em Curso Teórico-Prático de Colheita de Sangue Venoso. (Carga horária: 12h).  
Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre, UFCSPA,  
Brasil
- 2008 - 2008** Extensão universitária em Feiras de Saúde da UFCSPA. (Carga horária: 4h).  
Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre,  
UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2008 - 2008** Extensão universitária em Aplicações Clínicas da Bioquímica. (Carga horária: 15h).  
Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre,  
UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2008 - 2008** Curso de curta duração em Fisiologia de Carrapatos. (Carga horária: 15h).  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2007 - 2007** Extensão universitária em III Jornada Acadêmica da Biomedicina. (Carga horária: 15h).  
Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre,  
UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2007 - 2007** Curso de curta duração em I Curso de Cuidados no Manejo de Animais de Laboratório. (Carga horária: 13h).  
Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre,  
UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2007 - 2007** Curso de curta duração em IV Curso de Sensibilização em Biossegurança.  
(Carga horária: 3h).  
Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre,  
UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil
- 2007 - 2007** Extensão universitária em Feiras de Saúde da FFFCMPA. (Carga horária:  
20h).  
Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre,  
UFCSPA, Porto Alegre, Brasil

## **Atuação profissional**

### **1. Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - UFRGS Vínculo institucional**

- 2012 - Atual** Vínculo: Bolsista , Enquadramento funcional: Aluna de Doutorado, Regime: Dedicação exclusiva
- 2011 - 2012** Vínculo: Livre , Enquadramento funcional: Aluna de Mestrado, Regime: Dedicação exclusiva
- 2007 - 2010** Vínculo: Iniciação Científica , Enquadramento funcional: Aluna de Iniciação Científica , Carga horária: 20, Regime: Dedicação exclusiva

### **2. United States Department of Agriculture - USDA Vínculo institucional**

**2013 - 2014** Vínculo: Bolsista , Enquadramento funcional: Doutorado Sandwich (SWE), Regime: Dedicação exclusiva

### **3. Fundação Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre - UFCSPA**

#### **Vínculo institucional**

**2007 - 2007** Vínculo: Monitoria , Enquadramento funcional: Monitora de Biofísica , Carga horária: 6, Regime: Parcial

### **Idiomas**

**Inglês** Compreende Bem , Fala Bem , Escreve Bem , Lê Bem

**Espanhol** Compreende Razoavelmente , Fala Pouco , Escreve Pouco , Lê Bem

### **Prêmios e títulos**

- 2016** Selecionada para apresentação no encontro CONESUL, Sociedade Brasileira de Bioquímica e Biologia Molecular.
- 2012** Capa International Journal for Parasitology Vol 42 issue 7 June 2012, International Journal for Parasitology
- 2010** Destaque - XXII Salão de Iniciação científica da UFRGS, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
- 2009** Menção Honrosa - II Semana Científica da UFCSPA, Universidade Federal de Ciencias da Saúde
- 2009** Seleção para o 19º Programa de Bolsas de Verão, Laboratório Nacional de Luz Sincrotron

### **Produção bibliográfica**

#### **Artigos completos publicados em periódicos**

1. **Oldiges, Daiane P.; Luís Fernando Parizi; Karine Zimmer; Daniel Lorenzini; Adriana Seixas; Aoi Masuda; Itabajara da Silva Vaz Jr; Carlos Termignoni**  
A Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) microplus cathepsin with dual peptidase and antimicrobial activity. International Journal for Parasitology. , v.42, p.635 - 645, 2012.

2. PARIZI, Luís Fernando; Parizi, Luís F.; OLDIGES, D. P.; Reck, José; Guizzo, Melina G.; Seixas, Adriana; LOGULLO, Carlos; de Oliveira, Pedro L.; Termignoni, Carlos; Martins, João R.; da Silva Vaz, Itabajara  
Multi-antigenic vaccine against the cattle tick Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) microplus: A field evaluation. Vaccine (Guildford). , v.x, p.x - , 2012.

3. Santos, Camila Ramos; Squina, Fábio Márcio; Navarro, Andréia Meza; **Oldiges, Daiane Patrícia**; Leme, Adriana Franco Paes; Ruller, Roberto; Mort, Andrew John; Prade, Rolf; Murakami, Mário Tyago  
Functional and biophysical characterization of a hyperthermostable GH51  $\beta$ -L-arabinofuranosidase from Thermotoga petrophila. Biotechnology Letters. , v.33, p.131 - 137, 2011.
4. Souza, Tatiana A.C.B.; Santos, Camila R.; Souza, Angelica R.; **Oldiges, Daiane P.**; Ruller, Roberto; Prade, Rolf A.; Squina, Fabio M.; Murakami, Mario T.  
Structure of a novel thermostable GH51  $\beta$ -L-arabinofuranosidase from Thermotoga petrophila RKU-1. Protein Science (Print). , v.20, p.1632 - 1637, 2011.
5. Seixas, A.; OLDIGES, D. P.; DA SILVA VAZ, I. Jr.; TERMIGNONI, C.  
Endocrinology and control of tick vitellogenesis.. Acta Scientiae Veterinariae (Online). , v.38, p.1 - 16, 2010.

