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Design, Synthesis, Characterization, and Biological Activities of Novel Spirooxindoles Analogues Containing Hydantoin, Thiohydantoin, Urea, and Thiourea Moieties

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1	Design, Synthesis, Characterization, and Biological Activities of
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3	Thiohydantoin, Urea, and Thiourea Moieties
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22 ABSTRACT

Based on the scaffolds widely used in drug design, a series of novel 23 spirooxindole derivatives containing hydantoin, thiohydantoin, urea, and thiourea 24 25 moieties have been designed, synthesized, characterized, and first evaluated for their biological activities. The diastereoselectivity mechanism is proposed and the 26 systematic conformational analysis is performed. The bioassays results show that the 27 28 target compounds possess moderate to good antiviral activities against tobacco mosaic virus (TMV), among which compound 22 shows the highest antiviral activity in vitro 29 as well as inactivation, curative, and protection activities in vivo $(45\pm1, 47\pm3, 50\pm1,$ 30 and $51\pm1\%$, 500 mg/L, respectively), higher than ribavirin (38±1, 36±1, 38±1, and 31 36±1%, 500 mg/L, respectively). Thus, compound 22 is a promising candidate for 32 33 anti-TMV development. Most of these compounds show broad-spectrum fungicidal 34 activities against 14 kinds of phytopathogenic fungi and selectively fungicidal activities against Physalospora piricola, Sclerotinia sclerotiorum, and Rhizoctonia 35 cerealis. Additionally, some of these compounds exhibit insecticidal activity against 36 Culex pipiens pallens, Mythimna separata, Helicoverpa armigera, and Pyrausta 37 *nubilalis*. Compound 17 exhibits the highest larvicidal activity (LC_{50} was 0.32 mg/L) 38 against Culex pipiens pallens. 39

40

41 KEYWORDS: spirooxindoles, hydantoin, thiohydantoin, urea, thiourea,
42 characterization, antiviral activity, fungicidal activity, insecticidal activity

44 **INTRODUCTION**

Natural products have proven to be an important source of novel compounds for drug discovery.^{1,2} They posses many of the properties that make a good drug candidates, including structural diversity, specificity, and novel modes of action.³ However, natural products also have some disadvantages such as high structural complexity, limited compound availability, and poor drug-likeness.⁴ Structure modification on the core skeletons of natural products is a powerful method for overcoming these limitations and improving the efficiency of drug discovery.⁵

Spirooxindoles are a core skeleton widely existing in natural products and drugs 52 (Figure 1). In recent years, more and more spirooxindole natural products and their 53 54 derivatives have been reported to have new drug development value, and their application prospect has attracted wide attention.⁶ However, these research are 55 concentrated in the field of pharmaceuticals, few research have been done in 56 pesticides.⁷ B-Carbolines and spirooxindole alkaloids share a same biogenic 57 precursor-tryptophan.^{8, 9} In previous work, we found that β-carboline alkaloids and 58 tryptophan showed antiviral, fungicidal, and insecticidal activities.^{10, 11} So, we wonder 59 whether spirooxindole derivatives also have similar pesticide activities. 60

Hydantoin, thiohydantoin, urea and thiourea are important privileged scaffolds
that widely exist in natural products, medicines, and pesticides (Figure 1).¹² Part of
these natural products and their derivatives exhibit wide spread biological activities,
which have not only been used as antitumor,¹³ anti-HIV,¹⁴ antiarrhythmic,¹⁵

antiepileptic,¹⁶ and anxiolytic agents¹⁷ in medicinal chemistry but also been used as 65 pesticides.^{11, 18} Previous works has demonstrated that the introduction of these 66 structures is beneficial for improving the biological activities of compounds 67 containing these scaffolds.¹⁹ These structures contain multiple hydrogen bond donors 68 and receptors, which increase the probability or intensity of the interactions between 69 small organic molecules and target proteins.²⁰ The inclusion of these structures into 70 spirooxindoles would increase the molecular hydrogen bonding sites thus might 71 improve their bioactivities. 72

Based on the above points, a series of spirooxindole derivatives containing hydantoin, thiohydantoin, urea, and thiourea moieties were designed, synthesized, characterized and the diastereoselectivity mechanism were studied in detail. Their anti-TMV, fungicidal, and insecticidal activities were evaluated for the first time . The structure-activity relationship study of these new spirooxindole derivatives was also discussed (Figure 2).

