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J. Agric. Food Chem., **Just Accepted Manuscript** • DOI: 10.1021/acs.jafc.9b06006 • Publication Date (Web): 16 Dec 2019

Downloaded from pubs.acs.org on December 17, 2019

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Discovery, Structural Optimization and Mode of Action of Essramycin Alkaloid and Its Derivatives as Anti-Tobacco Mosaic Virus (TMV) and Anti-phytopathogenic-Fungus Agents

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1

2 **ABSTRACT:** Plant diseases seriously affect crop yield and quality and are difficult to
3 control. Marine natural products (MNPs) have become an important source of drug
4 candidates with new biological mechanisms. Marine natural product essramycin (**1**) was
5 found to have good anti-tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) and anti-phytopathogenic-fungus
6 activities for the first time. A series of essramycin derivatives were designed, synthesized
7 and evaluated for their bio-activity. Most of these compounds exhibited higher antiviral
8 effects than control ribavirin. Compounds **7e** and **8f** displayed higher antiviral activities
9 than ningnanmycin (the most widely used antiviral agent at present), thus emerged as novel
10 antiviral lead compounds. As the lead compound, **7e** was selected for further antiviral
11 mechanism research. The results indicated that **7e** could inhibit virus assembly and promote
12 20S disk protein aggregation. Fungicidal activity tests against 14 kinds of phytopathogenic
13 fungi revealed that essramycin analogues displayed broad-spectrum fungicidal activities.
14 Compound **5b** displayed more than 50% inhibition rate against most of the 14 kinds of
15 phytopathogenic fungi at 50 $\mu\text{g/mL}$. Current research lays a solid foundation for the
16 application of essramycin alkaloids in crop protection.

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19 **KEYWORDS:** marine natural product, essramycin, alkaloid, anti-TMV activity,

20 fungicidal activity, mode of action

21

22 INTRODUCTION

23 Plant diseases caused by plant viruses and pathogens have been recognized as a
24 worldwide threat to the agricultural industry. Tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) is the first virus
25 to be found, which is considered the most destructive disease of plant in the world. Because
26 of its clear research, TMV is often used as a model virus in the development of antiviral
27 agents. It has been found that TMV can infect more than 400 crops. As the widely used
28 antiviral agents, ribavirin (less than 50% inhibitory effect at 500 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$) and ningnanmycin
29 (50-60% inhibitory effect at 500 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$) (Figure 1) only gave moderate anti-TMV effects.
30 How to control TMV is still a very challenging task.¹

31 Natural products are still an important area to provide drug candidates with novel
32 structure and unique mechanism.²⁻⁴ However, the shortcomings of limited compound
33 availability, poor solubility, and metabolic instability of natural products have always
34 limited their direct application as drugs.³ Till now, only a small amount of natural products
35 are used directly as anti plant virus agents.⁵⁻⁶ Structural optimization based on natural
36 products is an important method to overcome these shortcomings.⁷⁻¹³ Essramycin (Figure
37 1), obtained from the culture broth of the marine *Streptomyces sp.*, is the first isolated
38 triazolopyrimidine natural product. The bio-activity research revealed that essramycin

39 possesses antibacterial activity.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ As the core framework, triazolopyrimidine is a well-
40 known scaffold in agricultural and medicinal chemistry. These compounds have broad-
41 spectrum biological activities, such as anticancer activity¹⁷, phosphodiesterase inhibition
42 activity¹⁸ and anti-tubercular activity¹⁹. Triazolopyrimidine derivatives also have
43 remarkable antibacterial activity²⁰, anti-epileptic activity²¹, anti-mycobacterial activity²²,
44 antimalarial activity²³⁻²⁵. As the widely used antiviral agent, ribavirin also contains triazole
45 skeleton. Research revealed that ribavirin triphosphate (RTP) can interact with various viral
46 RNA polymerases.^{26,27} Essramycin and ribavirin contain the same core structural unit
47 (Figure 1). Whether they have the same biological activity and mechanism of action is
48 worth to further study.

49 Based on the above findings, natural product essramycin was selected as the parent
50 structure. A series of essramycin analogues were designed (Figure 2), synthesized and
51 evaluated for their anti-TMV and fungicidal activities. The preliminarily antiviral
52 mechanism research was also carried out by transmission electron microscope (TEM).

53 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

54 **Instruments and Chemicals.** The melting points of the products were determined on an
55 X-4 binocular microscope (Gongyi Yuhua Instrument Co., China) and the thermometer
56 was not corrected. NMR spectra were acquired with a Bruker 400 MHz (100 MHz for ¹³C)
57 instrument at room temperature. Chemical shifts were measured relative to residual solvent

58 peaks of CDCl_3 (^1H : $\delta = 7.26$ ppm; ^{13}C : $\delta = 77.0$ ppm) or d_6 -DMSO (^1H : $\delta = 2.50$ ppm;
59 ^{13}C : $\delta = 39.5$ ppm) with tetramethylsilane as internal standards. The following
60 abbreviations were used to designate chemical shift multiplicities: s = singlet, d = doublet,
61 t = triplet, m = multiplet, and bs = broad singlet. All first-order splitting patterns were
62 assigned on the basis of multiplet appearance. Splitting patterns that could not be easily
63 interpreted were designated multiplet (m) or broad (br). HRMS data were obtained with an
64 FT-ICR MS spectrometer (Ionspec, 7.0 T). Procedures for the preparation of compounds
65 **1**, **2**, 2-(5-amino-1*H*-1,2,4-triazol-3-yl)acetic acid (**3**), methyl 5-amino-1*H*-1,2,4-triazole-
66 3-carboxylate (**4b**) and **5** (Figure 3) can be seen in Supporting Information. 5-Amino-
67 4*H*-1,2,4-triazole-3-carboxylic acid (**4a**, Figure 3) was bought from *Bide Pharmatech Ltd.*
68 All reagents were of analytical reagent grade or chemically pure. Among the synthesized
69 compounds, **1–6**, **7a–7c**, **8a**, **8b**, **8d**, **8e**, **8g**, **9b**, **9c** and **9e** are reported compounds and their
70 data were according with reference. The *in vitro* TMV rod assembly inhibition and 20S CP
71 disk assembly inhibition were tested via transmission electron microscopy (Tecnai G2 F20).

72 **Procedures for the Preparation of Compounds 6, 7a–7c.**^{15,16}

73 The solution of corresponding 3-substituted ethyl acetoacetate (2 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and **3**,
74 **4a** or **4b** (2 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in CH_3COOH (20 mL) was refluxed for 10 h. The solvent
75 was evaporated in vacuo and the residue was purified by recrystallization with ether to give
76 compounds **6**, **7a–7c**.

77 2-(5-Methyl-7-oxo-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-2-yl)acetic acid (**6**): white
78 solid, 97% yield; mp 257–259 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 12.90 (br s, 2H, NH),
79 5.82 (s, 1H, C=CH), 3.73 (s, 2H, CH₂), 2.32 (s, 3H, CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz):
80 170.7, 159.2, 156.0, 151.8, 151.3, 98.7, 35.4, 19.1; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₈H₉N₄O₃
81 [M+H]⁺ 209.0669, found (ESI⁺) 209.0672.

82 5-Methyl-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one (**7a**): white solid, 65% yield; mp
83 266–268 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.20 (br s, 1H, NH), 8.18 (s, 1H, N=CH),
84 5.82(s, 1H, C=CH), 2.31 (s, 3H, CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 155.8, 151.8,
85 151.6, 150.6, 98.1, 18.6; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₆H₇N₄O [M+H]⁺ 151.0614, found (ESI⁺)
86 151.0611.

87 5-Propyl-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one (**7b**): white solid, 91% yield; mp
88 117–120 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.08 (br s, 1H, NH), 8.20 (s, 1H, N=CH),
89 5.84 (s, 1H, C=CH), 2.55 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2H, CH₂CH₂CH₃), 1.62–1.71 (m, 2H,
90 CH₂CH₂CH₃), 0.90 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 3H, CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 156.0, 155.2,
91 151.9, 150.7, 97.6, 34.1, 21.2, 13.2; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₈H₁₁N₄O [M+H]⁺ 179.0927,
92 found (ESI⁺) 179.0923.

93 Methyl 5-methyl-7-oxo-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidine-2-carboxylate (**7c**):
94 white solid, 98% yield; mp 232–234 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.39 (br s, 1H,
95 NH), 5.94 (s, 1H, C=CH), 3.91 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 2.35 (s, 3H, CCH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆,

96 100 MHz): 160.0, 155.6, 153.0, 152.7, 151.1, 98.7, 52.6, 18.8; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for
97 $C_8H_9N_4O_3$ $[M+H]^+$ 209.0669, found (ESI⁺) 209.0668.

98 **Procedure for the Preparation of Compound 7d.**

99 Compound **7c** (0.84 g, 4 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and hydrazine hydrate (80% solution in water,
100 1.6 mL, 40 mmol, 10 equiv.) were dissolved in ethanol (20 mL). The mixture was refluxed
101 for 16 h. The suspension was cooled to room temperature and filtered. Compound **7d** was
102 obtained as a white solid, 98% yield; mp 213–214 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz):
103 9.79 (br s, 1H, CNHC=N), 7.27 (br s, 3H, NHHN₂), 5.54 (s, 1H, C=CH), 2.20 (s, 3H, CH₃);
104 ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 162.3, 159.7, 158.1, 157.9, 155.0, 95.4, 24.2; HR-MS
105 (ESI): Calcd for $C_7H_9N_6O_2$ $[M+H]^+$ 209.0781, found (ESI⁺) 209.0783.

106 **Procedure for the Preparation of Compound 7e.**

107 To a solution of **7c** (0.97 g, 5.0 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in tetrahydrofuran (40 mL) and water (8
108 mL) was added lithium hydroxide hydrate (0.36 g, 15.0 mmol). The reaction mixture was
109 stirred at room temperature for 12 h, then the mixture was evaporated in vacuo and the
110 residue was diluted with ice water (20 mL) and adjusted to pH = 3 by 4 M HCl solution.
111 The solution was refrigerated at 0 °C for 10 h. Compound **7e** was collected by filtration as
112 a white solid, 91% yield; mp 187–190 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.40 (br s,
113 1H, NH), 5.90 (s, 1H, C=CH), 2.33 (s, 3H, CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 160.4,
114 155.2, 153.5, 152.0, 150.5, 98.0, 18.2; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for $C_7H_7N_4O_3$ $[M+H]^+$

115 195.0514, found (ESI⁺) 195.0518.

