RESEARCH ARTICLE

Adult plant resistance in maize to northern leaf spot is a feature of partial loss-of-function alleles of *Hm1*

Sandeep R. Marla[1,#a], Kevin Chu[1,#b], Satya Chintamanani[1,#c], Dilbag Multani[2], Antje Klempien[1,#d], Alyssa DeLeon[1,#e], Kim Bong-suk[1], Larry D. Dunkle[1], Brian P. Dilkes[3], Gurmukh S. Johal[1*]

[1]Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907
[2]DowDuPont, Johnston, IA 50131
[3]Department of Biochemistry, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907

[#a]Current address: Department of Agronomy, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506
[#b]Current address: Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, St. Louis, MO 63132
[#c]Current address: Syngenta, Slater, IA 50244
[#d]Current address: KeyGene USA, Rockville, MD 20850
[#e]Current address: DowDuPont, Johnston, IA 50131

[*]**Corresponding author**

E-mail: gjohal@purdue.edu

Short title: A causal link between weak resistance and APR in maize

One sentence summary: Characterization of adult plant resistance in the maize-CCR1 pathosystem reveals a causal link between weak resistance and APR.

ABSTRACT

Adult plant resistance (APR) is an enigmatic phenomenon in which resistance genes are ineffective in protecting seedlings from disease but confer robust resistance at maturity. Maize has multiple cases in which genes confer APR to northern leaf spot, a lethal disease caused by *Cochliobolus carbonum* race 1 (CCR1). The first identified case of APR in maize is encoded by a hypomorphic allele, $Hm1^{A}$, at the *hm1* locus. In contrast, wild type alleles of *hm1* provide complete protection at all developmental stages and in every part of the maize plant. *Hm1* encodes an NADPH-dependent reductase, which inactivates HC-toxin, a key virulence effector of CCR1. Cloning and characterization of $Hm1^{A}$ ruled out differential transcription or translation for its APR phenotype and identified an amino acid substitution that reduced HC-toxin reductase (HCTR) activity. The possibility of a causal relationship between the weak nature of $Hm1^{A}$ and its APR phenotype was confirmed by the generation of two new APR alleles of *Hm1* by mutagenesis. The HCTRs encoded by these new APR alleles had undergone relatively conservative missense changes that partially reduced their enzymatic activity similar to $HM1^{A}$. No difference in accumulation of HCTR was observed between adult and juvenile plants, suggesting that the susceptibility of seedlings derives from a greater need for HCTR activity, not reduced accumulation of the gene product. Conditions and treatments that altered the photosynthetic output of the host had a dramatic effect on resistance imparted by the APR alleles, demonstrating a link between the energetic or metabolic status of the host and disease resistance affected by HC-toxin catabolism by the APR alleles of HCTR.

AUTHOR SUMMARY

Adult plant resistance (APR) is a phenomenon in which disease resistance genes are able to confer resistance at the adult stages of the plant but somehow fail to do so at the seedling stages. Despite the widespread occurrence of APR in various plant diseases, the mechanism underlying this trait remains obscure. It is not due to the differential transcription of these genes, and here we show that it is also not due to the differential translation or activity of the APR alleles of the maize *hm1* gene at different stages of development. Using a combination of molecular genetics, biochemistry and physiology, we present multiple lines of evidence that demonstrate that APR is a feature or symptom of weak forms of resistance. While the mature parts of the plant are metabolically robust enough to manifest resistance, seedling tissues are not, leaving them vulnerable to disease. Growth conditions that compromise the photosynthetic output of the plant further deteriorate the ability of the seedlings to protect themselves from pathogens.

INTRODUCTION

Plant responses to pathogens are dynamic, and they involve a number of inducible mechanisms that are tightly regulated both in space and time (1). They are called into action only at the time and site of infection. The tight regulation of innate immunity is due to disease resistance (DR) genes that plants inherit from their parents and which often segregate with the trait of resistance (1–3). A vast majority of these DR genes function in every part of the plant and at every stage of development. However, many exceptions exist where resistance is manifested in a tissue- or developmental stage-specific manner. In most instances of developmentally regulated resistance, plants are susceptible at the seedling stage but become increasingly resistant toward maturity. The term commonly

71 used to define such developmentally regulated resistance is adult plant resistance (APR),
72 although other terms such as age-associated resistance, ontogenic resistance, mature plant
73 resistance, or flowering-induced resistance have also been used in the literature to
74 describe the same phenomenon (4–8).

75 Adult plant resistance (APR) often manifests gradually with the advancement of
76 plant age, but a few cases have been reported where the onset is abrupt, happening
77 sharply at a certain stage of development (9–12). An example of the latter kind is the
78 wheat *Lr34* gene-mediated resistance, in which the onset against the leaf rust pathogen,
79 *Puccinia triticina,* is largely confined to the uppermost leaf (flag leaf) (13). In contrast, in
80 the rice-*Xanthomonas oryzae* pv. *oryzae* pathosystem, resistance conferred by the *Xa21*
81 gene is almost negligible during the first three weeks of age but then increases steadily
82 each week, reaching full efficacy at maturity (14,15). Similarly, the *Yr36*-conferred
83 resistance in wheat to *Puccinia striiformis* (16) and the *Hm2*-conferred resistance in
84 maize to *Cochliobolus carbonum* race 1 (CCR1) increase gradually with plant age (12).

85 In efforts to understand the mechanistic basis of APR, several genes conferring
86 this form of resistance were isolated in different pathosystems. Some of these genes
87 include *Cf-9B* from tomato conferring resistance to leaf mold (17), *Mi-1* from tomato
88 conferring resistance to aphids (18), *Xa21* from rice conferring resistance to leaf blight
89 (14), *Lr67* and *Lr34* from wheat conferring resistance to leaf rust (13,19), *Yr36* from
90 wheat conferring resistance to stripe rust (16), and *Hm2* from maize conferring resistance
91 to leaf blight (12). Two of these genes, *Cf-9* and *Mi-1*, clearly follow the gene-for-gene
92 (GFG) paradigm in conferring resistance, while four others, *Lr67*, *Lr34*, *Yr36* and *Hm2,*

93 do not, suggesting that any disease resistance gene has the potential to confer an APR
94 phenotype.

95 What makes a gene behave in an APR manner? This question still eludes us, even
96 though a number of APR genes, including those described in the preceding paragraph,
97 have been cloned and characterized. One logical expectation was that the phenotype of
98 APR genes may derive from their differential expression at different stages of plant
99 development and that the level of gene expression would match their phenotypic efficacy
100 closely. However, this has been ruled out with the majority of the APR genes, as their
101 transcript levels do not reflect changes in their resistance phenotype (12,13,15,17,20).
102 Other possibilities that may affect the APR behavior of these genes are differential
103 translation, differential post-translational modifications, and developmental changes in
104 plant physiology and metabolism.

105 To gain insight into the mechanistic basis of APR in maize, we have been
106 studying the northern leaf spot (NLS) disease of maize (*Zea mays*) caused by *C.*
107 *carbonum* race 1. A classic APR syndrome is described in this pathosystem where alleles
108 at two homeologous loci can confer resistance in a developmentally programmed fashion
109 (9). These duplicate genes, *Hm1* and *Hm2*, encode NADPH-dependent HC-toxin
110 reductases (HCTR), which utilize NADPH as a cofactor to reduce an essential ketone
111 function in HC-toxin (HCT), the key disease causing effector of CCR1, and abolish its
112 activity (21–23). There is one prominent difference between the HCTRs encoded by *hm1*
113 and *hm2*: whereas the HCTR encoded by wild type (WT) *Hm1* contains 356 amino acids,
114 the HCTR encoded by the functional *Hm2* allele is truncated and lacks the last 52 amino
115 acids compared to HM1 (12). This truncated allele is the only functional allele that has

116 been identified at *hm2*, and it confers APR against CCR1 when *hm1* is null. *Hm2* is
117 expressed throughout the age of the plant (12), ruling out developmentally regulated
118 transcript accumulation as the mechanism of APR. Like *Hm2*, an allele of *hm1* conferring
119 APR has also been described (9). Designated $Hm1^A$, this APR allele is recessive to the
120 WT *Hm1* allele and dominant to the *hm1* null allele (9).