79 MATERIALS AND METHODS

80 Instruments

¹H, ¹³C nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded on Bruker Avance 400 Ultrashield NMR spectrometers. Chemical shifts (δ) were given in parts per million (ppm) and were measured downfield from internal tetramethylsilane. High-resolution mass spectrometry (HRMS) data were obtained on an FTICR-MS instrument with a q-TOF mass analyzer (Ionspec 7.0 T). Single-crystal X-ray

86	structure data were collected on a Rigaku Saturn 70. The melting points were
87	determined on an X-4 microscope melting point apparatus and are uncorrected.
88	Conversion was monitored by thin layer chromatography (TLC). Flash column
89	chromatography was performed over silica gel (200-300 mesh).
90	General Synthesis
91	Ribavirin (Topscience Co., Ltd.), chlorothalonil (Bailing Agrochemical Co.,Ltd)
92	and other reagents were purchased from commercial sources and were used as
93	received. All anhydrous solvents were dried and purified according to standard
94	techniques just before use. The synthetic routes are given in Scheme 1.
95	The operating steps and physical data in detail of intermediates A-E and target
96	compounds 1–27 can be found in the Supporting Information.
97	Biological Assay
98	Each bioassay was repeated three times at 25 \pm 1 °C. Activity results were
99	estimated according to a percentage scale of 0-100 (0, no activity; 100, total kill). The
100	anti-TMV, ²¹ fungicidal, ²² and insecticidal activities ²³ of the synthesized compounds
101	were tested using previously reported methods, The results are presented as means \pm
102	standard errors. The detail biological assay methods were given in Supporting
103	Information.
104	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

105 Synthesis

The synthesis of the key intermediate spirooxindole E is depicted in Scheme 1. 106 Using L-tryptophan as starting material, the tetrahydrocarboline carboxylic acid A 107 was constructed via Pictet-Spengler cyclization, which then reacted with thionyl 108 chloride and methanol to form methyl ester **B**. The obtained methyl ester **B** was 109 subsequently reacted with $(Boc)_2O$ to afford compound C. The spirooxindole D was 110 obtained via the spirocyclization reaction in the presence of N-bromosuccinimide 111 (NBS) and glacial acetic acid. It is worth mentioning that the cyclization reaction is 112 stereoselective. The NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) spectra showed that the E 113 114 was a single isomer, indicating that the newly formed quaternary carbon was chiral-specific. The possible mechanism is shown in Figure S7. In molecule C, the 115 ester group is axially oriented,²⁴ it overlaps the π orbital during the bromination step. 116 The intermediate **H** is formed with the partial charge of Br⁺ distribute to ester oxygen 117 atom, which leads to the formation of cis-3-bromo-indolenine I. The following 118 addition of water to the imine group requires a before hand conformational change of 119 120 ring C (J). The stereospecific *cis*-bromohydrin (K) has perfectly aligned bonds for the subsequent pinacol-type rearrangement that offers the observed product **D**. The 121 spirooxindole \mathbf{E} is formed from the spirooxindole \mathbf{D} by deprotection. Compounds 122 1-15 containing the thiohydantoin fragment can be synthesized from the spirooxindole 123 E with the corresponding isothiocyanates and triethylamine (Scheme 1). In order to 124 explore the effects of substituent at 5'-position and chirality at 3- and 7a'-positions on 125 126 anti-TMV activities, 16 and 17 containing thiohydantoin were synthesized from L-and D-tryptophan, respectively. L-and D-tryptophan went through similar reactions to 127

128	form compounds \mathbf{F} and \mathbf{G} , ⁷ respectively. Then, they reacted with phenyl
129	isothiocyanates to form 16 and 17 (Scheme 1). Spirooxindole analogues containing
130	hydantoin (18-20) were obtained by reacting E with the corresponding isocyanates
131	(Scheme 1). When E reacted with <i>tert</i> -butyl isothiocyanates or some isocyanates, only
132	uncyclized thiourea derivative 21 or urea derivatives 22-27 were obtained (Scheme 1).
133	The single crystal structure of compound 6 further confirmed the chiral configuration
134	of quaternary carbon (Figure S6 and Table S1). ²⁵