116 **Procedures for the Preparation of Compounds 8a–8g.**

117 The solution of corresponding **5** (2 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), ethyl acetoacetate (2.4 mmol, 1.2
118 equiv.) in CH₃COOH (2 mL) was refluxed for 6 h. After cooling, ethanol (15 mL) was
119 added to the solution. The precipitate was filtered to obtain the target compounds **8a–8g**.

120 2-(Benzylthio)-5-methyl-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one: white solid (**8a**): 95%
121 yield; mp 214–217 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.18 (s, 1H, NH), 7.44–7.46 (m,
122 2H, ArH), 7.26–7.34 (m, 3H, ArH), 5.81 (s, 1H, C=CH), 4.43 (s, 2H, CH₂), 2.29 (s, 3H,
123 CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 162.0, 154.8, 151.1, 150.7, 137.4, 128.8, 128.5,
124 127.3, 98.5, 34.5, 18.5; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₁₃H₁₃N₄OS [M+H]⁺ 273.0805, found
125 (ESI⁺) 273.0809.

126 5-Methyl-2-((4-methylbenzyl)thio)-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one (**8b**): white
127 solid, 91% yield; mp 248–250 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.18 (s, 1H, NH),
128 7.32 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 2H, ArH), 7.12 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2H, ArH), 5.81 (s, 1H, C=CH), 4.38 (s,
129 2H, CH₂), 2.29 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 2.26 (s, 3H, ArCH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz):
130 162.0, 154.8, 151.1, 150.7, 136.5, 134.2, 129.0, 128.8, 98.5, 34.3, 20.7, 18.5; HR-MS (ESI):
131 Calcd for C₁₄H₁₅N₄OS [M+H]⁺ 287.0961, found (ESI⁺) 287.0957.

132 2-((3-Methoxybenzyl)thio)-5-methyl-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one (**8c**):
133 white solid, 91% yield; mp 153–155 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.19 (s, 1H,

134 NH), 7.23 (t, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.05 (s, 1H, , ArH), 7.01 (d, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.83
135 (d, $J = 9.4$ Hz, 1H, ArH), 5.81 (s, 1H, C=CH), 4.40 (s, 2H, CH₂), 3.73 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 2.29
136 (s, 3H, CCH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 162.0, 159.2, 154.8, 151.1, 150.7, 138.9,
137 129.5, 121.0, 114.5, 12.8, 98.5, 55.0, 34.5, 18.5; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₁₄H₁₅N₄O₂S
138 [M+H]⁺ 303.0910, found (ESI⁺) 303.0914.

139 2-((4-Fluorobenzyl)thio)-5-methyl-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one (**8d**): white
140 solid, 93% yield; mp 214–217 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.19 (s, 1H, NH),
141 7.50 (t, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H, ArH), 7.16 (t, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H, ArH), 5.81 (s, 1H, C=CH), 4.43 (s,
142 2H, CH₂), 2.29 (s, 3H, CCH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 161.9, 161.4 (d, $J = 243.4$
143 Hz), 154.8, 151.2, 150.7, 133.8 (d, $J = 2.8$ Hz), 130.8 (d, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 115.2 (d, $J = 21.3$
144 Hz), 98.5, 33.6, 18.5; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₁₃H₁₂FN₄OS [M+H]⁺ 297.0710, found
145 (ESI⁺) 297.0708.

146 2-((4-Chlorobenzyl)thio)-5-methyl-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one (**8e**): white
147 solid, 90% yield; mp 248–251 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.19 (s, 1H, NH),
148 7.36–7.48 (m, 4H, ArH), 5.81 (s, 1H, C=CH), 4.42 (s, 2H, CH₂), 2.28 (s, 3H, CCH₃); ¹³C
149 NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 161.7, 154.8, 151.1, 150.7, 136.8, 131.9, 130.7, 128.4, 98.5,
150 33.7, 18.5; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₁₃H₁₂ClN₄OS [M+H]⁺ 307.0415, found (ESI⁺)
151 307.0413.

152 2-((2-Chloro-4-fluorobenzyl)thio)-5-methyl-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one

153 (**8f**): white solid, 94% yield; mp 216–219 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.21 (s,
154 1H, NH), 7.66 (t, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.50 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H, ArH), 7.21 (t, *J* = 8.3 Hz,
155 1H, ArH), 5.83 (s, 1H, C=CH), 4.50 (s, 2H, CH₂), 2.29 (s, 3H, CCH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆,
156 100 MHz): 162.5, 161.4, 160.0, 154.8, 151.0 (d, *J* = 44.3 Hz), 134.0 (d, *J* = 10.7 Hz), 132.5
157 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz), 131.1 (d, *J* = 3.3 Hz), 116.8 (d, *J* = 25.2 Hz), 114.5 (d, *J* = 21.1 Hz), 98.6,
158 32.0, 18.5; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₁₃H₁₁ClFN₄OS [M+H]⁺ 325.0321, found (ESI⁺)
159 325.0325.

160 5-Methyl-2-((4-nitrobenzyl)thio)-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one (**8g**): white
161 solid, 94% yield; mp 256–259 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz): 13.21 (s, 1H, NH),
162 8.18 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H, ArH), 7.73 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H, ArH), 5.82 (s, 1H, C=CH), 4.56 (s,
163 2H, CH₂), 2.28 (s, 3H, CCH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 161.4, 154.8, 151.2, 150.8,
164 146.6, 146.0, 130.0, 123.5, 98.6, 33.7, 18.5; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₁₃H₁₂N₅O₃S
165 [M+H]⁺ 318.0655, found (ESI⁺) 318.0658.

166 **Procedures for the Preparation of Compounds 9a–9o, 10.**

167 The mixture of corresponding **5** (2 mmol, 1.0 equiv.), ethyl acetoacetate or acetylacetone
168 (2.4 mmol, 1.2 equiv.), substituted aldehydes (1.0 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in DMF (1.0 mL) was
169 heated in oil bath at 140 °C for 2 h. After cooling, water (5 mL) was added to the solution.
170 The precipitate was filtered and washed with ether to obtain the desired products **9a–9o**,
171 **10**.

172 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-5-methyl-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidine-6-
173 carboxylate (**9a**): white solid, 90% yield; mp 171–173 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz):
174 10.85 (s, 1H, NH), 7.19–7.35 (m, 10H, ArH), 6.22 (s, 1H, CH), 4.23 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H,
175 SCH₂), 4.16 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 3.92–3.97 (m, 2H, OCH₂CH₃), 2.40 (s, 3H, CCH₃),
176 1.04 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H, OCH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 165.0, 157.7, 147.7,
177 146.3, 141.8, 138.0, 128.7, 128.4, 128.2, 128.0, 127.0, 97.6, 59.5, 59.4, 34.7, 18.4, 13.8;
178 HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₂₂H₂₃N₄O₂S [M+H]⁺ 407.1536, found (ESI⁺) 407.1533.

179 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-5-methyl-7-(*p*-tolyl)-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidine-6
180 -carboxylate (**9b**): white solid, 90% yield; mp 157–159 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz):
181 10.84 (s, 1H, NH), 7.24–7.27 (m, 2H, ArH), 7.19–7.20 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.09–7.14 (m, 4H,
182 ArH), 6.17 (s, 1H, CH), 4.23 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.16 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H, SCH₂),
183 3.92–3.97 (m, 2H, OCH₂CH₃), 2.39 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 2.26 (s, 3H, ArCH₃), 1.06 (t, *J* = 7.1
184 Hz, 3H, OCH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 165.5, 158.1, 148.2, 146.6, 139.5,
185 138.4, 137.7, 129.4, 129.2, 128.7, 127.5, 127.4, 98.2, 59.9, 59.7, 35.3, 21.1, 18.8, 14.3;
186 HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₂₃H₂₅N₄O₂S [M+H]⁺ 421.1693, found (ESI⁺) 421.1688.

187 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-7-(4-methoxyphenyl)-5-methyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
188 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9c**): white solid, 92% yield; mp 170–172 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-
189 *d*₆, 400 MHz): 10.82 (s, 1H, NH), 7.25–7.27 (m, 2H, ArH), 7.19–7.21 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.14
190 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H, ArH), 6.87 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H, ArH), 6.17 (s, 1H, CH), 4.23 (d, *J* = 13.2

191 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.16 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 3.92–3.96 (m, 2H, OCH₂CH₃), 3.72 (s,
192 3H, OCH₃), 2.39 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 1.06 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H, OCH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-
193 *d*₆, 100 MHz): 165.5, 159.4, 158.0, 148.1, 146.4, 138.5, 134.5, 129.2, 128.7, 127.5, 114.2,
194 98.3, 59.9, 59.4, 55.5, 35.2, 18.8, 14.4; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₂₃H₂₅N₄O₃S [M+H]⁺
195 437.1642, found (ESI⁺) 437.1645.

196 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-7-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-methyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
197 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9d**): white solid, 89% yield; mp 153–156 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-
198 *d*₆, 400 MHz): 10.90 (s, 1H, NH), 7.24–7.30 (m, 4H, ArH), 7.13–7.20 (m, 5H, ArH), 6.24
199 (s, 1H, CH), 4.23 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.16 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 3.90–4.00
200 (m, 2H, OCH₂CH₃), 2.40 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 1.03 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H, OCH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR
201 (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 165.4, 162.1 (d, *J* = 244.1 Hz), 158.3, 148.0, 147.0, 138.7, 138.5,
202 129.6 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz), 129.2, 128.7, 127.5, 115.6 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz), 97.8, 59.9, 59.3, 35.2,
203 18.9, 14.3; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₂₂H₂₂FN₄O₂S [M+H]⁺ 425.1442, found (ESI⁺)
204 425.1447.