121 To explore why and how the $Hm1^A$ allele leads to an APR phenotype, we have
122 cloned and characterized it in detail. Comparison of the sequence of $Hm1^A$ with those of
123 the WT haplotypes from a number of resistant inbreds and accessions revealed a single
124 amino acid substitution in the $HM1^A$ peptide that is unique to its APR behavior. $HM1^A$
125 transcripts accumulated to similar levels throughout plant growth and development, as
126 did the translational product of the gene. However, the HCTR activity in $Hm1^A$ plants
127 was intermediate between WT (*Hm1Hm*1) and null mutant (*hm1hm1hm2hm2*) plants.
128 This, along with the truncated nature of the APR allele at *hm2*, prompted us to consider if
129 the hypomorphic *Hm1* allele in $Hm1^A$ was the reason for its APR phenotype. This
130 hypothesis was addressed by mutagenesis, generating two new APR mutants of the B73
131 maize inbred, which is homozygous for the WT allele at *hm1* and the null allele at *hm2*
132 (*Hm1Hm1hm2hm2*). Both new APR alleles were found to contain single amino acid
133 substitutions in HM1-B73 and reduced HCTR activity. Thus, APR is a symptom of
134 partial loss-of-function mutations in *Hm1* that result in seedling susceptibility.

135 **RESULTS**

136 **Detailed genetics of APR-conferring $Hm1^A$ as an allele of *hm1***

137 The APR trait attributed to $Hm1^A$ was first noticed in the inbred P8, developed at Purdue
138 University in the early 1960s (9). The genetic evidence linking the APR of P8 with an

139 allele of *hm1* (*Hm1*^{A}) made use of two segregating populations, a testcross and an F_2
140 population, generated by crossing P8 (*Hm1*^{A}*Hm1*^{A}*hm2hm2*) with the resistant inbred
141 WF9 (*Hm1Hm1Hm2Hm2*). The susceptible inbred for the testcross was Pr, which is
142 homozygous for null mutations at both the *hm1* and *hm2* loci. There were at least two
143 concerns with this study. First, it used a relatively small number of progenies, comprising
144 about 90 plants each for both the F_2 and testcross populations. Second, the resistant
145 inbred WF9 also contained an APR allele at the *hm2* locus, leaving room for error in
146 extrapolation from these data.

147 These concerns necessitated that we revisit these findings, to clone and
148 characterize *Hm1*^{A}. We acquired P8 from the Germplasm Resources Information
149 Network (GRIN). To confirm that this source of P8 harbored the *Hm1*^{A} allele reported by
150 Nelson and Ullstrup (1964), we conducted a thorough analysis of the genetics of P8
151 resistance to CCR1. We first crossed P8 twice with Pr (*hm1hm1hm2hm2*) to produce a
152 BC_1F_1 testcross population. Of 384 BC_1F_1 plants inoculated with CCR1, 186 plants were
153 susceptible at both the seedling and adult stage while 198 plants were susceptible as
154 seedlings, but later emerging leaves were fully resistant, consistent with the APR
155 phenotype of P8. The recessive null *hm1* allele of Pr (designated as *hm1*^{Pr}) contains a
156 256-bp *Drone* transposon insertion in exon 4 (24). All 186 plants susceptible at maturity
157 were homozygous for *hm1*^{Pr}, whereas all 198 plants that were initially susceptible and
158 then displayed APR were heterozygous for *hm1*^{Pr}. This 1:1 ratio of susceptible *vs.* APR
159 plants (X^2 - 0.375, $P > 0.05$, 1 d.f.) indicated that a single gene at or near the *hm1* locus
160 controlled the APR behavior of P8.

161 Next we crossed P8 to Pr1, a near isogenic line (NIL) of Pr in which the mutant
162 *hm1* allele was replaced by a WT *Hm1* (25). The resulting $Hm1^{A}Hm1$ F_1 hybrid was
163 testcrossed to Pr, the *hm1hm2* null stock. The inheritance of $Hm1^{Pr1}$ vs. $Hm1^{A}$ in this
164 population was tracked with a PCR-based marker that differentiated between those two
165 alleles. Of the 540 F_1 test cross progeny, 276 were susceptible as seedlings and later
166 exhibited APR, while the remaining 264 were completely resistant to CCR1 regardless of
167 age. All 264 completely resistant plants had inherited the WT *Hm1* allele from Pr1, while
168 the 274 plants that exhibited APR had inherited the $Hm1^{A}$ allele from P8. Chi-squared
169 tests supported the 1:1 expected inheritance of monogenic inheritance (X^2 -0.266667, $P >$
170 0.05, 1 d.f.). No recombinants between the genotypes at the *hm1* locus and the expression
171 of CCR1 susceptibility were found in either population (924 opportunities for crossover).
172 This confirmed that the source of P8 we obtained recapitulated the phenomenon
173 described in 1964 (9) and that the APR of P8 is likely conferred by the $Hm1^{A}$ allele.
174 To incorporate $Hm1^{A}$ into a uniform background for detailed phenotypic
175 comparisons, we introgressed this APR allele into the B73 inbred by crossing P8
176 ($Hm1^{A}Hm1^{A}$ *hm2hm2*) to B73 (*Hm1Hm1hm2hm2*). As $Hm1^{A}$ is recessive to WT *Hm1*, we
177 utilized sequence polymorphism between $Hm1^{A}$ and $Hm1^{B73}$ to construct a PCR-based
178 marker. After seven crosses to B73 with selection for the $Hm1^{A}$ genotype, BC_7F_2 progeny
179 were generated by self-pollinating a heterozygous plant. This BC_7F_2 population
180 segregated in a 3:1 ratio for complete resistance and APR, again consistent with $Hm1^{A}$
181 being responsible for APR of P8. Homozygous $Hm1^{A}$ plants from this population were
182 selected and maintained as an $Hm1^{A}$ near-isogenic line in B73.

183 **Phenotypic manifestation of adult plant resistance in maize to CCR1**

184 To develop a comprehensive account of the onset of APR by $Hm1^{A}$, we also introgressed
185 the null $hm1^{Pr}$ allele into the B73 background over seven generations, and crossed with
186 $Hm1^{A}$ B73 NIL to generate plants heterozygous for $Hm1^{A}$. Both homozygous
187 ($Hm1^{A}Hm1^{A}$) and heterozygous ($Hm1^{A}hm1^{Pr}$) $Hm1^{A}$ plants were inoculated with CCR1 at
188 weekly intervals, starting at 1 week-after-planting (wap) and culminating at 10 wap.
189 Their infection phenotypes were measured using a 1-10 disease rating scale (12) and
190 compared with those of B73 and a B73 NIL containing the null *hm1* allele ($hm1^{Pr}$ B73
191 NIL). A rating of 10 on this scale indicated highly susceptible plants, while a rating of 1
192 indicated complete resistance.

193 The susceptible $hm1^{Pr}$ B73 NILs scored 10 on the disease rating scale regardless
194 of age, and the resistant controls (B73 inbred), which produced small chlorotic flecks in
195 response to CCR1 infection, scored 1 throughout development. Plants containing $Hm1^{A}$
196 exhibited very little resistance at the seedling stage, but severity scores decreased with
197 age (Fig 1A and 1C). At the age of week-1, $Hm1^{A}$ seedlings were consistently rated 8 or
198 higher. This disease rating dropped to 5 or less by week-5. At week-10, $Hm1^{A}$ plants
199 resembled the resistant controls, receiving a rating of 1 (Fig 1B and 1C). The level of
200 resistance conferred by $Hm1^{A}$ correlated with the age of the whole plant at the time of
201 inoculation and not the age of the inoculated leaf. Inoculating each leaf of $Hm1^{A}Hm1^{A}$
202 and *hm1hm1* plants at week-5 of plant growth confirmed this observation. All the leaves
203 of $Hm1^{A}$ plants were equally resistant regardless of their age, and all the leaves of
204 *hm1hm1* plants were equally susceptible (data not shown).

205 Similar to the APR conferred by the *Hm2* gene (12), the resistance conferred by
206 $Hm1^{A}$ was dosage dependent. Plants homozygous for $Hm1^{A}$ were slightly more resistant
207 to CCR1 at almost all stages of development compared to plants heterozygous for $Hm1^{A}$
208 and the null allele ($Hm1^{A}hm1^{Pr}$) indicating that $Hm1^{A}$ is haploinsufficient (Fig 1C). The
209 dosage effect was more pronounced at week-5 and declined after week-7 as the plants
210 matured and became completely resistant.