135 **Configuration.**

It is interesting that both thiohydantoin (1-15) and hydantoin (18-20) derivatives 136 exhibite two sets of peaks in NMR spectra (Figure S8). However, there is only one set 137 138 of peaks in the NMR spectra of thiourea (19), and urea (22-27) derivatives (Figure S9). Since the chirality of the quaternary carbon and the chirality of carbon which 139 connected to the methyl formate is determined, both factors can be ruled out. 140 Therefore, the only factor orients the charity of nitrogen. As we know, the lone pair 141 occupies one sp^3 orbital of nitrogen atom. In the case of thiourea (19) and urea 142 (22-27) derivatives, the barrier to pyramidal inversion of nitrogen is not high, and the 143 rate of inversion in solution is too fast to be measured by NMR spectroscopy. 144 Therefore, there is only one set of peaks for thiourea (19) and urea (22-27) derivatives 145 (Figure S10).²⁶ When the fused ring has been produced, such as thiohydantoin (1-15) 146 and hydantoin (18-20) derivatives, nitrogen atom inversion is restricted due to the 147 high inversion barriers, thus a pair of invertomers are generated resulting in two set of 148 peaks in NMR spectra (Figure S10).²⁷ When there is a methyl substitution in the 149

150 5'-position, the cyclization reaction is stereospecific due to steric hindrance, resulting151 in a single chiral nitrogen (16-17).

152 Antiviral Activities.

In general, most of these spirooxindole analogues exhibit higher anti-TMV activities in *vitro* and inactivation, curative, and protection effects in *vivo* than compound **E** (Table 1), which suggests that the introduction of these privileged scaffolds is indeed beneficial to antiviral activities. Part of the compounds, such as compounds **4**, **16**, and **22**, show significantly higher activities than that of commercialized anti-plant virus agent ribavirin $(38\pm1, 36\pm1, 38\pm1, \text{ and } 36\pm1\%, 500 \text{ mg/L})$.

For derivatives containing thiohydantoin moiety (1-15): When the substituent on 160 the N of thiohydantoin is substituted phenyl (1-4), the electronic effect of the 161 substituents on the phenyl has effect on the anti-TMV activities. The 162 electron-donating substituent is beneficial to improving anti-TMV activities compared 163 with electron-withdrawing substituent. For example, the structure-activity relationship 164 shows as follows: o-methyl (4) > non-substituent (1) > m-chloro (2) \approx p-chloro (3). 165 The activities decrease obviously when the phenyl is changed to aliphatic substituents 166 167 (5-8). The size of cyclic substituents also has an effect on the activities, expressed as the compound containing cyclopentyl (6) exhibits lower activities than those of 168 cyclohexyl (5). But the chain length of the substituents has little effect on activities (7 169 and 8). It is adverse to the anti-TMV activities when phenyl is changed to benzyl 170

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171	(9-15). The activities of derivative with an electron-donating substituent on the benzyl
172	ring (15) are significantly better than that with electron-withdrawing substituents
173	(10-14). For example, the activities of derivative with a p -methoxyl substituent (15,
174	35 ± 1 , 31 ± 1 , 28 ± 2 , and $29\pm1\%$, 500 mg/L) are higher than that with a <i>p</i> -chloro
175	substituent (11, 0, 6±1, 0, and 0, 500 mg/L). The position of the substituents on the
176	benzyl also affect the activities, the structure-activity relationship shows as follows:
177	<i>m</i> -chloro substituent (12) \approx <i>o</i> -chloro substituent (13) > dichloro substituent (14) >
178	<i>p</i> -chloro substituent (11). When the α position of N (5' position) is substituted by a
179	methyl, compound 16 (44±1, 44±2, 48±1, and 50±1%, 500 mg/L) exhibits higher
180	activities than that of unsubstituted one (1), even higher than that of ribavirin. Chiral
181	has important influence on the anti-TMV activities, the activities of isomer 16 are
182	significantly better than that of isomer 17. Compounds containing hydantoin moiety
183	(18-20) exhibits similar activities to the corresponding compounds containing
184	thiohydantoin moiety.