205 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-7-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-methyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
206 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9e**): white solid, 90% yield; mp 150–152 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-
207 *d*₆, 400 MHz): 10.92 (s, 1H, NH), 7.56 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H, ArH), 7.19–7.25 (m, 7H, ArH),
208 6.22 (s, 1H, CH), 4.23 (d, *J* = 13.2 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.14 (d, *J* = 13.3 Hz, 1H, SCH₂),
209 3.92–3.99 (m, 2H, OCH₂CH₃), 2.40 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 1.03 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H, OCH₂CH₃);

210 ^{13}C NMR (DMSO- d_6 , 100 MHz): 165.4, 158.3, 148.1, 147.2, 141.4, 138.5, 133.0, 131.6,
211 129.2, 128.9, 128.7, 127.5, 97.6, 60.0, 59.4, 35.2, 18.9, 14.4; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for
212 $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{22}\text{ClN}_4\text{O}_2\text{S}$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 441.1147, found (ESI $^+$) 441.1153.

213 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-7-(4-bromophenyl)-5-methyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
214 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9f**): white solid, 93% yield; mp 143–147 °C; ^1H NMR (DMSO-
215 d_6 , 400 MHz): 10.91 (s, 1H, NH), 7.53 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H, ArH), 7.14–7.24 (m, 7H, ArH),
216 6.22 (s, 1H, CH), 4.23 (d, $J = 13.3$ Hz, 1H, SCH $_2$), 4.15 (d, $J = 13.3$ Hz, 1H, SCH $_2$),
217 3.91–3.98 (m, 2H, OCH $_2$ CH $_3$), 2.40 (s, 3H, CCH $_3$), 1.04 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 3H, OCH $_2$ CH $_3$);
218 ^{13}C NMR (DMSO- d_6 , 100 MHz): 165.4, 158.4, 148.1, 147.2, 141.7, 138.4, 131.8, 129.8,
219 129.2, 128.7, 127.5, 121.7, 97.5, 60.0, 59.5, 35.2, 18.9, 14.3; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for
220 $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{22}\text{BrN}_4\text{O}_2\text{S}$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 485.0641 found (ESI $^+$) 485.0643.

221 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-7-(furan-2-yl)-5-methyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
222 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9g**): white solid, 82% yield; mp 195–197 °C; ^1H NMR (DMSO-
223 d_6 , 400 MHz): 10.92 (s, 1H, NH), 7.56 (s, 1H, CH), 7.31–7.32 (m, 2H, ArH), 7.21–7.27
224 (m, 3H, ArH), 6.39–6.40 (m, 1H, ArH), 6.33 (m, 2H, ArH), 4.27 (d, $J = 13.2$ Hz, 1H, SCH $_2$),
225 4.20 (d, $J = 13.2$ Hz, 1H, SCH $_2$), 3.96–4.07 (m, 2H, OCH $_2$ CH $_3$), 2.38 (s, 3H, CCH $_3$), 1.10
226 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 3H, OCH $_2$ CH $_3$); ^{13}C NMR (DMSO- d_6 , 100 MHz): 165.3, 158.3, 153.5, 148.5,
227 147.5, 143.2, 138.4, 129.3, 128.8, 127.6, 111.0, 108.0, 95.4, 59.9, 53.3, 35.2, 18.9, 14.4;
228 HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{21}\text{N}_4\text{O}_3\text{S}$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 397.1329, found (ESI $^+$) 397.1327.

229 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-5-methyl-7-(thiophen-2-yl)-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
230 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9h**): white solid, 95% yield; mp 170–172 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-
231 *d*₆, 400 MHz): 10.98 (s, 1H, NH), 7.43–7.45 (m, 1H, ArH), 7.31–7.33 (m, 2H, ArH),
232 7.21–7.27 (m, 3H, ArH), 6.94–6.96 (m, 2H), 6.53 (s, 1H, CH), 4.26 (d, *J* = 13.3 Hz, 1H,
233 SCH₂), 4.21 (d, *J* = 13.3 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 3.96–4.07 (m, 2H, OCH₂CH₃), 2.39 (s, 3H, CCH₃),
234 1.10 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H, OCH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 164.8, 157.9, 147.7,
235 145.0, 137.9, 128.8, 128.3, 127.1, 126.8, 125.9, 125.6, 97.6, 59.5, 54.3, 34.8, 18.3, 13.9;
236 HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₂₀H₂₁N₄O₂S₂ [M+H]⁺ 413.1100, found (ESI⁺) 413.1101.

237 Ethyl 2-(benzylthio)-5-methyl-7-propyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidine
238 -6-carboxylate (**9i**): white solid, 75% yield; mp 172–174 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400
239 MHz): 10.56 (s, 1H, NH), 7.36–7.38 (m, 2H, ArH), 7.23–7.30 (m, 3H, ArH), 5.27 (t, *J* =
240 3.92 Hz, 1H, CH), 4.30 (d, *J* = 13.4 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.25 (d, *J* = 13.4 Hz, 1H, SCH₂),
241 4.05–4.17 (m, 2H, OCH₂CH₃), 2.30 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 1.71–1.80 (m, 1H,), 1.54–1.61 (m,
242 1H), 1.23 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H, OCH₂CH₃), 1.68–1.24 (m, 1H, CH₂CH₂CH₃), 0.75–0.82 (m,
243 4H, CH₂CH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 165.7, 157.6, 149.0, 147.6, 138.5,
244 129.2, 128.8, 127.6, 96.8, 60.0, 56.0, 38.0, 35.5, 18.9, 17.2, 14.6, 14.0; HR-MS (ESI):
245 Calcd for C₁₉H₂₅N₄O₂S [M+H]⁺ 373.1693, found (ESI⁺) 373.1697.

246 Ethyl 5-methyl-2-((4-methylbenzyl)thio)-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
247 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9j**): white solid, 95% yield; mp 157–160 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-

248 d_6 , 400 MHz): 10.87 (s, 1H, NH), 6.99–7.33 (m, 10H, ArH), 6.21 (s, 1H, CH), 4.18 (d, J =
249 12.8 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.12 (d, J = 12.7 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 3.93–3.96 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₃), 2.40
250 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 2.23 (s, 3H, ArCH₃), 1.04 (t, J = 5.6 Hz, 3H, CH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO- d_6 ,
251 100 MHz): 165.0, 157.7, 147.6, 146.3, 141.8, 136.2, 134.8, 128.8, 128.6, 128.4, 127.9,
252 127.0, 97.6, 59.5, 59.4, 34.5, 20.6, 18.4, 13.8; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for C₂₃H₂₅N₄O₂S
253 [M+H]⁺ 421.1693, found (ESI⁺) 421.1697.

254 Ethyl 5-methyl-2-((3-methoxybenzyl)thio)-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
255 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9k**): white solid, 93% yield; mp 151–153 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-
256 d_6 , 400 MHz): 10.89 (s, 1H, NH), 7.21–7.32 (m, 5H, ArH), 7.11 (t, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH),
257 6.88 (s, 1H, ArH), 6.82 (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.77 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.21 (s,
258 1H, CH), 4.20 (d, J = 13.4 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.16 (d, J = 13.1 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 3.93–3.97 (m,
259 2H, CH₂CH₃), 3.67 (s, 3H, OCH₃), 2.40 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 1.03 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H, CH₂CH₃);
260 ¹³C NMR (DMSO- d_6 , 100 MHz): 164.9, 159.1, 157.8, 147.7, 146.3, 141.8, 139.3, 129.3,
261 128.4, 127.9, 127.0, 120.9, 114.2, 112.6, 97.7, 59.5, 59.4, 54.9, 34.8, 18.3, 13.8; HR-MS
262 (ESI): Calcd for C₂₃H₂₅N₄O₃S [M+H]⁺ 437.1642, found (ESI⁺) 437.1639.

263 Ethyl 5-methyl-2-((4-fluorobenzyl)thio)-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
264 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9l**): white solid, 91% yield; mp 179–181 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-
265 d_6 , 400 MHz): 10.87 (s, 1H, NH), 7.22–7.34 (m, 7H, ArH), 6.99 (t, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H, ArH),
266 6.21 (s, 1H, CH), 4.22 (d, J = 13.4 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.14 (d, J = 13.4 Hz, 1H, SCH₂),

267 3.93–3.96 (m, 2H, CH_2CH_3), 2.40 (s, 3H, CCH_3), 1.02 (t, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 3H, CH_2CH_3); ^{13}C
268 NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$, 100 MHz): 165.0, 161.4 (d, $J = 243.1$ Hz), 157.5, 147.7, 146.3, 141.8,
269 134.3 (d, $J = 2.6$ Hz), 130.7 (d, $J = 8.1$ Hz), 128.4, 128.0, 127.0, 114.9 (d, $J = 21.3$ Hz),
270 97.6, 59.5, 59.4, 33.8, 18.4, 13.8; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{22}\text{FN}_4\text{O}_2\text{S}$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$
271 425.1442, found (ESI $^+$) 425.1447.

272 Ethyl 5-methyl-2-((4-chlorobenzyl)thio)-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
273 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9m**): white solid, 93% yield; mp 108–111 °C; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 ,
274 400 MHz): 10.58 (s, 1H, NH), 7.32 (s, 5H, ArH), 7.05–7.07 (m, 4H, ArH), 6.34 (s, 1H,
275 CH), 4.23 (d, $J = 13.4$ Hz, 1H, SCH_2), 4.04–4.08 (m, 2H, CH_2CH_3), 4.02 (d, $J = 13.4$ Hz,
276 1H, SCH_2), 2.57 (s, 3H, CCH_3), 1.13 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 3H, CH_2CH_3); ^{13}C NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$,
277 100 MHz): 164.6, 157.0, 147.3, 146.0, 141.5, 136.9, 131.2, 130.2, 128.1, 127.8, 127.6,
278 126.7, 97.2, 59.2, 59.0, 33.5, 18.0, 13.5; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{22}\text{ClN}_4\text{O}_2\text{S}$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$
279 441.1447, found (ESI $^+$) 441.1145.