211 **Molecular characterization of the $Hm1^{A}$ allele**

212 Atypical behavior of a disease resistance gene can sometimes result from complex
213 structural changes at the locus, such as an increase in the copy number of the gene or a
214 part of the gene (26,27). To address if such a genetic mechanism also led to the $Hm1^{A}$
215 APR, we conducted a Southern blot analysis with P8 DNA digested with a variety of
216 restriction enzymes. Consistent with the genetic data, a single *BamHI* restriction fragment
217 hybridized to *Hm1*-specific probes on these blots, indicating that $Hm1^{A}$ was a single copy
218 gene in the P8 inbred and that the entire gene was present on a 13 kb restriction fragment
219 (Fig 2A). To clone the $Hm1^{A}$ gene, a lambda library was constructed from the *Bam*H1-
220 digested P8 DNA restriction fragments migrating on a gel as 12 to 15 kb fragments. We
221 identified and sequenced a clone containing the 13 kb *hm1*-encoding fragment. Sequence
222 analysis indicated that our clone contained the entire coding region of the *Hm1* gene, as
223 well as 3.8 kb of the promoter region.

224 To determine the structural changes in $Hm1^{A}$, its sequence was compared with
225 that of the B73 reference sequence. Significant changes were encountered in the promoter
226 regions of $Hm1^{A}$ and $Hm1^{B73}$. Except for a few indels and SNPs, the first -200 bp from
227 the translation start site of the promoter region are similar in $Hm1^{A}$ and B73 (Fig S1). The

228 next -1.5 kb region upstream, however, is completely different between the two alleles,
229 though this does not seem to be due to the insertion of a transposable element.
230 Interestingly, the promoter region of *Hm1*^{A} is identical to that of *hm1*^{Pr}, the null *hm1*
231 allele from the susceptible inbred Pr. To examine if any other resistant lines containing a
232 wild type *Hm1* allele also had a promoter region identical to that of *Hm1*^{A}, we used a
233 primer pair designed from the *Hm1*^{A} promoter region to PCR amplify DNA from a
234 number of resistant inbreds. Two inbreds, Pr1 and Va35, were found whose *Hm1* WT
235 alleles have the promoter regions identical to that of *Hm1*^{A} (Fig S1). Taken together,
236 these results indicate that the promoter polymorphism between *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1*^{B73}
237 predicted neither resistance nor susceptibility and thus may be inconsequential to the
238 APR phenotype of *Hm1*^{A}.

239 The coding region of *Hm1*^{A} also differed from that of *Hm1*^{B73}, containing nine
240 SNPs. Although four of these SNPs were silent or synonymous, five led to amino acid
241 substitutions in the predicted HM1^{A} peptide (Fig 2B). Relative to the B73 HM1
242 reference, these substitutions were: a Serine to Tyrosine change at residue 99 (S99Y), an
243 Aspartic acid to Tyrosine change at residue 110 (D110Y), a Leucine to Histidine change
244 at residue 116 (L116H), a Serine to Asparagine change at residue 191 (S191N), and a
245 Leucine to Proline change at residue 240 (L240P) (Fig 2B).

246 **The L116H substitution is the likely causative polymorphism in the *Hm1*^{A} allele**

247 As *Hm1* is one of the most polymorphic genes in maize (28), we decided to examine the
248 peptide sequence of various resistance alleles to potentially pinpoint the amino acid
249 change(s) responsible for the APR behavior of *Hm1*^{A}. We first amplified and evaluated
250 the HM1 sequences of Pr1 and Va35, the two resistant inbreds that share their promoters

251 with *Hm1*^{A}, and compared them with the sequences of both HM1^{A} and HM1^{B73}. HM1^{Pr1}
252 was found to differ by five amino acids from HM1^{B73}, with two of these polymorphisms,
253 S99Y and L240P, also being present in HM1^{A} (Fig S2). These same two changes were
254 also found in HM1^{Va35}, which differed from HM1^{B73} by six amino acids. Another
255 resistant *Hm1* allele that differed from B73 by six amino acids was in the inbred W22,
256 but none of those changes matched those of HM1^{A}. However, the predicted HM1 of the
257 landrace Enano from Bolivia (28) shared with HM1^{A} the two polymorphisms D110Y and
258 S191N. And most importantly, the HM1 of the landrace Pira from Colombia (28) shared
259 four of the five amino acid changes between HM1^{A} and HM1^{B73}. These are S99Y,
260 D110Y, S191N, and L240P, thereby leaving only the L116H polymorphism unique to
261 HM1^{A}.

262 To examine the functional status of the *Hm1* allele of Pira, we acquired this
263 landrace from GRIN and inoculated it with CCR1. It was found to be completely resistant
264 to CCR1, even at the seedling stage. This demonstrated that despite having four of the
265 five amino acid changes of HM1^{A}, the *Hm1*^{Pira} allele is fully functional and not APR.
266 These results highlight the importance of the L116H substitution in defining the
267 phenotype of *Hm1*^{A}. Consistent with this hypothesis, the Leucine at 116 is highly
268 conserved not only in all the homoeologs and orthologs of the *Hm1* gene across the grass
269 lineage, but also in the maize dihydroflavonol 4-reductase (DFR), an NADPH-dependent
270 enzyme of the anthocyanin pathway predicted to be a progenitor of HM1 (Fig S2). All
271 these findings suggest that the HM1^{A} L116H substitution is unique to *Hm1*^{A} and may
272 underlie its APR behavior to CCR1 in maize by somehow negatively impacting HCTR
273 activity.

274 **HM1 transcript accumulation is not developmentally regulated in *Hm1^A***

275 To examine if the transcriptional activity of *Hm1^A* undergoes any change during plant
276 development, reverse transcription (RT)-PCR was conducted on RNA extracted from
277 CCR1-inoculated *Hm1^A* plants of diverse ages. Using a semi-quantitative form of this
278 assay, no dramatic changes could be observed in the level of the *Hm1^A* transcript between
279 the seedling and mature-plant stages (Fig 3A). Likewise, quantitative real time PCR
280 (qRT-PCR) measurements of transcript abundance of *Hm1^A* plants inoculated with CCR1
281 at different ages did not detect any rise in HM1 expression as the susceptible plants
282 became resistant over time (Fig 3B). These results ruled out the differential transcription
283 of the *Hm1^A* allele as the basis for its APR phenotype.

284 **The level and activity of *Hm1^A*-encoded HCTR stays the same during plant**
285 **development**

286 To address if the differential translational activity of *Hm1^A* had any impact on its APR
287 behavior, we first conducted western analysis to examine the level and stability of the
288 HM1^A protein. While an antibody raised against the entire HM1^A peptide lacked
289 specificity, a multiple antigenic peptide (MAP) (29) antibody generated against a 13 aa
290 peptide corresponding to residues 312 to 324 of the HM1 peptide worked well and
291 reacted to a single product on Western blots generated from *Hm1^A* homozygous or
292 heterozygous plants (Fig 3C). No change in the level of the HM1^A protein could be
293 detected over time, indicating that the APR phenotype of *Hm1^A* is not due to differential
294 translation either.

295 We next addressed if the activity of HCTR encoded by *Hm1^A* had any role in its
296 APR behavior. To do this, an LC-MS/MS-based *in vitro* HCTR activity assay that

297 quantified the reduction of HC-toxin by crude protein extracts was developed. The *in*
298 *vitro* measurements were normalized to total protein content, allowing us to estimate the
299 level of the functional HCTR in plant tissues. To examine the level of HCTR over time,
300 proteins were extracted from CCR1-inoculated leaves of 3- and 7-week-old plants of
301 $Hm1^{A}$ and control stocks, and their HCTR activity was measured in replicated samples.
302 Two trends were noted as shown in Fig 3D. First, the HCTR activity encoded by $HM1^{A}$
303 was lower than by the WT allele but not null as that of $hm1^{Pr}$. At both stages of
304 development, the HCTR activity of $HM1^{A}$ was about 3-fold lower than that of HM1.
305 Second, the level of active HCTR differed little if any in 3- or 7-week $Hm1^{A}$ plants (Fig
306 3D). Likewise, the HCTR activity of the WT allele also did not differ between week-3
307 and week-7-old plants (Fig 3D). Two conclusions can be drawn from these results. First,
308 $Hm1^{A}$ encodes an HCTR that is relatively weaker than the enzyme encoded by the WT
309 allele. Second, the level of the active HCTR stays constant over development and does
310 not account for the APR phenotype of $Hm1^{A}$.