For the derivatives containing urea moiety, they have a similar structure-activity relationship to derivatives containing thiohydantoin moiety: the activities of the compound containing aromatic substituent on N (22) are better than that of compounds containing aliphatic substituents (21, 23-27). Compound 22 shows the highest activities (45 ± 1 , 47 ± 3 , 50 ± 1 , and $51\pm1\%$, 500 mg/L), which is significantly higher than that of ribavirin (Figure S11). This compound (22) can be used as an anti-TMV candidate for further study.

192 Fungicidal Activities

In general, these compounds have a broad spectrum of fungicidal activities 193 against 14 kinds of phytopathogenic fungi (Table 2). Most of the derivatives exhibit 194 better fungicidal activities than compound E. Almost all these compounds show 195 fungicidal activities selectively against *Physalospora piricola*, 196 Sclerotinia sclerotiorum, and Rhizoctonia cerealis. Among them, compounds 1, 8, and 12 show 197 more than 60% fungicidal activities against 6 fungi. In particular, compound 21 shows 198 more broad-spectrum fungicidal activities, with more than 60% fungicidal activities 199 against 9 fungi. Compounds 8, 18, 20, and 22 exhibit more than 90% against 200 Physalospora piricola at 50 mg/L, compounds 6 and 20 show 90% and 96% 201 fungicidal activities, respectively, against Sclerotinia sclerotiorum at 50 mg/L. 202

203 Insecticidal Activities

Most of these derivatives show insecticidal activities against *lepidoptera* pests 204 such as Mythimna separata, Helicoverpa armigera, and Pyrausta nubilalis (Table 3). 205 206 All compounds show larvicidal activity against mosquito (*Culex pipiens pallens*), and most of these derivatives show higher larvicidal activity against mosquito than that of 207 compound E. Thiohydantoin, thiourea, and urea compounds exhibit higher activities 208 than those of hydantoin compounds (Table 3). Chiral also has an important influence 209 on the mosquito larvicidal activity, thus the activity of isomer 17 is significantly better 210 than that of isomer 16. Compound 17 shows 40% inhibitory effect against Culex 211 pipiens pallens at 0.5 mg/L, and its LC_{50} against Culex pipiens pallens is 0.32 mg/L 212 (Table S2), whereas, compound 16 exhibits only 40% mosquito larvicidal activity at 5 213 mg/L. 214

In summary, a series of novel spirooxindole derivatives containing hydantoin, 215 thiohydantoin, urea, and thiourea moieties were designed and synthesized based on 216 217 the widely used privileged scaffolds in drug design. Firstly, we proposed a diastereoselectivity mechanism and analyzed the conformation. Then. 218 we systematically studied the biological activity of the new compounds. The bioassays 219 results showed that the target compounds possessed moderate to good activities 220 against tobacco mosaic virus (TMV), among which compound 22 showed the highest 221 antiviral activity both in vitro and in vivo. At the same time, most of these compounds 222 223 exhibited broad-spectrum fungicidal activities against 14 kinds of phytopathogenic fungi and selectively fungicidal activities against Physalospora piricola, Sclerotinia 224 sclerotiorum, and Rhizoctonia cerealis. Additionally, some of these compounds 225 226 exhibited insecticidal activity to Culex pipiens pallens, Mythimna separata, Helicoverpa armigera, and Pyrausta nubilalis. Further investigations on structural 227 optimization and mode of action are in progress in our laboratory. 228

229 ASSOCIATED CONTENT

230 Supporting Information.

The operating steps and physical data in detail of intermediates A–E and target compounds 1–27. Crystal data and structure refinement of 6 (Table S1 and Figure S6). The diastereoselectivity mechanism (Figure S7). Copies of ¹H NMR of 15 and 27 (Figure S8 and Figure S9). Explanation of the cause of the difference in NMR spectra (Figure S10). Detailed bioassay methods for anti-TMV, fungicidal, and insecticidal

- activities. Pictures of inactivation of 22, ribavirin, and blank control against TMV
- 237 (Figure S11). LC₅₀ value of compound **17** against *C. pipiens pallens* (Table S2). This
- 238 material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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249 Notes

250 The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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342	Figure 1. Natural products and drugs containing spirooxindole, thiohydantoin,
343	hydantoin, thiourea, and urea scaffolds.
344	Figure 2. Design of target compounds.
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347	Scheme 1. Synthesis of spirooxindole analogues 1-27.
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Figure 1.