280 Ethyl 5-methyl-2-((2-chloro-4-fluorobenzyl)thio)-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo
281 [1,5-*a*]pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9n**): white solid, 94% yield; mp 195–198 °C; ^1H NMR
282 (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz): 10.78 (s, 1H, NH), 7.32 (s, 5H, ArH), 6.96–7.03 (m, 2H, ArH), 6.50
283 (t, $J = 6.5$ Hz, 1H, ArH), 6.34 (s, 1H, ArH), 4.31 (d, $J = 13.7$ Hz, 1H, SCH_2), 4.13 (d, $J =$
284 13.6 Hz, 1H, SCH_2), 4.04–4.07 (m, 2H, CH_2CH_3), 2.57 (s, 3H, CCH_3), 1.13 (t, $J = 6.9$ Hz,
285 3H, CH_2CH_3); ^{13}C NMR ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$, 100 MHz): 164.9, 161.0 (d, $J = 247.4$ Hz), 157.0,

286 147.7, 146.3, 141.8, 133.8 (d, $J = 10.6$ Hz), 132.2 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz), 131.7 (d, $J = 3.1$ Hz),
287 128.4, 128.0, 127.1, 116.6 (d, $J = 25.1$ Hz), 114.0 (d, $J = 21.0$ Hz), 97.6, 59.6, 59.4, 32.2,
288 18.3, 13.8; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for $C_{22}H_{21}ClFN_4O_2S$ $[M+H]^+$ 459.1052, found (ESI⁺)
289 459.1047.

290 Ethyl 5-methyl-2-((4-nitrobenzyl)thio)-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]
291 pyrimidine-6-carboxylate (**9o**): white solid, 91% yield; mp 172–175 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-
292 *d*₆, 400 MHz): 10.86 (s, 1H, NH), 8.00 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 2H, ArH), 7.48 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 2H,
293 ArH), 7.27–7.36 (m, 3H, ArH), 7.20–7.22 (m, 2H, ArH), 6.20 (s, 1H, CH), 4.34 (d, $J =$
294 14.0 Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.26 (d, $J = 13.9$ Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 3.92–3.96 (m, 2H, CH₂CH₃), 2.39
295 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 1.02 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 3H, CH₂CH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 164.9,
296 162.3, 156.9, 147.8, 146.5, 146.3, 141.8, 129.9, 128.4, 127.9, 127.0, 123.2, 97.6, 59.5, 59.4,
297 33.8, 18.3, 13.8; HR-MS (ESI): Calcd for $C_{22}H_{22}N_5O_4S$ $[M+H]^+$ 452.1387, found (ESI⁺)
298 452.1389.

299 (2-(Benzylthio)-5-methyl-7-phenyl-4,7-dihydro-[1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-6-
300 yl)ethanone (**10**): white solid, 87% yield; mp 203–205 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 400 MHz):
301 10.85 (s, 1H, NH), 7.25–7.33 (m, 7H, ArH), 7.19–7.21 (m, 3H, ArH), 6.42 (s, 1H, CH),
302 4.25 (d, $J = 13.3$ Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 4.17 (d, $J = 13.3$ Hz, 1H, SCH₂), 2.42 (s, 3H, CCH₃), 2.13
303 (s, 3H, C=OCH₃); ¹³C NMR (DMSO-*d*₆, 100 MHz): 195.2, 158.2, 147.9, 146.1, 141.8,
304 138.5, 129.1, 129.2, 128.9, 128.8, 127.8, 127.5, 108.2, 59.9, 35.2, 31.0, 19.9; HR-MS (ESI):

305 Calcd for C₂₁H₂₁N₄OS [M+H]⁺ 377.1431, found (ESI⁺) 377.1437

306 **Biological Assay.** Each bioassay was repeated three times at 25±1 °C. Activity results were
307 estimated according to a percentage scale of 0–100 (0: no activity; 100: total inhibited).

308 Detailed bioassay procedures for the anti-TMV²⁸ and fungicidal²⁹⁻³¹ activities were
309 described in literature and also can be found in the Supporting Information.

310 **Mode of Action Studies.** The detailed procedures of *in vitro* TMV rod and 20S CP disk
311 assembly inhibition was described in literature¹³ and also can be found in the Supporting
312 Information.

313 **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

314 **Chemistry.**

315 *Synthesis of the Compounds 1–10.* Procedures for the preparation of compounds **1**, **2**, **3**,
316 **4b** and **5a–5g** (Figure 3) can be seen in Supporting Information. Essramycin (**1**) and 2-
317 (5-amino-4*H*-1,2,4-triazol-3-yl)-1-phenylethanone (**2**) were synthesized according to the
318 method reported by Moody with modification.¹⁵ Methyl ester **4b** was obtained in good
319 yield by esterification of **4a** with methanol in the presence of SOCl₂.³² Condensation of 3-
320 amino-5-thiol-1,2,4-triazole and corresponding alkyl bromides in the presence of triethyl
321 amine to give triazoles **5a–5g** in excellent yields.²⁰ Compounds **6**, **7a–7c** and **8a–8g** were
322 prepared by condensation of corresponding 3-amino-1,2,4-triazoles and corresponding

ethyl acetoacetates in acetic acid (Figure 4). The tautomeric structures (Figure 5) of a large variety of 1,2,4-triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidines have been determined in literature.^{33,34} The structures of **1**, **6–8** were validated as the lactam tautomeric forms via comparison of ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR with literature. Compounds **7a** and **7b** were obtained as 2-decarboxylic 1,2,4-triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidines rather than design products. In order to determine the structures of **7a** and **7b**, the single crystal of **7a** was obtained (Figure 6, CCDC number: 1948036), which enabled the configuration of the product to be 2-decarboxylic 1,2,4-triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidine. The configuration of **7b** was assigned by analogy. Compound **7d** was obtained by hydrazinolysis of **7c** with hydrazine hydrate in 98% yield (Figure 4). Compound **7e** was gained by hydrolysis of **7c** with lithium hydroxide hydrate with 91% yield (Figure 7).

Compounds **9a–9o** and **10** were obtained in excellent yields (Figure 8). The Biginelli-like heterocyclization reaction of aldehyde, β -dicarbonyl compound and 3-alkylthio-5-amino-1,2,4-triazole was used.

Phytotoxic Activity. Compounds **1–10** were first tested for their phytotoxic activities against the test plant. The results indicated that compounds **1–10** showed no phytotoxic activities at 500 μ g/mL. There was no lesions on the tobacco leaves.

Antiviral Activity. The inhibition ratio of essramycin and its analogues against TMV are shown in Tables 1 and 2 with the commercial plant virucides ribavirin and

342 ningnanmycin as the controls.

343 *In Vitro Anti-TMV Activity.* The natural alkaloid essramycin (**1**) and its analogues **2–10**
344 were first investigated for their *in vitro* inhibition ratio against TMV using conventional
345 half-leaf method.²⁸ Essramycin alkaloids were found to have good antiviral activities for
346 the first time. Most of these compounds exhibited higher antiviral activities than ribavirin
347 (Table 1). Compounds **7e** and **8f** exhibited significantly higher TMV inhibition effects than
348 ningnanmycin (the most widely used antiviral agent at present), thus emerged as novel
349 antiviral lead compounds. Essramycin (**1**) gave 39% inhibition ratio at 500 $\mu\text{g/mL}$, which
350 about similar to that of ribavirin. Interestingly, pyrimidine ring opening compound **2**
351 exhibited better activity than essramycin (**1**). The biological activity was further improved
352 after the phenyl was converted into carboxyl group (inhibitory effect: **3** > **2**). Further
353 reducing one methylene of compound **3** led to a decrease in activity (inhibitory effect:
354 **3** > **4a**). However, **4b**, a carboxylic ester compound, exhibited the same level of biological
355 activity as compound **3**. Above results indicate that minor changes of groups at 2-position
356 can lead to significant changes in biological activity. A series of sulfur-containing
357 functional groups were introduced into the 2-site to further investigate the structure-activity
358 relationship in this region. Compounds **5a–5c** showed similar level of activities with **3** and
359 higher than essramycin (**1**). Compounds **5d**, **5e** containing *p*-fluorophenyl and *p*-
360 chlorophenyl exhibited the same biological activities as **1**. Among compounds **5a–5g**,
361 compound **5f** containing 4-fluoro-2-chlorophenyl showed the best activity, while

362 compound **5g** containing *p*-nitrophenyl showed the lowest activity, indicated that the
363 electron-withdrawing group was unfavorable to the activity. The 1,2,4-triazolo[1,5-
364 *a*]pyrimidine compound **6** displayed the same activity as **3** but higher than compound **1**.
365 Compounds **7a** and **7b** with a hydrogen atom, **7c** with methyl formyl, and **7d** with
366 formylhydrazine showed a similar level of activities as ribavirin. Compared with **7a**,
367 substitution of the *n*-propyl group (**7b**) in 5-position of 1,2,4-triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidine
368 resulted in sharp decline of anti-TMV activity, which indicated that addition of a lipophilic
369 group on 5-position of 1,2,4-triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidine is inadvisable. The COOH
370 containing compound **7e** exhibited higher activity than compounds **6**, **4a** and ningnanmycin.
371 Compound **8a** containing –SCH₂Ph showed about similar level of TMV inhibition effect
372 with compounds **6** and **4a**. Encouraged by these results, essramycin analogues **8b–8g**
373 containing kinds of *S*-benzyl groups were further designed. Compounds with electron-
374 withdrawing groups (**8d**, **8e** and **8g**) at the *S*-benzyl ring showed relatively lower activities
375 than **8a**. However, **8f** with electron-withdrawing groups 4-F and 2-Cl performed excellent
376 anti-TMV activity. Compounds **8b** and **8c** with electron-donating groups at *S*-benzyl ring
377 displayed about similar level of activities as compound **8a**. From the above results, we can
378 see that biological activity is very sensitive to structural changes. In order to further
379 investigate the effect of substituent change at other sites on biological activity, compounds
380 **9a–9o** and **10** were designed and synthesized. The results proved that the 5-methyl-
381 [1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidin-7(4*H*)-one is important core structure for activity

382 (inhibitory effect: **8a** > **9a**; **8b** > **9j**; **8c** > **9k**; **8d** > **9l**; **8f** > **9n**; **8g** > **9o**). Compounds **9b–9d**
383 showed slightly higher activities than **9a**. The activities of **9e**, **9f** and **9i** are higher than that
384 of ribavirin. Compounds **9g**, **9h**, **9j–9o** and **10** displayed relatively low activities.