311 **Partial loss-of-function mutations confer adult plant resistance in the maize-CCR1**
312 **pathosystem**

313 What aspect of the $Hm1^{A}$ gene structure or function restricts it to be an APR gene, i.e.,
314 conferring resistance only at the mature-plant stage but not the seedling stage? Having
315 ruled out differential transcription or translation as possible mechanisms, we paid
316 attention to an attribute of $Hm1^{A}$ that differentiates it from both the WT and null mutant
317 alleles of *hm1* - the relatively weak nature of the HCTR activity encoded by $Hm1^{A}$. This
318 partial enzymatic activity of $HM1^{A}$ mirrored exactly the phenotypic strength of resistance
319 conferred by this APR allele, which is recessive to that of WT *Hm1* but dominant to that

320 of null *hm1*. Given that the APR allele at the *hm2* locus also confers partial resistance to
321 CCR1 (12), we pondered if this could be a requirement for a resistance gene to have an
322 APR phenotype.

323 If this hypothesis that a *Hm1* APR allele owes its phenotype to being a weak or
324 partial loss-of-function allele is correct, we should be able to confirm it by generating
325 new APR alleles from the WT *Hm1* allele by mutagenesis. To address this possibility, we
326 first tried a random mutagenesis screen to generate new alleles of *Hm1*, in large part
327 because of the lethal nature of CCR1 infection on field-grown plants lacking functional
328 *Hm1*. About 1,000 M_2 families of B73 were generated by treating pollen with the
329 mutagen ethyl methanesulfonate (EMS). Twenty-four plants per M_2 family were planted
330 in a field and inoculated with CCR1 at the seedling stage. One M_2 family was identified
331 in which CCR1-susceptible plants segregated in a recessive fashion. These plants
332 remained susceptible throughout their growth, suggesting they were the result of a null
333 mutation. Sequence analysis of the *hm1* allele from this mutant (named *hm1-2*) confirmed
334 its null status and revealed a single G to A transition at the junction of exon3/intron3 as
335 the cause of mutation (Fig S3). Since this change is expected to abolish the splicing of
336 intron 3, it would result in a truncated protein lacking all the amino acids encoded by
337 exons 4 and 5 (Fig S3). It is unlikely that such a grossly truncated protein would have any
338 HCTR activity, and as shown in Fig 6, *hm1-2* exhibited very little enzymatic activity.

339 We next conducted a targeted mutagenesis screen to generate a series of mutant
340 alleles of *Hm1*. To accomplish this, EMS-mutagenized $Hm1^{B73}$ pollen was applied to ears
341 of completely susceptible Pr plants in a greenhouse (Fig 4). Approximately 4,500 M_1
342 seeds obtained from this cross were planted in the field and inoculated with CCR1 at

343 week-2. Seven plants were identified as CCR1 susceptible at this seedling stage. When
344 inoculated again at week-5, five of them were still fully susceptible, suggesting they were
345 null mutants. The other two plants however exhibited APR as they developed different
346 levels of resistance (Fig S4). Sequencing the *Hm1* gene (Fig S5) from all seven mutants
347 revealed that they all carried GC to AT transitions in the coding region of *Hm1*. The two
348 APR-exhibiting alleles (designated *Hm1-3* and *Hm1-4*) had missense mutations resulting
349 in single amino acid substitutions, T90M in *Hm1-3* and V210M in *Hm1-4*, in the HM1
350 peptide (Table 1). Of the five null mutants, three (named *hm1-6* to *hm1-8*) had nonsense
351 mutations, one a C82Y substitution (*hm1-5*), and one a splice-site mutation (*hm1-9*) at the
352 junction of intron 4/exon 5 that also produced a pre-mature stop codon (Table 1). The
353 new APR alleles were introgressed back into B73 for seven generations using CAPs
354 markers. Comparison of the resistance phenotype of the two new APR alleles with $Hm1^{A}$
355 revealed that all three APR alleles differ markedly from each other in this trait. *Hm1*-3
356 confers the highest level of resistance at all stages of development, followed by $Hm1^{A}$
357 and *Hm1-4* (Fig 5). This screen thus provided us with a series of APR alleles at the *hm1*
358 locus.
359
360 Table 1. The nature of molecular changes in the mutant alleles of *Hm1* generated by
361 mutagenesis and their respective disease/resistance phenotypes to infection by CCR1 at
362 maturity.

363

Allele No.	Disease Response	Mutation
Hm1-3	APR	T90M
Hm1-4	APR	V210M
hm1-5	Null	C82Y
hm1-6	Null	Nonsense
hm1-7	Null	Nonsense
hm1-8	Null	Nonsense
hm1-9	Null	Nonsense

364

365 **Like *Hm1*^{A}, the new APR alleles encode HCTRs with intermediate activity**

366 To evaluate if the HCTR activity encoded by *Hm1-3* and *Hm1-4* was also partially
367 compromised like that of *Hm1*^{A}, we used the aforementioned LC-MS/MS based activity
368 assay on samples derived from these two mutants as well as their positive and negative
369 controls. During weeks-3 and 7 (when APR plants are susceptible and resistant,
370 respectively), crude protein was extracted from the leaf tissue following inoculation with
371 CCR1. The HCTR activity of extracts from APR plants was found to be significantly
372 reduced when compared with B73 at both week-3 and week-7, indicating that HM1-3 and
373 HM1-4 proteins display partially compromised HCTR activity during both susceptible
374 and resistant plant ages like HM1^{A} (Fig 6). Furthermore, and consistent with HM1^{A} (Fig
375 3C), the levels of their HCTR did not change significantly with age (Fig 6),
376 demonstrating that the APR encoded by these new alleles was also expressed without a
377 concomitant increase in HCTR levels in mature plants.

378 Differences in the disease/resistance ratings of the new APR alleles predicted
379 corresponding differences in their HCTR activities. This indeed was found to be true. The

380 disease severity of APR plants at 3 weeks of age was found to be linearly correlated with
381 HCTR activity (Fig 5 and 6). The APR allele with the highest degree of HCTR activity
382 was HM1-3, followed by $HM1^{A}$, and HM1-4 being the weakest (Fig 6). This variation in
383 enzymatic activity is consistent with the gradient of CCR1 resistance displayed by *Hm1-*
384 *3*, $Hm1^{A}$, and *Hm1-4* plants from strongest to weakest (Fig 5). At maturity, however,
385 plants carrying any of these weak alleles of *Hm1* were all indistinguishable from WT
386 B73. This was not the case with plants carrying only the null allele; they remained
387 uniformly susceptible to CCR1 infection even at maturity.

388 **Modulation of photosynthesis output alters susceptibility to CCR1 in $Hm1^{A}$**
389 **seedlings**

390 If the HCTR levels of the APR alleles remain largely uniform throughout plant
391 development, why then are weak alleles unable to confer protection at the seedling stage?
392 Some anecdotal observations that we have made about plants with APR alleles suggested
393 that the availability of fixed carbon for energy production played a role in determining
394 the ability of these weak alleles to suppress disease. The APR mutants always exhibited
395 greater disease susceptibility and prolonged sensitivity in winter greenhouses as
396 compared to the field. In the winter greenhouse, those plants closest to supplemental
397 lights were more resistant than plants growing distant from light fixtures. Third, the
398 resistance phenotype of APR alleles was compromised in the dominant *oil-yellow1-*
399 *N1989* allele that has a chlorophyll deficiency (30).

400 We grew the $Hm1^{A}$ plants at extended and reduced photoperiods to test the
401 hypothesis that energy availability from fixed carbon could determine disease
402 susceptibility in APR mutants. We grew $Hm1^{A}$ B73 NIL homozygotes in a growth

403 chamber with a light regimen of 12h light (L) and 12h dark (D) for 2 weeks. Following
404 inoculation with CCR1 and overnight incubation, half of the seedlings were shifted to a
405 growth chamber adjusted at 18h L and 6h D. *Hm1*^{A} seedlings grown in 12:12 L:D
406 photoperiod were susceptible to CCR1 when examined at 72 hours post-inoculation (hpi)
407 (Fig 7A) and showed no ability to suppress expanding lesions at 96 hpi (Fig 7B).
408 However, the *Hm1*^{A} plants that were shifted to 18:6 L:D developed a resistant reaction
409 instead (Fig 7C and D). Thus, the seedling susceptibility of *Hm1*^{A} conferred by low
410 HCTR activity could be overcome by providing a longer period of photosynthetically
411 active radiation.