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Scheme 1.

		inhibition rate (%)/500 mg/L						
compd	structure	in vitro	inactivation	curative effect	protection effect			
1			35±1	25±2	41±1			
2	HN-CI	20±1	16±1	20±2	27±1			
3		29±1	24±1	12±1	21±1			
4			40±1	50±2	46±2			
5	HN-C	28±1	29±1	10±2	13±1			
6	HN C	0	8±1	6±1	0			
7		10±1	15±2	20±1	10±2			
8	HN-C	12±1	13±1	21±1	8±1			
9	HN C S	21±1	18±1	14±2	28±1			
10			26±3	17±1	31±2			
11		0	6±1	0	0			

366	Table 1. In	Vitro and in	Vivo Anti-TMV	Activity of S	ynthesized C	Compounds 1-	-27.
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25	HN HN	13±1	31±2	15±1	30±1
26	HN C HN	36±1	36±2	29±1	32±2
27	N HN HN	31±1	42±2	34±1	43±2
E	HN O	9±1	10±1	15±1	22±1
ribavirin		38±1	36±1	38±1	36±1

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comnd						fungi	icidal act	ivity (%)	/50 mg/L					
compa	$F.C^a$	C.H	P.P	A.S	F.G	F.M	S.S	P.C	R.C	B.M	W.A	P.I	R.S	B.C
1	54±1	63±3	76±1	58±2	56±1	46±2	86±3	59±1	84±1	56±1	64±2	42±1	54±1	70±2
2	14±1	25±1	70±2	26±2	28±1	8±2	80±2	41±1	40±1	30±1	32±3	16±1	12±1	42±1
3	18±3	31±1	76±1	37±2	28±1	15±1	70±1	45±1	56±1	26±1	56±2	5±1	12±1	56±1
4	23±1	38±1	80±2	37±1	13±2	15±1	70±1	24±2	62±1	30±3	40±1	15±1	10±1	50±1
5	18±1	50±2	72±1	37±2	33±1	8±1	53±1	37±1	62±1	22±3	36±1	5±1	12±1	33±1
6	46±2	56±1	72±1	47±1	23±2	31±1	90±1	44±3	73±1	52±1	56±1	27±2	30±1	81±1

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7	36±1	56±3	76±1	58±1	56±2	46±1	76±1	31±2	80±1	48±1	40±2	26±1	49±1	56±1
8	50±3	63±1	93±1	42±2	42±1	46±2	83±1	45±1	82±1	60±3	60±1	21±2	24±1	58±1
9	41±1	38±1	80±2	53±1	39±1	31±1	74±2	48±1	60±1	41±3	56±1	37±1	24±1	61±1
10	23±3	38±1	80±2	47±1	6±1	15±1	84±2	24±1	62±1	30±2	44±1	6±1	20±1	78±2
11	41±1	44±1	80±4	47±1	19±1	46±1	73±2	37±1	73±1	48±1	48±1	30±1	25±1	70±2
12	36±1	50±1	90±3	63±1	62±1	46±1	88±1	37±1	82±1	48±2	44±1	30±1	30±1	64±1
13	32±3	44±1	80±2	32±1	56±1	31±1	66±1	38±1	70±1	37±2	52±1	21±1	12±1	47±1
14	23±1	44±1	62±1	47±1	47±1	10±2	66±1	41±1	62±1	33±1	36±1	16±1	37±1	39±1
15	32±1	50±1	72±1	40±3	45±1	15±1	57±2	32±1	73±1	44±1	52±1	21±1	10±1	67±2
16	23±1	63±1	76±1	30±1	23±2	15±1	84±1	17±1	73±4	37±1	44±1	15±1	20±1	14±1