385 *In Vivo Anti-TMV Activity.* All of target compounds and a part of intermediates were
386 investigated *in vivo* antiviral activities against TMV using our reported method.²⁸ As shown
387 in Table 2, most of the target compounds also exhibited higher *in vivo* TMV inhibitory
388 effects than commercial ribavirin. Compounds **3**, **5f**, **6**, **8c** and **9e** showed about similar
389 level of TMV inhibitory effects as ningnanmycin. Compounds **7e** and **8f** displayed
390 significantly higher TMV inhibitory effects than ningnanmycin. Unlike the data of *in vitro*
391 anti-TMV activity, the curative effects were slightly decreased. Other structure-activity
392 relationships are consistent with *in vitro* activity. The EC₅₀ value of compound **7e** for
393 protection effect was further investigated to further confirm the activity data. As shown in
394 Table 3, compound **7e** displayed 197 μg/mL EC₅₀ value which is lower than that of ribavirin
395 (711 μg/mL) and ningnanmycin (204 μg/mL).

396 **Preliminary Mode of Action**

397 With lead compounds in hand, we began to study their mechanism of action. Compound
398 **7e** was selected to investigate preliminary mode of action with RNA inhibitor antofine³⁵
399 and CP disk assembly inhibitor NK0209³⁶ as controls. As shown in Figure 9, Figure 9A
400 and Figure 9B revealed that 20S CP disk and TMV rod can be formed effectively. The use

401 of a small amount of DMSO did not affect virus assembly (Figure 9C). The bits and pieces
402 of TMV rod in Figure 9D and Figure 9E revealed that antofine and NK0209 can obviously
403 inhibit the assembly of TMV rods. From Figure 9E, we can also see a large number of 20S
404 CP disk, which further proved that antofine had no effect on protein. By comparing the
405 Figures 9D, 9E and 9F, we can see that compound **7e** has a better inhibitory effect on virus
406 assembly than controls antofine and NK0209. Further 20S CP disk assembly inhibition
407 tests were carried out to evaluate the interaction of compound **7e** with TMV CP. As
408 depicted in Figure 10, the 20S CP disk can be gained by hatching TMV CP at 20 °C for 12
409 h (Figure 10A). The use of small amount of DMSO did not affect the formation of 20S CP
410 disk (Figure 10B). Antofine has no impact on 20S CP disk assembly (Figure 10C). As CP
411 disk assembly inhibitor, NK0209 exhibited obviously impact on the 20S CP disk, which
412 can induce fusion and aggregation of 20S CP disks (Figure 10D). Comparing with Figure
413 10D, there are larger number of CP disks aggregated and fused in Figures 10E and 10F.
414 The above results suggested that compound **7e** may inhibit viral assembly by fusing 20S
415 CP disks, thus exerting its antiviral activity.

416 **Fungicidal Activity.** The fungicidal activities of compounds **1–10** on 14 kinds of plant
417 fungi at 50 µg/mL were evaluated with commercial fungicides chlorothalonil and
418 carbendazim as controls (Table 4). All of the compounds displayed broad spectrum
419 fungicidal activities at 50 µg/mL. Compound **5b** displayed more than 50% inhibition rate
420 against most of the 14 kinds of phytopathogenic fungi at 50 µg/mL. Compounds **5a–5c** and

421 **8e** displayed higher fungicidal activities than carbendazim against *Botrytis cinerea*. The
422 fungicidal activity of **5b** against *Cercospora arachidicola* Hori is higher than that of
423 commercial fungicides chlorothalonil and carbendazim. Compounds **5b** and **9n** displayed
424 higher fungicidal activities than chlorothalonil and carbendazim against *Rhizoctonia*
425 *cerealis*. Compound **5b** with broad spectrum and high effect fungicidal activity emerged
426 as new fungicidal lead compound.

427 In summary, marine natural product essramycin (**1**) was found to have good anti-TMV
428 activity for the first time. A series of [1,2,4]triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidines were designed,
429 synthesized and evaluated for their anti-TMV activities systematically. Most of these
430 compounds exhibited higher antiviral activities than ribavirin. Compounds **3**, **5f**, **6**, **8c** and
431 **9e** showed about similar level of TMV inhibitory effects as ningnanmycin. Compounds **7e**
432 and **8f** exhibited significantly higher TMV inhibition effects than ningnanmycin, thus
433 emerged as novel antiviral lead compounds. The structure-activity relationship study
434 revealed that the biological activity is very sensitive to structural changes for these
435 compounds. Compound **7e** was selected to further investigate preliminary mode of action.
436 The results revealed that compound **7e** may inhibit viral assembly by fusing 20S CP disks,
437 thus exerting its antiviral activity. All of the compounds also displayed broad spectrum
438 fungicidal activities against 14 kinds of phytopathogenic fungi at 50 µg/mL. Compound **5b**
439 with broad spectrum and high effect fungicidal activity emerged as new fungicidal lead
440 compound. Current work demonstrated that these simple essramycin analogues could be

441 considered as potential candidates for the development of novel plant virus and
442 fungi inhibitors in the future.

443 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

444 Detailed preparation procedures of **1–5**, detailed bio-assay procedures and the spectra data
445 of compounds **1–10** are provided in Supporting Information. This material is available free
446 of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

447 **Funding**

448 This study was supported by Natural Science Fund of China (21772145, 21732002,
449 21672117) and the Research Innovation Program for Postgraduate of Hebei Province
450 (CXZZSS219014).

451 **Notes**

452 The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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575

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Structures of Essramycin, Ribavirin and Ningnanmycin.

Figure 2. Design of Essramycin Analogues.

Figure 3. Structures of Compounds **1–5**.

Figure 4 Synthesis of Compounds **6**, **7a–7d** and **8a–8g**.

Figure 5. Different Tautomeric Forms of 1,2,4-Triazolo[1,5-*a*]pyrimidines.

Figure 6 X-ray Crystal Structure of **7a**.

Figure 7 Synthesis of Compound **7e**.

Figure 8 Synthesis of Compounds **9a–9o** and **10**.

Figure 9 TMV Rod Assembly Inhibition of Compound **7e**, NK0209 and Antofine.

Figure 10 20S CP Disk Assembly Inhibition of Compounds **7e**, NK0209, and Antofine.

Table 1. *In Vitro* Antiviral Activities of Compounds **1–10**, Ribavirin and Ningnanmycin Against TMV.

Compd	Concn	Inhibition	Compd	Concn	Inhibition
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	($\mu\text{g/mL}$)	rate (%) ^a		($\mu\text{g/mL}$)	rate (%) ^a
1	500	39 \pm 2	8e	500	37 \pm 2
	100	12 \pm 2		100	14 \pm 3
2	500	44 \pm 1	8f	500	63\pm3
	100	13 \pm 2		100	29\pm1
3	500	56\pm1	8g	500	37 \pm 2
	100	23\pm1		100	14 \pm 1
4a	500	42 \pm 2	9a	500	34 \pm 1
	100	12 \pm 1		100	0
4b	500	53 \pm 1	9b	500	41 \pm 1
	100	19 \pm 1		100	15 \pm 2
5a	500	52 \pm 4	9c	500	43 \pm 3
	100	21 \pm 3		100	13 \pm 2
5b	500	51 \pm 1	9d	500	46 \pm 1
	100	21 \pm 2		100	16 \pm 2
5c	500	53 \pm 2	9e	500	56\pm2
	100	21 \pm 2		100	25\pm2
5d	500	42 \pm 2	9f	500	48 \pm 1
	100	15 \pm 1		100	18 \pm 1
5e	500	39 \pm 2	9g	500	39 \pm 2
	100	12 \pm 1		100	0
5f	500	59\pm1	9h	500	25 \pm 3

	100	28±3		100	0
5g	500	32±1	9i	500	48±2
	100	0		100	21±2
6	500	57±3	9j	500	39±1
	100	27±1		100	17±3
7a	500	40±3	9k	500	41±1
	100	13±1		100	19±2
7b	500	35±2	9l	500	31±3
	100	0		100	0
7c	500	32±1	9m	500	38±1
	100	0		100	15±1
7d	500	43±2	9n	500	42±1
	100	17±2		100	13±2
7e	500	65±2	9o	500	23±2
	100	29±3		100	0
8a	500	55±2	10	500	39±3
	100	23±1		100	12±1
8b	500	54±1	Ningnanmycin	500	58±2
	100	21±1		100	23±2
8c	500	58±1	Ribavirin	500	41±1
	100	25±2		100	15±2
8d	500	43±3	<i>^aAverage of three replicates; All results are</i>		

100

19±2

expressed as mean ± SD; Activity Data with prominent were presented in blue bold.

Table 2. *In Vivo* Antiviral Activities of Compounds 1–10, Ribavirin and Ningnanmycin Against TMV.

Compd	Concn (µg/mL)	Inactive effect (%) ^a	Curative effect (%) ^a	Protective effect (%) ^a	Compd	Concn (µg/mL)	Inactive effect (%) ^a	Curative effect (%) ^a	Protective effect (%) ^a
1	500	41±2	35±4	32±3	8e	500	41±3	33±3	47±4
	100	11±1	9±1	15±1		100	12±2	14±1	15±3
2	500	43±4	41±1	49±2	8f	500	60±4	59±3	64±3
	100	9±1	11±1	13±1		100	28±1	25±1	26±1
3	500	55±3	50±4	60±2	8g	500	35±2	33±1	40±1
	100	23±1	16±1	27±1		100	10±2	11±2	0
4a	500	43±2	39±1	44±2	9a	500	37±4	34±2	33±1
	100	10±1	6±1	13±1		100	0	0	0
4b	500	51±1	56±3	44±3	9b	500	43±1	39±2	46±3
	100	20±2	17±2	16±1		100	17±3	15±1	19±3
5a	500	50±4	45±4	55±3	9c	500	41±2	37±3	43±4
	100	19±1	16±1	23±1		100	12±2	0	19±3
5b	500	49±4	48±2	50±1	9d	500	49±2	43±3	48±2
	100	15±1	17±2	24±2		100	17±2	11±2	15±1
5c	500	55±1	46±3	53±3	9e	500	53±5	56±3	58±4
	100	20±2	12±1	19±1		100	26±2	27±1	19±1