412 We reasoned that if greater photosynthate availability provides enhanced
413 resistance sufficient to permit the weak *Hm1* alleles to confer seedling resistance,
414 disruption of energy balance should negate their ability to confer any resistance. To test
415 this, we treated *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* homozygotes with extended darkness or with the
416 herbicide (3-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)-1,1-dimethylurea) (DCMU), which disrupts electron
417 transfer during the light reactions of photosynthesis. We inoculated two-week-old plants
418 with CCR1 and grew them in 14:10 L:D or 4:20 L:D. Extending the dark period of the
419 diurnal cycle resulted in an increase in disease severity after 7 days of growth for *Hm1-3*
420 plants (Fig 8A). If extended darkness renders plants susceptible to CCR1 due to a lack of
421 photosynthesis, then disruption of photosynthesis by herbicide treatment should effect the
422 same result. To test this, plants grown at 14:10 L:D were inoculated with CCR1 and
423 grown for 24 h. At 24 hpi, plants were divided into two groups with one receiving a
424 solution of DCMU applied to the leaf whorl and then grown for 6 days under the 14:10
425 L:D cycles. Observation of plants 7 dpi and 6 days after the DCMU treatment

426 demonstrated that a single DCMU application rendered both *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3*
427 homozygotes completely susceptible to CCR1 (Fig 8b).

428 Together, these two experiments demonstrate that light, and perhaps the energy
429 status of the plant, were key determinants of resistance to CCR1, and provide a direct link
430 between plant primary metabolism and physiology and disease resistance.

431 **DISCUSSION**

432 This study reveals one fundamental aspect of adult plant resistance (APR) in maize to
433 CCR1. APR alleles at the *hm1* locus are weak determinants of resistance that fail to
434 protect plants at the seedling stage but are sufficient to confer complete protection to
435 CCR1 at maturity. This conclusion is supported by multiple lines of evidence derived
436 from a combination of genetic, molecular, and biochemical experimentation. Genetic
437 analysis demonstrated that all APR alleles of *hm1* confer partial resistance that exhibits
438 haploinsufficiency (gene-dosage sensitivity) during most stages of plant development.
439 This contrasts with resistance conferred by the wild type (WT) alleles of *hm1* that are
440 completely dominant and protect every part of the plant regardless of age or maturity.
441 Plants with null alleles of *hm1,* on the other hand, are susceptible to CCR1 at all stages of
442 development. CCR1 infection typically results in plant lethality for these alleles, and the
443 ubiquitous nature of this pathogen makes them difficult to propagate in the field. The
444 APR alleles of *hm1* are recessive to the WT alleles (e.g., *Hm1*^{B73}) but dominant to null
445 alleles of *hm1* (e.g., *hm1*^{Pr}).

446 Consistent with the idea that APR is a symptom of weak or partial loss-of-
447 function alleles, we were able to generate two new APR alleles from the WT *Hm1*^{B73}
448 allele by mutagenesis with EMS. Five completely susceptible mutants were also

449 recovered in this mutant screen, which presumably encoded null mutations. In keeping
450 with these predictions, molecular analysis of these null alleles showed that four of the
451 five null mutants were the result of nonsense mutations that truncated their predicted
452 peptides by introducing premature stop codons. The fifth null mutant, which was caused
453 by a missense mutation, changed a highly conserved cysteine residue (C82Y) that is
454 perhaps critical for protein function. In sharp contrast, both novel APR alleles underwent
455 relatively conservative mutational changes: T90M in *Hm1-3* and V210M in *Hm1-4*. Even
456 $Hm1^{A}$, which differs from the WT $Hm1^{B73}$ allele by five amino acids, seems to owe its
457 APR phenotype to a single L116H change. HCTR activity was encoded by all of the APR
458 alleles, indicating that none of these mutations completely eliminates the function of the
459 enzyme. Their HCTR activities were compromised, however, being intermediate to that
460 of the fully functional WT allele (which confers completely dominant protection) and the
461 recessive null *hm1* alleles, which impart no resistance to CCR1. These results indicate
462 that at some level HCTR activity is unable to deter the pathogen from colonizing maize
463 plants at the seedling stage but that level of activity is sufficient to prevent CCR1 from
464 colonizing at maturity.

465 A cause-and-effect relationship between APR and partial-loss-of-function alleles
466 of *hm1* is further substantiated by the correlation between the strength of the resistance
467 reaction conferred by an APR allele and its HCTR activity. The level of HCTR activity
468 matched perfectly with the strength of CCR1 resistance conditioned by the three APR
469 alleles. These results demonstrate that alleles of *hm1* with partial loss-of-function
470 mutations encode HCTR with a compromised activity and that the weaker activity results
471 in later onset of disease resistance. The resistance of seedlings encoding WT *Hm1*

472 demonstrates that efficient toxin deactivation is sufficient for maize seedlings to resist
473 CCR1 infection and, therefore, they express all of the required machinery for defense.
474 Likewise, mature plants lacking *hm1* function are completely susceptible, demonstrating
475 that HCTR is absolutely required for CCR1 infection, and mature maize plants are not
476 protected from toxin-mediated disease spread. These interpretations depend on the *in*
477 *vitro* assay correctly reflecting *in vivo* activity. Our *in vitro* HCTR activity assay did not
478 detect the *in vivo* activity of the enzyme but instead the level of the functional protein
479 present at a given time point. It is possible that *in vivo* activity did not correspond to the
480 *in vitro* activity identified by this method.

481 A seemingly mechanistic relationship between partial resistance and APR is also
482 evident in many other pathosystems where such genes have been cloned and studied in
483 detail. One example is that of *Cf-9B*, which mediates incomplete resistance to *C. fulvum*
484 in a developmentally specified fashion (17). Its paralog *Cf9*, which encodes a receptor
485 like protein, confers complete protection in all plant tissues at every stage of development
486 (31). Another example is that of *Xa21*, a receptor-like kinase that confers weak resistance
487 to Xanthomonas leaf blight in rice (14,15). The maize *Hm2* APR allele provides another
488 example. The weak CCR1 resistance provided by this allele is conferred by a truncated
489 HCTR (12).

490 In wheat, APR genes are rather common and have been used widely to protect
491 this crop from all forms of the disease caused by three different species of rust pathogens
492 (reviewed in Ellis et al., 2014). Even though APR genes confer little or no protection in
493 wheat seedlings, the broad-spectrum and durable nature of resistance provided by such
494 genes in adult plants have many breeders proclaim that breeding for rust resistance

495 should deploy only APR genes (32). Three of these wheat APR genes have been cloned
496 recently and, interestingly, they all appear to confer resistance by different mechanisms.
497 One of them, *Yr36*, a mediator of resistance to yellow rust, encodes a kinase with an
498 unusual domain (16), while *Lr34* and *Lr67*, both of which mediate APR to both rust and
499 powdery mildew pathogens, encode an ABC transporter and a hexose transporter,
500 respectively (13,19). Exactly how these genes confer APR remains unresolved, but one
501 thread that unifies them is their ability to confer only weak or partial resistance (32).
502 Overexpression of *Lr34*, one of the best studied APR genes, however, did enable it to
503 confer seedling resistance in durum wheat (33). Furthermore, the efficacy of this
504 transgene in conferring seedling resistance improved even further under extended
505 daylight conditions (34). These results echo what we have discovered with the APR
506 alleles in maize and suggest that the connection between weak resistance and APR is not
507 unique to the maize-CCR1 pathosystem but perhaps is a general feature of most disease
508 resistance genes that are weak and provide only partial protection.

509 A second major finding is that APR is not the result of the enhanced level or
510 activity of proteins encoded by APR alleles at the mature-plant stage. Rather, it must be
511 the result of a change in seedlings vs mature plants that affects differential resistance. It
512 was previously shown in a number of cases that the differential transcriptional activity of
513 an APR gene did not account for its APR phenotype (12,13,15,17,20). Here we extend
514 this to the level and HCTR activity of the accumulated HM1 proteins, which remained
515 stable across development. At the onset of APR, resistance manifests uniformly in all
516 parts of the plant, including the youngest leaves that are still unfurled, indicating that the
517 APR-inducing factor is not accumulated over a long period of time in aging tissues, but

518 rather is available in every part of the plant regardless of the age of the organ and
519 determined solely by the plant maturity.