17	18±2	25±1	72±2	32±1	36±1	15±1	72±2	52±1	71±2	33±1	44±1	26±2	22±1	42±1
18	23±1	56±1	93±1	23±1	23±1	23±1	77±1	12±1	64±1	44±1	48±1	15±1	25±1	33±1
19	9±1	25±1	60±3	26±1	22±1	15±1	72±2	28±1	40±1	19±1	32±2	16±1	12±1	14±3
20	50±1	75±3	90±3	63±1	70±1	54±1	96±2	42±1	84±1	63±1	70±2	46±2	20±1	75±1
21	14±1	13±1	62±2	16±1	42±1	0	36±1	31±1	49±2	19±1	32±1	11±1	12±1	14±1
22	27±1	63±2	90±2	47±1	23±1	31±1	60±1	17±2	62±1	33±1	44±3	15±1	13±1	42±1
23	9±1	0	70±1	10±1	6±2	7±1	10±1	7±1	47±2	15±1	36±1	12±1	15±1	17±1
24	14±2	19±1	45±1	16±1	19±1	15±1	20±1	14±1	40±1	11±2	36±1	11±2	12±1	11±1
25	14±1	6±1	62±2	16±1	28±1	8±1	33±1	10±1	47±1	19±1	16±1	16±1	15±1	17±1
26	5±2	13±1	35±1	30±1	17±1	0	20±1	12±1	38±2	11±1	28±1	6±1	10±1	28±1

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27	14±1	6±1	62±3	32±1	42±1	23±1	26±1	17±1	50±2	33±1	36±1	16±1	17±1	14±2
E	15±2	0	30±2	30±2	40±1	31±1	33±1	10±1	44±1	35±1	30±1	12±1	15±1	14±1
chlorothalonil	100	73±2	100	73±2	<50	100	<50	100	100	91±1	91±1	86±1	100	100

369 *a F.C: Fusarium oxysporiumf. sp.cucumeris; C.H: Cercospora arachidicola Hori; P.P: Physalospora piricola; A.S: Alternaria solani; F.G:*

370 Fusarium graminearum; F.M: Fusarium moniliforme; S.S: Sclerotinia sclerotiorum; P.C: Phytophthora capsici; R.C: Rhizoctonia cerealis; B.M:

371 Bipolaris maydis; W.A: Watermelon-anthracnose; P.I: Phytophthora infestans; R.S: Rhizoctonia solani; B.C: Botrytis cinerea.

Table 3. Insecticidal Activity of Compounds 1–27 against *Culex pipiens pallens*,

373	Mythimna	separata,	Helicoverpa	armigera,	and Pyrausta	nubilalis.
	-	1 /	1	0 /	~	

	larvicidal activity (%) at concn (mg/L)										
compd		C. pij	piens po	allens		M.separata	M.separata H. armigera				
	10	5	2	1	0.5	600	600	600			
1	100	80±0	40±0	_	_	20±0	30±0	20±0			
2	100	80±0	40±0	_	_	60±0	30±0	40±0			
3	100	90±0	50±0	20±0	_	20±0	40±0	30±0			
4	100	60±0	33±6	_	_	46±6	20±0	20±0			
5	40±0	_	_	_	_	50±0	36±6	20±0			
6	100	70±0	40±0	_	_	26±6	10±0	30±0			
7	100	60±0	23±6	_	_	40±0	20±0	60±0			
8	60±0	20±0	_	_	_	70±0	10±0	16±6			
9	100	80±0	60±0	40±0	_	26±6	0	0			
10	100	80±0	46±6	_	_	60±0	20±0	26±6			
11	100	20±0	_	_	_	40±0	20±0	20±0			
12	100	40±0	_	_	_	20±0	40±0	16±6			

13	70±0	20±0	_	_	_	76±6	20±0	20±0
14	40±0	_	_	_	_	30±0	10±0	60±0
15	100	60±0	40±0	_	_	0	0	0
16	100	70±0	20±0	_	_	30±0	20±0	40±0
17	100	100	96±6	80±0	46±6	70±0	30±0	40±0
18	80±0	40±0	_	_	_	20±0	16±6	20±0
19	60±0	20±0	_	_	_	40±0	30±0	10±0
20	56±6	_	_	_	_	5±0	0	0
21	100	80±0	20±0	_	_	10±0	20±0	10±0
22	100	60±0	40±0	_	_	60±0	40±0	30±0
23	100	40±0	_	_	_	30±0	50±0	60±0
24	100	46±6	_	_	_	50±0	30±0	16±6
25	100	100	60±0	20±0	_	70±0	30±0	40±0
26	100	60±0	20±0	_	-	23±6	20±0	20±0
27	100	100	60±0	40±0	_	10±0	10±0	16±6
Е	100	40±0	—	—	—	10±0	30±0	10±0

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