5d	500	39±2	32±1	41±3	9f	500	45±1	40±2	50±1
	100	11±1	9±2	13±1		100	19±1	13±1	15±3
5e	500	40±1	30±1	42±2	9g	500	41±1	37±3	39±3
	100	11±3	9±1	8±1		100	13±1	0	12±4
5f	500	55±2	56±1	58±2	9h	500	29±4	23±3	23±2
	100	26±1	19±1	24±1		100	0	0	0
5g	500	35±1	30±2	34±2	9i	500	51±2	46±2	48±3
	100	0	0	0		100	24±1	19±1	23±1
6	500	56±4	57±2	58±1	9j	500	40±2	35±1	36±1
	100	25±1	23±3	28±1		100	18±1	13±3	12±2
7a	500	44±2	41±3	41±1	9k	500	39±2	40±1	41±3
	100	12±1	13±2	13±1		100	18±1	19±3	18±2
7b	500	37±1	39±1	35±1	9l	500	33±4	30±2	31±1
	100	11±1	12±3	0		100	0	0	0
7c	500	39±2	32±1	33±1	9m	500	39±2	33±1	36±1
	100	10±1	0	12±1		100	12±1	11±1	13±1
7d	500	46±1	40±2	43±2	9n	500	43±3	39±2	40±2
	100	13±1	15±2	17±1		100	15±1	13±1	15±1
7e	500	62±3	64±2	68±4	9o	500	27±3	21±3	23±2
	100	31±2	28±1	29±1		100	0	0	0
8a	500	59±3	52±4	50±3	10	500	40±2	38±1	42±2
	100	29±2	21±1	25±2		100	19±1	17±2	18±5

8b	500	55±3	53±1	53±1	Ningnanmycin	500	55±2	52±3	59±2
	100	23±1	19±2	23±2		100	28±2	22±2	26±3
8c	500	60±1	53±3	55±1	Ribavirin	500	39±2	38±3	40±1
	100	27±4	19±2	23±2		100	13±1	11±1	14±1
8d	500	45±5	36±2	47±3	<i>^a Average of three replicates; All results are expressed as mean ± SD; Activity Data with prominent were presented in blue bold.</i>				
	100	13±1	17±2	12±1					

Table 3. The EC₅₀ values of compound **7e**, ribavirin and ningnanmycin against TMV.

Compd.	regression equation	<i>r</i>	Protective effect EC ₅₀ (µg/mL)
7e	y = 1.39 + 1.57x	0.9863	197
Ribavirin	y = 1.64 + 1.18x	0.9717	711
Ningnanmycin	y = 1.59 + 1.48x	0.9804	204

Table 4. Fungicidal Activities of the Compounds **1-10** against 14 Kinds of Fungi.

Compd	Fungicidal activity (%) ^a / 50 mg kg ⁻¹													
	<i>B.C^b</i>	<i>S.S^b</i>	<i>R.S^b</i>	<i>C.H^b</i>	<i>F.M^b</i>	<i>F.C^b</i>	<i>P.C^b</i>	<i>W.A^b</i>	<i>B.M^b</i>	<i>P.I^b</i>	<i>A.S^b</i>	<i>P.P^b</i>	<i>F.G^b</i>	<i>R.C^b</i>
1	46±1	8±1	26±2	15±1	18±2	9±1	21±3	15±1	26±1	58±2	19±1	7±1	16±2	57±1
2	29±1	25±2	19±1	11±1	11±2	12±1	12±2	18±1	18±2	12±1	10±1	13±2	14±1	27±1
3	46±1	33±2	44±2	51±1	34±3	28±1	33±1	49±2	30±1	55±2	38±1	34±2	22±1	56±1
4a	27±1	26±2	15±1	7±1	19±2	11±1	0	6±1	17±1	16±1	35±2	45±3	16±2	27±1
4b	22±1	11±2	12±1	4±1	12±2	9±1	9±1	11±1	6±1	9±1	23±2	23±1	16±1	22±1
5a	59±3	30±1	30±2	26±3	12±1	3±1	3±1	17±1	11±1	9±1	27±1	29±1	15±2	59±2

5b	57±2	41±1	54±2	75±1	51±2	46±1	48±2	53±1	17±2	52±1	45±1	58±2	59±1	81±3
5c	67±2	25±2	41±1	37±3	32±1	18±4	12±1	28±1	10±1	15±3	29±3	19±2	23±3	54±1
5d	22±1	27±2	36±1	45±2	31±1	26±2	37±1	46±1	22±3	34±1	12±2	52±1	42±2	56±3
5e	12±2	8±1	12±3	25±1	17±1	11±2	17±1	13±2	17±1	18±2	22±1	6±1	16±2	57±1
5f	22±1	42±2	12±1	9±2	14±1	5±1	24±2	34±1	34±2	28±1	13±2	18±1	22±1	38±1
5g	21±2	36±2	22±1	33±2	29±1	36±2	34±1	30±3	46±2	39±1	37±1	21±1	35±2	50±1
6	12±1	11±2	18±1	4±1	12±1	14±1	9±1	6±1	3±1	3±1	46±3	10±1	15±1	12±1
7a	15±1	9±1	27±2	7±1	12±1	20±2	6±1	9±1	9±1	3±1	42±1	29±2	21±1	15±2
7b	32±2	18±1	12±1	0	23±2	17±1	6±1	3±1	0	9±1	23±2	48±1	15±1	27±1
7c	24±2	2±1	9±1	11±1	15±2	11±1	3±1	3±1	6±1	6±1	23±2	13±1	8±1	20±1
7d	37±2	40±1	27±2	11±1	19±2	17±1	6±1	11±1	3±1	16±2	54±1	45±2	7±1	37±2
7e	40±1	52±2	37±2	12±2	32±1	36±3	11±1	27±2	21±1	20±1	47±3	53±1	25±2	41±1
8a	37±1	21±1	30±2	15±1	27±3	9±1	6±1	6±1	9±1	6±1	23±1	32±2	12±1	37±2
8b	35±2	28±3	38±1	26±1	17±3	22±2	9±1	14±1	17±1	19±1	33±3	49±2	11±1	48±2
8c	44±3	23±1	26±1	11±1	29±1	17±2	7±1	13±1	15±1	25±1	17±1	39±3	22±1	58±3

8d	51±4	23±1	42±2	16±2	37±3	12±1	9±2	16±1	18±1	17±2	30±2	33±1	31±4	48±2
8e	59±1	39±1	39±2	27±1	43±3	21±1	16±1	21±1	0	5±1	39±1	28±2	22±1	51±1
8f	44±1	28±1	45±3	28±1	17±3	21±1	15±1	32±2	23±1	29±1	36±2	41±2	32±1	35±2
8g	27±2	9±1	36±2	28±1	37±3	27±2	28±1	30±1	18±1	16±1	43±1	30±2	23±1	46±2
9a	42±1	26±1	36±3	22±2	27±1	17±1	9±1	14±1	11±2	16±1	35±1	39±2	15±1	44±2
9b	24±1	0	27±1	7±1	8±1	6±1	9±1	6±1	11±1	13±2	27±1	16±1	18±1	32±1
9c	29±2	9±1	33±1	19±2	4±1	14±2	9±1	17±1	20±1	19±2	27±2	48±1	13±2	39±1
9d	24±1	26±2	27±3	4±1	23±2	11±1	6±1	9±1	9±1	16±1	35±3	48±1	12±1	39±2
9e	24±2	16±1	15±1	11±2	19±2	14±1	9±1	14±1	26±1	22±2	31±2	19±1	16±2	36±1
9f	27±1	11±1	36±2	7±1	19±2	17±1	6±1	11±1	14±2	16±1	27±1	29±1	20±1	54±2
9g	29±2	11±1	27±1	7±1	23±2	9±1	0	14±1	26±2	16±1	27±2	42±2	18±1	42±3
9h	22±2	19±2	0	15±1	19±2	11±2	6±1	9±1	11±1	6±1	0	19±2	16±1	42±1
9i	32±1	7±1	21±2	11±1	15±1	17±2	3±1	0	6±1	3±1	12±1	39±1	16±2	37±2
9j	29±1	10±1	46±2	17±2	21±2	17±1	9±1	13±1	18±2	15±1	33±1	31±2	24±2	63±2
9k	28±2	15±2	39±3	9±1	17±2	18±2	7±1	12±2	17±2	19±2	26±2	32±1	27±1	51±1

9l	22±1	17±2	32±2	8±1	22±3	25±1	5±1	16±2	16±1	19±2	32±3	27±2	22±1	59±2
9m	37±2	25±1	28±2	13±2	22±1	31±3	9±1	13±1	19±2	8±1	20±1	36±2	27±2	68±1
9n	33±1	26±2	56±1	11±1	25±2	25±1	6±1	18±2	22±1	9±1	17±1	20±1	42±1	79±3
9o	21±1	17±1	31±2	15±1	26±2	19±1	16±1	19±2	24±1	12±2	26±2	37±1	29±1	48±2
10	27±2	7±1	15±2	11±1	0	11±1	3±1	11±2	14±2	9±1	35±2	33±3	20±1	32±2
Chlorothalonil ^c	100	86±2	100	71±1	<50	100	92±2	100	<50	90±1	100	100	100	75±2
Carbendazim ^c	<50	100	100	<50	100	<50	100	<50	100	100	<50	<50	100	<50

^aAverage of three replicates; All results are expressed as mean ± SD. ^bB.C, *Botrytis cinerea*; S.S, *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*;

R.S, *Rhizoctonia solani*; C.H, *Cercospora arachidicola* Hori; F.M, *Fusarium moniliforme*; F.C, *Fusarium oxysporium* f.

sp. *cucumeris*; P.C, *Phytophthora capsici*; W.A, watermelon anthracnose; B.M, *Bipolaris maydis*; P.I, *Phytophthora*

infestans; A.S, *Alternaria solani*; P.P, *Phylospora piricola*; F.G, *Fusarium graminearum*; R.C, *Rhizoctonia cerealis*. ^c

The commercial agricultural fungicides were used for comparison of antifungal activity. Activity Data with prominent were presented in blue bold.

Figure 1.

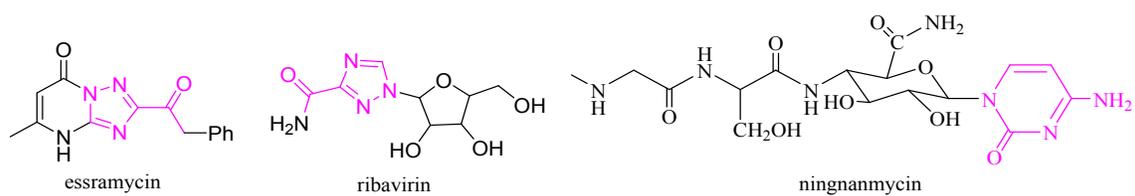


Figure 2.