520 Considering that the HCTR activity is present at equivalent levels in APR mutant
521 extracts regardless of plant stage, why then are seedlings susceptible? Though the studies
522 presented here do not resolve this question, the biochemical mechanism by which *hm1*
523 confers resistance to CCR1 suggests a plausible scenario. Although this resistance is
524 conferred by *hm1*-encoded HCTR, the HC-toxin (HCT) inactivation reaction requires the
525 reducing power of NADPH as a co-substrate. The direct involvement of NADPH in HC-
526 toxin reduction suggests this molecule could be very critical in regulating resistance in
527 the maize-CCR1 pathosystem. Supporting this hypothesis are our results showing that
528 light and photosynthetic activity have a great impact on resistance mediated by APR
529 alleles, either boosting them to confer seedling resistance or limiting them to prevent
530 APR.

531 Based on these results, it could well be the availability of NADPH that determines
532 the difference in resistance between seedling and mature stages in the *hm1* APR mutants.
533 NADPH is produced during the light reactions of photosynthesis, the C4 malate shuttle,
534 and sugar oxidation, along with other energy carriers such as ATP. Maize seedlings not
535 only have a limited photosynthetic capacity to assimilate carbon (C), but also strong sinks
536 to consume these assimilates (35). As a result, seedling leaves become C-deficient at
537 night and that may negatively impact the availability of NADPH and ATP. Since
538 NADPH is required for HCTR activity, its depletion at night may negatively impact the
539 activity of hypomorphic mutants of HCTR, thereby leaving HCT active to induce
540 susceptibility to CCR1. Bolstering this hypothesis is the observation that the *Hm1-3* and

541 *Hm1-4* mutations occur at residues predicted to be critical for the binding of NADPH to
542 HCTR (36). The WT HCTR has likely evolved to require lower NADPH levels for
543 optimal activity, buffering any impact from the likely diurnal dip in its cofactor at night
544 and thereby allowing sufficient HCT inactivation. This scenario also explains why plants
545 with the APR genes become more resistant as they mature; the increased output of
546 photosynthates may outstrip the sink requirements, allowing excess photosynthates to be
547 stored as starch during the day and then used at night to fuel NADPH production.

548 Although several other aspects of plant bioenergetics are expected to support the
549 resistance phenotype of the APR genes in most pathosystems, NADPH appears to be the
550 most critical in energizing APR in the maize-CCR1 pathosystem. This, of course, is due
551 to the direct involvement of this molecule in the resistance mechanism mediated by
552 HCTR, and is supported by the fact that maize plants carrying the WT *Hm1* gene are
553 completely resistant to CCR1 at all stages of development, including as seedlings. This
554 study thus provides direct evidence linking, for the first time, primary host metabolism to
555 the realm of disease resistance in plants.

556 An intriguing implication of this study concerns the metabolic cost of resistance
557 in plants. This topic is not only of fundamental interest to plant pathologists and
558 entomologists but also has huge agricultural relevance (37–39). Our study demonstrates
559 that, compared to strong resistance, the weak form of resistance has a much higher
560 metabolic cost for the host. As shown in the case of APR, this cost can be so high that the
561 seedlings are not robust enough metabolically to express such resistance effectively. This
562 argument also extends to the quantitative form of resistance that is often relatively weak
563 and easily affected by the environment (40,41). An additional complication is that the

564 vulnerability of seedlings to diseases increases even further by conditions that
565 compromise photosynthesis. This phenomenon is analogous to what has been well
566 established in the animal world that malnutrition compromises the immunity of infants
567 much more than that of adults (42,43).

568 **METHODS**

569 **Plant materials**

570 The inbred P8 and landraces Pira and Enano were obtained from Germplasm Resources
571 Information Network (GRIN) of the U.S. National Plant Germplasm System. The CCR1-
572 susceptible maize inbred Pr, and the CCR1-resistant inbreds B73, Va35, W22, and Pr1 (a
573 near-isogenic line of Pr) were previously available in our research program. To determine
574 whether $Hm1^A$ is an allele of *Hm1*, P8 was crossed with Pr and the F_1 hybrid was
575 backcrossed to Pr to generate a BC_1F_1 population. Additionally, P8 was crossed with Pr1
576 and the resulting F_1 hybrid was testcrossed to the *hm1* null stock Pr. Near-isogenic lines
577 of B73 displaying APR to CCR1 infection were generated by backcrossing *hm1* APR
578 alleles with the B73 inbred, to determine the behavior of the APR alleles in a uniform
579 genetic background.

580 **Pathogen growth and inoculation**

581 The protocol for culturing CCR1 pathogen on carrot juice agar medium was the same as
582 previously described (23). One-hundred µl of 10^5 spores/ml of CCR1 conidial suspension
583 was used for leaf whorl inoculations. To study the phenotypic manifestation of APR by
584 the $Hm1^A$ allele, both homozygous ($Hm1^AHm1^A$ introgressed into B73) and heterozygous
585 ($Hm1^Ahm1^{Pr}$ also in B73) plants were planted in isolation at the Purdue ACRE farm and
586 inoculated with 100 µl of 10^5 spores/mL of CCR1 spore suspension. Wild type B73

587 encoding *Hm1*^{B73} and the susceptible *hm1*^{Pr} B73 NIL plants were used as resistant and
588 susceptible controls, respectively. A fresh set of five rows of ~40 plants per row was
589 inoculated every week, and disease severity rating was determined 5 days post-
590 inoculation (dpi) as described previously (12). To determine if *Hm1*^{A} is an allele of *Hm1*,
591 genetic crosses were made at the ACRE farm and the resulting segregating progeny was
592 evaluated under field conditions again at the ACRE farm.

593 **Amplification of *Hm1*^{A} genomic DNA**

594 Four primer pairs were designed to amplify *Hm1*^{A} based on its sequence homology with
595 *Hm1*^{B73}. The promoter region was amplified using a primer pair based on the promoter of
596 *hm1* from Pr. Touchdown PCR (44) was carried out with 10 consecutive cycles of
597 denaturation at 94ºC for 30 sec, annealing at 63ºC for 30 sec with a decrease in 0.5ºC per
598 cycle to a "touchdown" of 58ºC, and extension at 72ºC for 30 sec; followed by 35 cycles
599 of 94ºC for 30 sec, 58ºC for 30 sec, and 72ºC for 45 sec. Three separate PCR reactions
600 were carried out for every primer so that any errors initiated by either the GoTaq DNA
601 Polymerase (Promega, Madison, WI, USA) or by sequencing could be ruled out. The
602 PCR products were cleaned by running them through an agarose column, BigDye
603 sequencing reactions were conducted, and the products precipitated with sodium acetate
604 and ethanol before final resuspension in 20 µl of double-distilled water (ddH_2O). These
605 samples were submitted to the Purdue Genomics Facility for low throughput sequencing.
606 Forward and reverse complementary sequences for each primer were compared using the
607 ClustalW2 multiple alignment program. In order to assemble the *Hm1*^{A} sequence without
608 sequencing errors, only sequences with at least three perfect reads for each primer
609 sequence were considered.

610 **Cloning of *Hm1*^{A} cDNA**

611 P8 (*Hm1*^{A}*Hm1*^{A}) seeds were planted in 500M MetroMix and grown in Conviron growth
612 chambers for two weeks. One-hundred µl of 10^5 spores/mL CCR1 spore suspension was
613 used for whorl inoculation, and plants were covered with a hood overnight to maintain
614 humidity required for spore germination and penetration into the leaf tissue. At 24 h post-
615 inoculation (hpi), affected leaf tissue was collected from the plants and snap-frozen in
616 liquid nitrogen. RNA was extracted with a Qiagen RNeasy extraction kit (Qiagen,
617 Germantown, MD), and cDNA was synthesized by RT-PCR using random hexamer mix
618 (New England BioLabs, Ipswich, MA).