### **Trabalhos publicados em anais de eventos (resumo)**

1. **OLDIGES, D. P.**; LAUGHERY, J.; LACY, P.; DA SILVA VAZ, I. Jr.; SUAREZ, C. E.; TERMIGNONI, C.  
Babesia bovis as a potential vector for an anti-tick vaccine In: 25th International Conference of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology., 2015, Liverpool.  
**25th International Conference of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology.** , 2015. p.571 -
2. Nascimento, Juliana Rodrigues; **Oldiges, Daiane Patrícia**; Adriana Seixas; da Silva Vaz, Itabajara  
CLONING, EXPRESSION AND PURIFICATION OF AN ANTIMICROBIAL CYSTEINE ENDOPEPTIDASE FROM RHIPICEPHALUS (BOOPHILUS) MICROPLUS In: XLII Reunião Anual da SBBq, 2013, Foz do Iguaçu.  
**XLII Annual Meeting of SBBq.** , 2013.
3. COUTINHO, Mariana Loner; **Oldiges, Daiane Patrícia**; Frydrych, Erika; Tirloni, Lucas; da Silva Vaz, Itabajara  
PARTIAL CLONING AND CHARACTERIZATION OF A RHIPICEPHALUS MICROPLUS DOWN-SYNDROME CELL ADHESION MOLECULE GENE In: XLII Reunião Anual da SBBq, 2013, Foz do Iguaçu.  
**XLII Annual Meeting of SBBq.** , 2013.
4. COUTINHO, Mariana Loner; **Oldiges, Daiane Patrícia**; Frydrych, Erika; Tirloni, Lucas; da Silva Vaz, Itabajara  
PARTIAL CLONNING OF A Rhipicephalus microplus DOWN-SYNDROME CELL ADHESION MOLECULE GENE In: IV Simposio Brasileiro de Acarologia, 2013, Bento Gonçalves.  
**Livro de resumos do IV Simposio Brasileiro de Acarologia.** , 2013.
5. **Oldiges, Daiane Patrícia**; COUTINHO, Mariana Loner; da Silva Vaz, Itabajara; Termignoni, Carlos  
RHIPICEPHALUS MICROPLUS HEAT SHOCK PROTEINS In: XLII Reunião Anual da SBBq, Foz do Iguaçu.  
**XLII Annual Meeting of SBBq.** , 2013.
6. **Oldiges, Daiane P.**; PARIZI, L. F.; Karine Zimmer; Daniel Lorenzini; Adriana Seixas; DA SILVA VAZ, I. Jr.; TERMIGNONI, C.  
A Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) microplus Cathepsin with a Dual Activity: Peptidase and Antimicrobial In: XLI Reunião Anual da Sociedade Brasileira de Bioquímica e Biologia Molecular - SBBq, 2012, Foz do Iguaçu.  
**Livro de resumos XLI Reunião Anual da Sociedade Brasileira de Bioquímica e Biologia Molecular.** , 2012.

7. **OLDIGES, D. P.; PARIZI, L. F.; Karine Zimmer; Daniel Lorenzini; Adriana Seixas; DA SILVA VAZ, I. Jr.; TERMIGNONI, C.**

VTDCE: A PEPTIDASE AND ANTIMICROBIAL MOLECULE In: XVII Congresso Brasileiro de Parasitologia Veterinária, 2012, São Luís.

**Anais do XVII Congresso Brasileiro de Parasitologia Veterinária.** , 2012.

8. **Oldiges, Daiane P.; PARIZI, L. F.; Lorenzini, D. M.; Seixas, A.; DA SILVA VAZ, I. Jr.; TERMIGNONI, C.**

Expression and Characterization of a Recombinant Vitellin- Degrading Cysteine Endopeptidase from the Cattle Tick *Rhipicephalus microplus* In: XL Annual Meeting of The Brazilian Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Society, 2011, Foz do Iguaçu.

**Livro de Resumos da XL Reunião Anual da Sociedade Brasileira de Bioquímica e Biologia Molecular (SBBq).** , 2011.

9. DA SILVA VAZ, I. Jr.; PARIZI, L. F.; RECK JR, J.; **OLDIGES, D. P.; GUIZZO, M. G.; DOYLE, R.; Seixas, A.; LOGULLO, C.; TERMIGNONI, C.; OLIVEIRA, P.L.**

Field evaluation of a *Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) microplus* multiantigenic vaccine in cattle In: 23rd. International Conference of the World Association for the Advancemet of Veterinary Parasitology, 2011, Buenos Aires.

**Livro de Resumos da 23rd. International Conference of the World Association for the Advancemet of Veterinary Parasitology.** , 2011.

10. **OLDIGES, D. P.; PARIZI, L. F.; Seixas, A.; DA SILVA VAZ, I. Jr.; TERMIGNONI, C.**

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## Patentes e registros

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