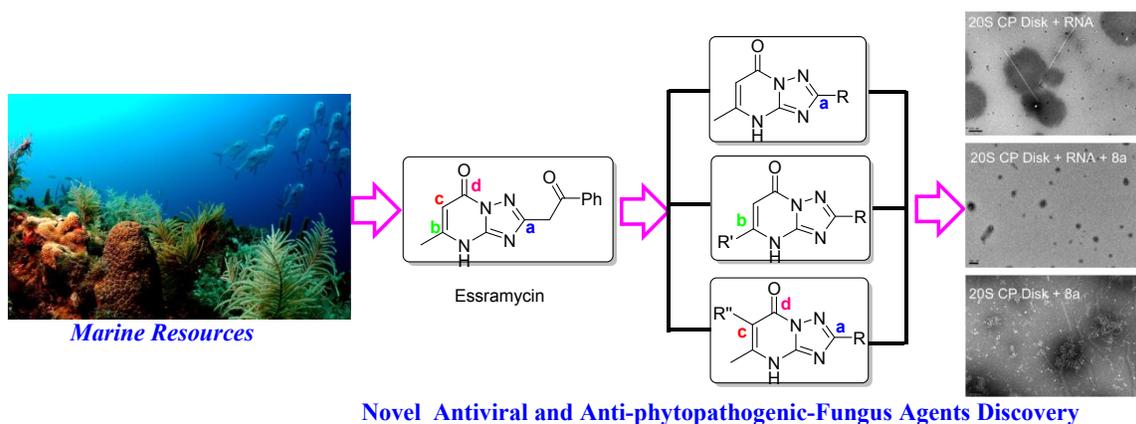


Figure 3.

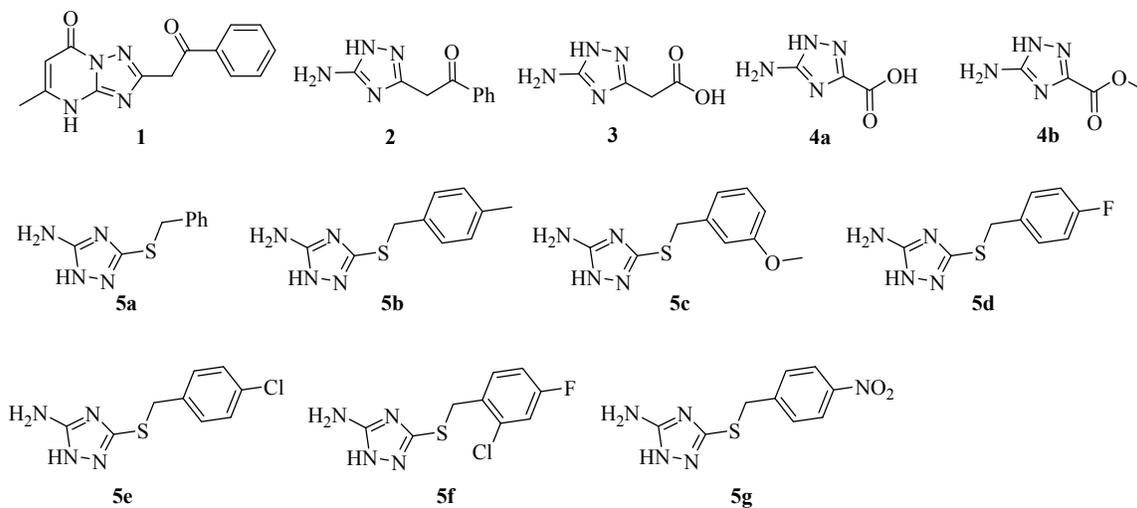


Figure 4.

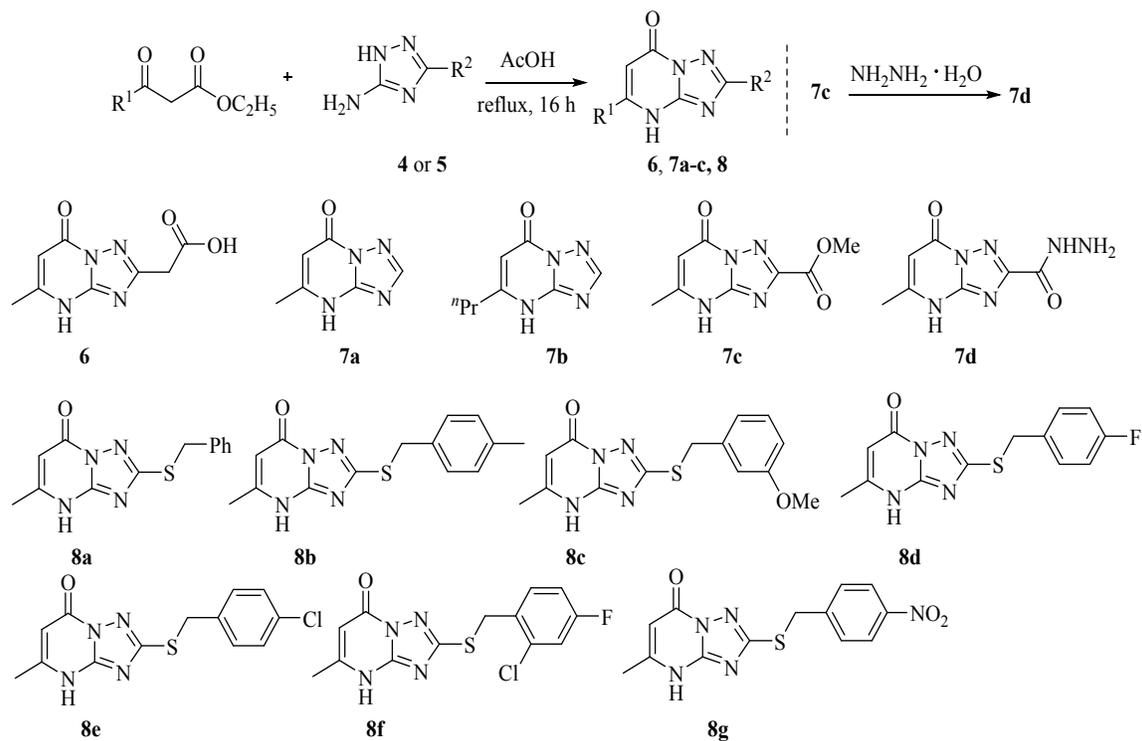


Figure 5.

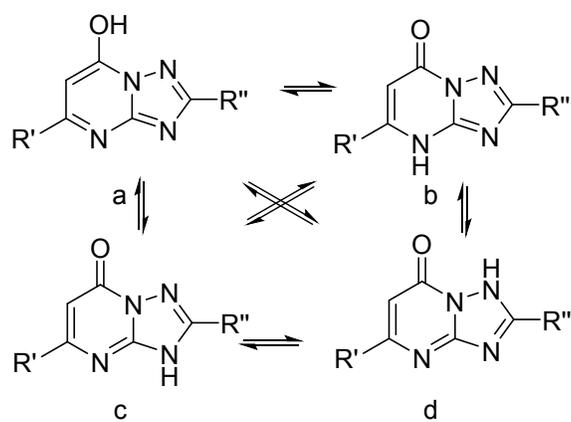


Figure 6.

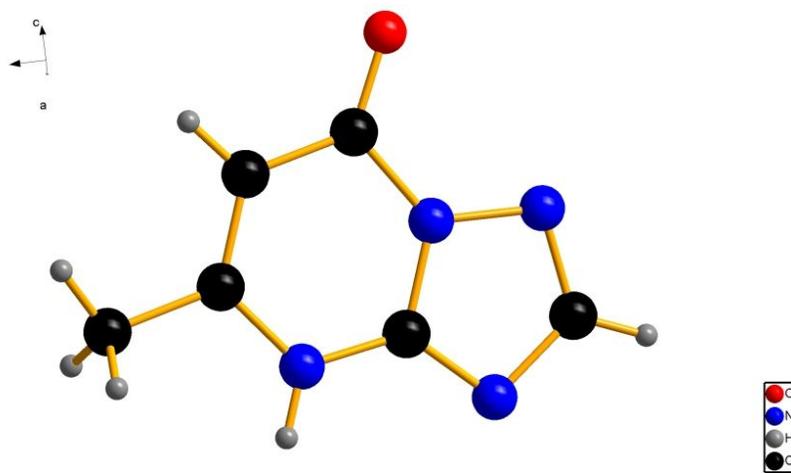


Figure 7.

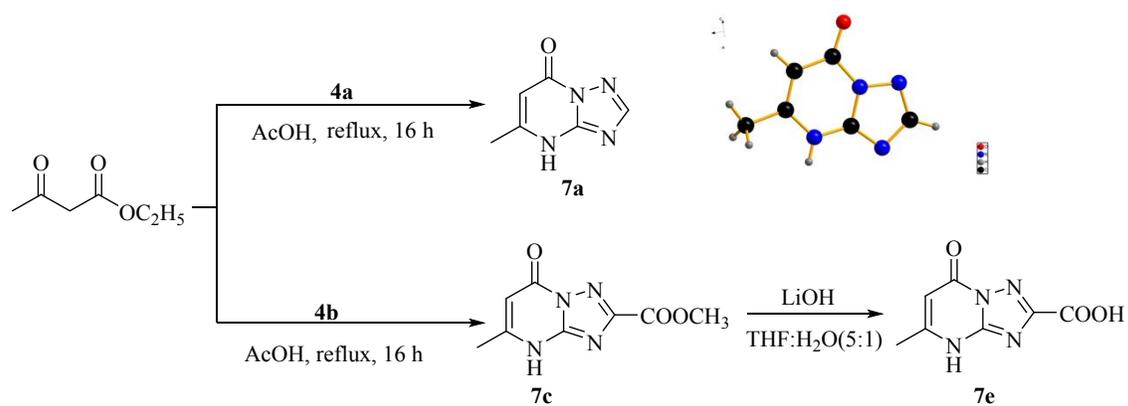
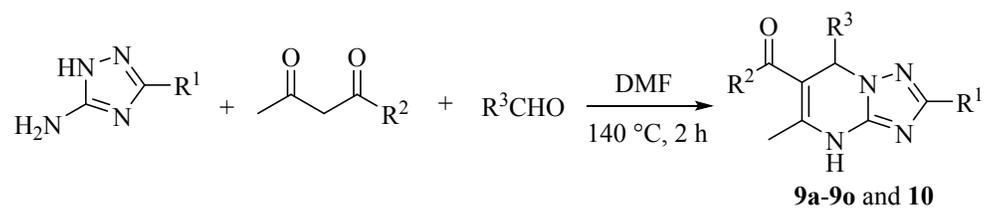


Figure 8.