619 **Generating near-isogenic lines of B73 manifesting APR and susceptibility to CCR1**

620 The P8 maize inbred line was crossed with the maize reference B73 inbred, and the
621 resulting F_1 hybrid was backcrossed to B73. To introgress *Hm1*^{A} into the B73 inbred, the
622 resulting BC_1F_1 progeny was backcrossed to B73 for six generations. Since the promotor
623 region of *Hm1*^{B73} differed from that of *Hm1*^{A}, PCR-based markers designed from the
624 promotor region were used for introgressing *Hm1*^{A} into B73 (primer sequences are
625 available in Table S1). After the BC_7 generation, *Hm1*^{A} containing plants (*Hm1Hm1*^{A})
626 were self-pollinated to generate homozygous *Hm1*^{A} B73 NIL plants. Homozygous *Hm1*^{A}
627 B73 NIL plants were identified with PCR-based markers and were self-pollinated to
628 generate seed. Similar to *Hm1*^{A}, the two novel APR alleles *Hm1-3* and *-4* generated
629 through EMS mutagenesis were introgressed into the B73 inbred for seven generations
630 using a Cleaved Amplified Polymorphic sequences (CAPs) assay (primer sequences in
631 Table S1). The restriction enzyme *NlaIII* (New England BioLabs, Ipswich, MA) was
632 used to differentiate the *Hm1*^{B73} allele from the two novel APR alleles. Similar to the

633 novel APR alleles, the novel null allele *hm1-2* identified in the EMS-mutagenized B73
634 M_2 family screen was backcrossed for five generations into B73 using PCR-based
635 markers and self-pollinated to obtain a homozygous *hm1-2* NIL in B73. Marker-assisted
636 backcrossing using PCR-based genotyping was conducted on plants grown at the Purdue
637 Agronomy Center for Research and Education (ACRE) farm during the summer and in
638 the Purdue University Botany and Plant Pathology greenhouses during the winter season.

639 **Transcriptional activity of *Hm1^A***

640 *Hm1^A* plants were inoculated with CCR1 spore suspension as described above at weekly
641 intervals from the seedling stage to maturity (week-1 through week-8). Total RNA was
642 isolated from CCR1-infected leaf tissue as described by Eggermont et al. (1996) and
643 treated with RNase-free DNase I to eliminate genomic DNA using the TURBO DNA-
644 free Kit (Ambion, Austin, TX). One µg of treated RNA was reverse-transcribed to cDNA
645 in a total volume of 25 µl using the iScript^{TM} cDNA Synthesis kit from Bio-Rad
646 (Hercules, CA). RT-PCR was conducted using gene specific primers with the maize actin
647 transcript as a control (see Table S1 for primer information). RT-PCR was conducted
648 under the following conditions: denaturation at 94°C for 1 min, annealing at 60°C for 1
649 min, extension at 72°C for 1 min, and a terminal extension steps for 10 min. 30 and 28
650 cycles of PCR were conducted to amplify *Hm1^A* and the control actin gene, respectively.
651 Amplified PCR products were separated on a 0.8% agarose gel to visualize the
652 expression of the *Hm1^A* transcript. Three replicates for each time point were used for this
653 experiment.

654 Additionally, qRT-PCR was conducted on cDNA from *Hm1^A* plants inoculated
655 with CCR1 at week-1, -3, -5, and -7 using gene specific primers. For relative

656 quantification, Molybdenum co-factor biosynthesis protein (MOL, GRMZM2G067176)
657 was used as a reference gene (46). All primer combinations had an efficiency of 90-
658 100%. Individual qRT-PCR reactions contained 5 µl of SYBR® Select Master Mix
659 (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA), 2 µl of cDNA template (20x dilution), and the
660 appropriate amount of forward and reverse primers plus water. A three-step qRT-PCR
661 amplification (40 cycles of 95°C for 5 s followed by 61°C for 20 s and 72°C for 30 s)
662 was performed using the Mx3000P qPCR system (Stratagene–Agilent Technologies,
663 Santa Clara, CA). Semi-quantitative RT-PCR was conducted using gene-specific primers
664 for $Hm1^{A}$ and the reference gene *Actin* (primer sequence in Table S5). Three replicates
665 for each time point were used for this experiment.

666 **Translational activity of $Hm1^{A}$**

667 For Western analysis, samples were collected at weekly intervals from week 2 through
668 week 8 after planting. Since $Hm1^{A}$ is infection inducible, plants were inoculated with
669 CCR1 for 24 h before collecting leaf samples. Protein was extracted using an alkaline
670 lysis protocol and quantified using the Bradford method. Equal amounts of the protein
671 (10 ug) was loaded onto SDS-PAGE gels and western blots were developed using a MAP
672 antibody raised against a synthesized 13 amino acid peptide (RPARDRLGELGFK)
673 corresponding to amino acids 312 to 324 of the HM1 peptide.

674 For the HCTR activity assay, $Hm1^{B73}$, $hm1^{Pr}$, and $Hm1^{A}$ plants grown in the field
675 were inoculated with 200 μl of 10^5 spores/mL CCR1 spore suspension into the leaf whorl
676 at weeks-3 and -7. Four biological replicates of three inoculated plants were sampled 24
677 hpi and stored at -80°C until used. Total plant protein was extracted using a protocol
678 adapted from Hayashi et al. (2005) and desalted using a Sephadex G-50 Fine column (GE

679 Healthcare, Chicago, IL). After determining protein concentration with a Bradford assay,
680 13.55 μg of protein was used to start reactions containing 25 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.0), 160
681 mM NADPH, and 55 μM HC-toxin. The assays were run at 30°C in the dark for 45 min
682 and then stopped by the addition of 1.25 ml cold acetone. After centrifugation at 15,000 x
683 *g* for 15 min at 4°C, 10 μL of the supernatant was injected onto an Atlantis T3 column
684 (2.1 x 150 mm, 3 μm, 100 Å, Waters) maintained at room temperature and analyzed
685 using an Agilent 1200 series LC instrument coupled to an Agilent 6460 triple quadrupole
686 mass spectrometer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA) at the Bindley Bioscience
687 Center in Purdue Discovery Park.

688 The solvent system contained solvents A (0.1% formic acid in ddH_2O) and B
689 (0.1% acetonitrile). The column was eluted with 85% A and 15% B (0 to 1 min),
690 followed by a linear gradient from 1 to 16 min to 40% A and 60% B, and a hold from 16
691 to 16.5 min at 40% A and 60% B. The column solvent was then reduced from 60% B to
692 15% B (16.5 to 17 min) and kept isocratic at 15% B from 17 to 22 min with a flow rate of
693 0.3 ml/min. HC-toxin (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) and its reduced form eluted from
694 the column at 8.5–11.5 min under these conditions. During the analysis, the column
695 effluent was directed to the MS/MS, with the Jetstream ESI set to positive mode with
696 nozzle and capillary voltages at 1000 – 4000 V. The nebulizer pressure was set at 35 psi,
697 the nitrogen drying gas was set at 325°C with a flow rate of 8 L/min, and the sheath gas
698 was held at 250°C at a flow rate of 7 L/min. Fragmentation was achieved with 70 V for
699 both analytes. Multiple reaction monitoring (MRM) was used to selectively detect HC-
700 toxin and its reduced form. The first quadrupole was set to transition between the $[M-H]^+$
701 of the analytes, whereas the last quadrupole monitored *m/z* 411 and 409 for reduced and

702 normal HC-toxin respectively. Each transition was monitored with a dwell time of 150
703 ms and collision energy of 15 V, with ultrapure nitrogen used as the collision gas. Mass
704 selection was achieved using the following ions: 439.3 for reduced HC-toxin and 437.3
705 for HC-toxin. Data were collected and analyzed via the MassHunter Workstation (version
706 B.06.00, Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA), and peak areas were determined by
707 integration. Similar to *Hm1*^{A}, the HCTR activity of the new APR alleles generated by
708 targeted EMS mutagenesis (*Hm1-3* and *Hm1-4*) along with resistant (*Hm1*) and
709 susceptible (*hm1-2*) controls were also evaluated by LC-MS/MS.

710 **Generating novel APR manifesting alleles of *Hm1* by EMS mutagenesis**

711 The B73 (*Hm1Hm1hm2hm2*) maize inbred, which exhibits complete resistance to CCR1
712 at all stages of plant development (23), was the pollen parent for the targeted EMS
713 mutagenesis screen. The CCR1-susceptible maize inbred Pr (*hm1hm1hm2hm2*) (9,24),
714 which exhibited complete susceptibility to CCR1 at all stages of plant development, was
715 used as the female parent. This experiment was conducted in a greenhouse facility, as the
716 Pr plants do not survive in the field due to high levels of disease pressure.