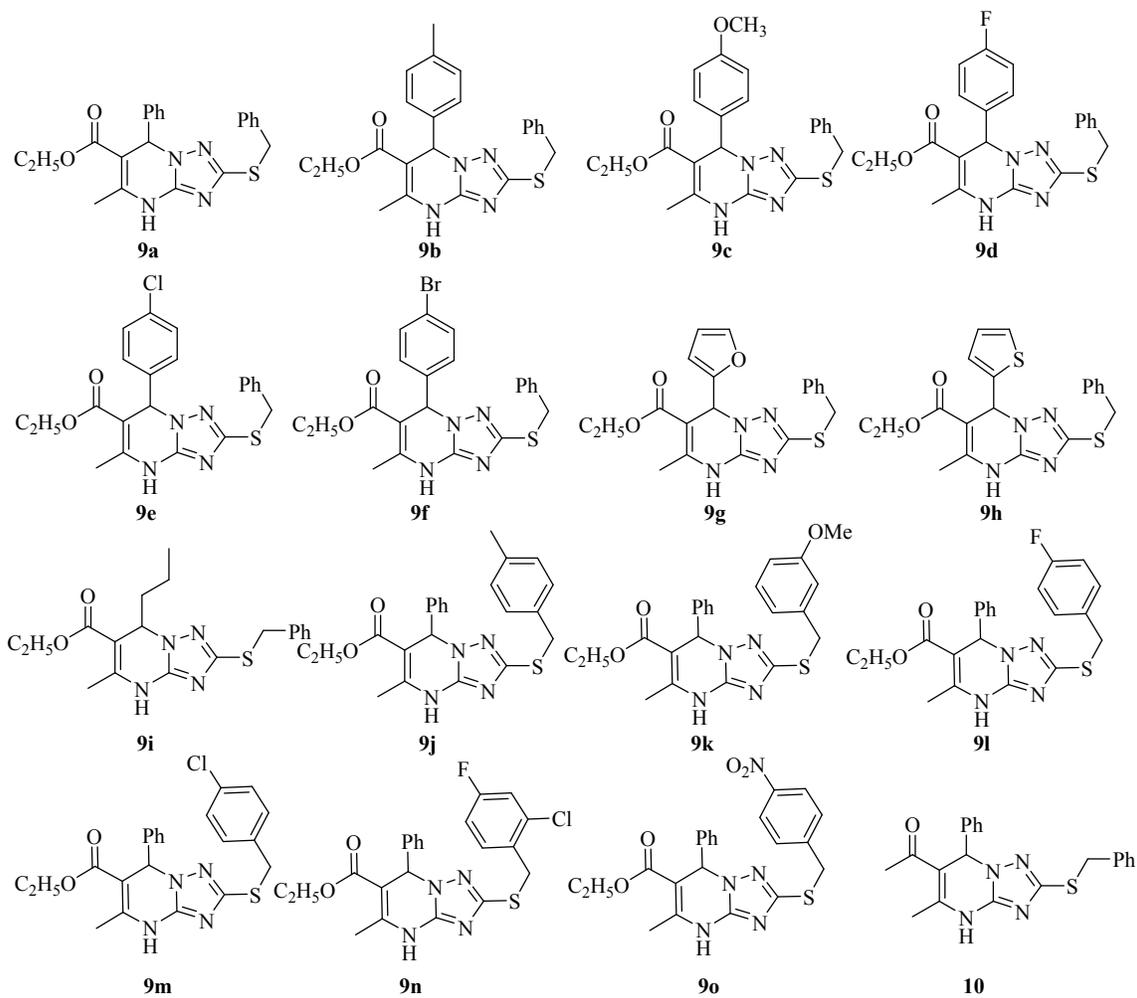
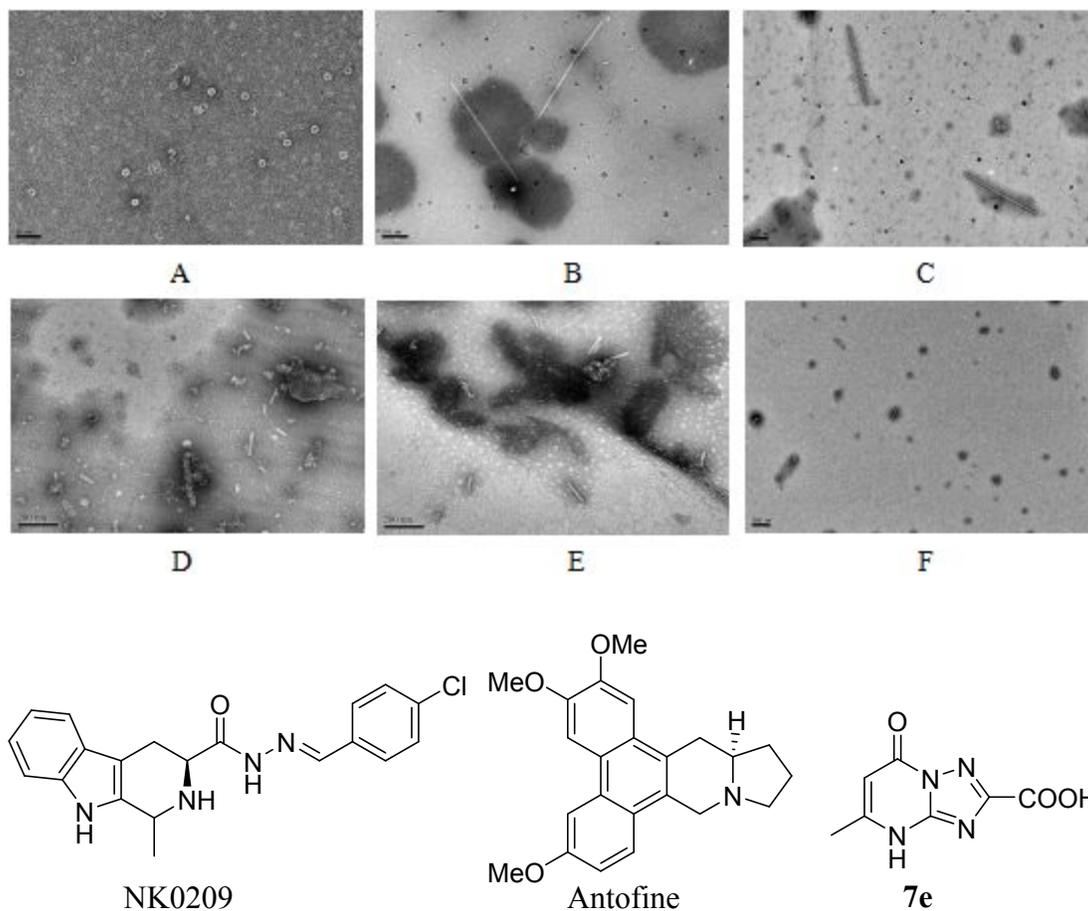
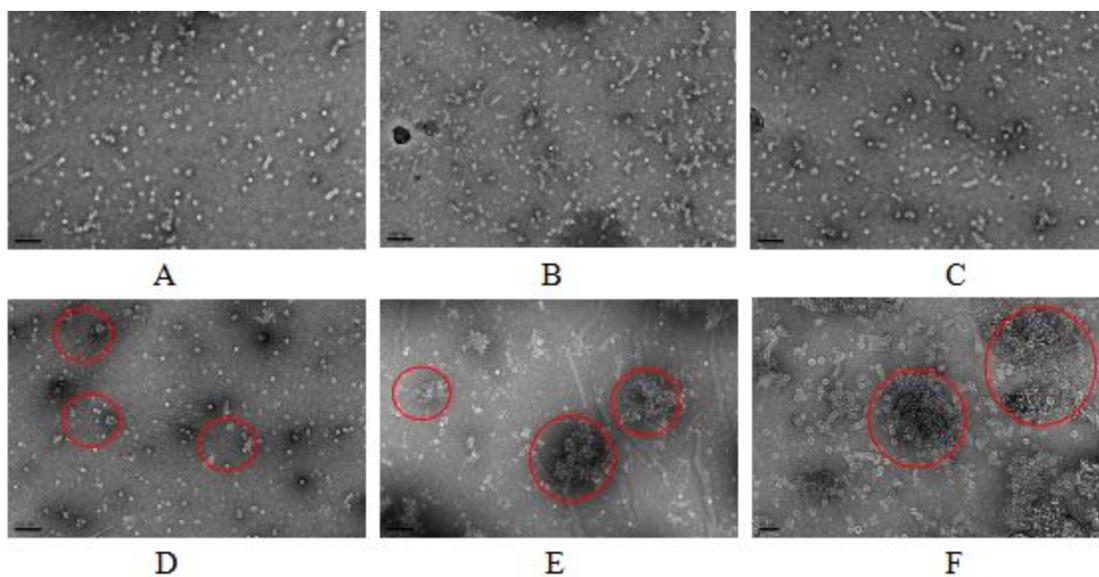


Figure 9.



(A) 20S CP disk (50 nm scale bar), (B) 20S CP disk + RNA (200 nm scale bar), (C) 20S CP disk + RNA + DMSO (200 nm scale bar), (D) 20S CP disk + RNA + antofine (200 nm scale bar), (E) 20S CP disk + RNA + NK0209 (200 nm scale bar), (F) 20S CP disk + RNA + 7e (200 nm scale bar).

Figure 10.



(A) CP, (B) CP + DMSO (100 nm scale bar), (C) CP + antofine (100 nm scale bar), (D) CP + NK0209 (100 nm scale bar), (E) CP + **7e** (100 nm scale bar), (F) CP + **7e** (50 nm scale bar).

TOC *graphic*

Agrochemical Bioregulators