717 To conduct pollen EMS mutagenesis, EMS stock solution was prepared by adding
718 1 ml of EMS (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) to 99 ml of paraffin oil (Sigma-Aldrich, St.
719 Louis, MO). Tassels of the Pr plants were removed before starting the experiment. On the
720 day of conducting pollen mutagenesis, EMS working solution was prepared by mixing 1
721 ml of EMS stock solution with 14 ml of paraffin oil. This working solution of EMS was
722 mixed gently for one hour to uniformly disperse the EMS in paraffin oil. B73 pollen was
723 collected in tassel bags, measured and transferred to a 50-ml Nalgene bottle. For every 1
724 ml of pollen collected, 10 ml of EMS working solution was added. The EMS-treated

725 pollen was placed on ice and mixed gently every 5 min for 45 min. About two to three
726 drops of EMS-treated B73 pollen was then applied to the silks of Pr ears. Ears from these
727 Pr plants were harvested 45 days after pollination. The M_1 seeds (~4500) obtained from
728 this genetic cross were planted at the Purdue ACRE farm. At both week-2 and week-5,
729 plants were whorl-inoculated with 100 µl of 10^5 spores/mL of CCR1 conidial suspension
730 and screened for their disease response one week post-inoculation.

731 **Amplification of *Hm1*^{B73} allele from heterozygous CCR1-susceptible mutants**

732 Based on sequence polymorphisms between the wild type *Hm1* from B73, *Hm1*^{B73} and
733 the null *hm1* allele from Pr, *hm1*^{Pr}, four primer pairs amplifying -560-bp of the promoter
734 region from the translation start site and the entire coding region of *Hm1* were designed
735 to preferentially amplify the WT *Hm1*^{B73} from heterozygous M_1 plants (Fig S5), which
736 were obtained by crossing Pr plants with EMS-treated B73 pollen. Four overlapping
737 primer combinations (primer sequences in Table S1) were used to preferentially amplify
738 *Hm1*^{B73} over the *hm1*^{Pr} allele. Amplified PCR fragments were processed as described
739 above for *Hm1*^{A} amplification and submitted to the Purdue Genomics Facility for low-
740 throughput sequencing.

741 **Differential photoperiod treatments of *Hm1*^{A} plants**

742 *Hm1*^{A} B73 NIL plants were grown in Conviron growth chambers providing a 12:12 L:D
743 photoperiod. Two-week-old *Hm1*^{A} plants were inoculated with 100 µl of 10^5 spores/mL
744 of CCR1 spore suspension into the leaf whorl. CCR1-inoculated plants were incubated
745 overnight in a humidity chamber at 80% relative humidity. These plants were then
746 subjected to 12:12 L:D or 18:6 L:D photoperiods. The response reaction to CCR1

747 infection was evaluated every 24 h for a 96 h period. Digital photographs of lesion
748 progression were taken using a Canon EOS Digital Rebel XSi camera.

749 Additional extended darkness and DCMU treatment experiments were performed
750 in growth chambers on plants homozygous *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* in the B73 genetic
751 background. Plants were grown in a growth chamber under 14:10 L:D for two weeks. We
752 inoculated these plants with CCR1 and subjected them to two different light regimes,
753 14:10 L:D or 4:20 L:D. On a subset of CCR1 inoculated plants transferred to 14:10 L:D,
754 the herbicide (3-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)-1,1-dimethylurea) (DCMU) at a concentration of
755 100 μM was applied to the leaf whorl 24 hpi. Disease severity of these plants was
756 determined at 7 dpi.

757 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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761 **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

762 DSM, SC, SM and GSJ designed and performed linkage analysis studies. DSM did the
763 Southern blots and also constructed and screened the lambda library to clone *Hm1*^{A}. SM
764 conducted sequence alignment analysis with *Hm1* orthologs and different maize inbreds.
765 SC performed *Hm1*^{A} transcriptome analysis using semi-quantitative RT-PCR and AK
766 conducted qRT-PCR. KC and AK designed and performed HCTR assays. SC, SM, and
767 GJ designed and conducted EMS mutagenesis. SM, KC, and GJ screened EMS-generated
768 M_1 plants for their disease response to CCR1. SM, AD, BK, BD and GJ designed and

769 performed experiments to look at the effect of photosynthesis on APR. LD initially
770 provided P8, the inbred possessing *Hm1*A, and worked with GJ to characterize its APR.
771 SM, SC, KC, BD, and GJ wrote the paper. All authors reviewed the manuscript and LD
772 provided the detailed editorial changes.

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904

905 **FIGURE LEGENDS**

906 **Fig 1. Developmental onset of the adult plant resistance phenotype of *Hm1*^{A}.**

907 **(A)** A seedling *Hm1*^{A} leaf exhibiting susceptibility to *Cochliobolus carbonum* race 1
908 (CCR1) at the 2-week age. **(B)** A 9-week old *Hm1*^{A} leaf completely resistant to CCR1.
909 **(C)** The disease/resistance phenotype of *Hm1*^{A} plants homozygous and heterozygous
910 (*Hm1*^{A}*hm1*^{Pr}) for the APR allele to CCR1 at weekly intervals from week-1 through week-
911 10. Ratings were established by controls *Hm1*^{B73}*Hm1*^{B73} (rated 1 and resistant
912 throughout) and *hm1*^{Pr}*hm1*^{Pr} (rated 10 and susceptible throughout). All *hm1* alleles were
913 in the B73 genetic background. Error bars represent standard error calculated using R
914 statistical package.

915

916 **Fig 2. Molecular characteristics of *Hm1*^{A}.**

917 **(A)** Southern blot analysis of DNA of inbreds P8 (*Hm1*^{A}*Hm1*^{A}) and Pr1 (*Hm1*^{Pr1}*Hm1*^{Pr1})
918 demonstrating that *Hm1*^{A} is a single copy gene. Sample genotypes (inbreds P8 or Pr1) are
919 indicated below the restriction endonuclease used for DNA digestions (BamHI, EcoRI, or
920 HindIII) and M corresponds to the DNA marker lane. **(B)** Schematic representation of the
921 gene structure of *Hm1*^{A} comprised by five exons (gray boxes) and four introns, identical
922 to *Hm1*^{B73}. The locations and the nature of five amino acids that differ between HM1^{A}
923 and HM1^{B73} are indicated by red lines. The locations of the start and termination codons
924 are also indicated.

925

926 **Fig 3. Transcriptional and translational activities of *Hm1*^{A} during the seedling and**
927 **mature stages.**

928 **(A)** Reverse transcription (RT)-PCR assay showing no change in $Hm1^{A}$ accumulation in
929 leaves from week-1 through week-8 after planting. The *actin* gene was used as a control.
930 **(B)** Quantitative real time PCR (qRT-PCR) measurements of the expression of $Hm1^{A}$ also
931 demonstrates no change in $Hm1^{A}$ accumulation across the time period when APR is
932 established. **(C)** Western blots showing that the level or stability of the $HM1^{A}$ protein do
933 not change over time during plant development. Equal amounts of protein were loaded
934 following quantification with the Bradford method. **(D)** *In vitro* HC-toxin reductase
935 (HCTR) assays showing that the relative enzymatic activity encoded by $Hm1^{A}$ is less than
936 $Hm1^{B73}$ but higher than $hm1^{Pr}$, the null allele. The specific activity of HCTR varies
937 between alleles but not over time between weeks 3 and 7 in any genotype. The HCTR
938 assay was based on the determination via LC-MS/MS of the amount of HC-toxin reduced
939 by leaf protein extracts from the leaves of all genotypes. Different letters indicate
940 significant differences between genotypes ($p_{adj} < 0.05$).
941
942 **Fig 4. Design of the targeted EMS mutagenesis screen to generate new mutant**
943 **alleles of *Hm1*.**
944 Pollen collected from the fully resistant inbred B73 ($Hm1^{B73}Hm1^{B73}$) was treated with
945 ethyl methanesulfonate (EMS) and used to pollinate ears of the fully susceptible inbred
946 Pr ($hm1^{Pr}hm1^{Pr}$) in a greenhouse. The resultant M1 seeds ($Hm1^{B73}/hm1^{Pr}$) were planted in
947 the field, inoculated with CCR1, and screened for disease resistance at both the seedling
948 stage and at maturity to identify rare susceptible mutants, designated as $Hm1^{B73*}/hm1^{Pr}$.
949 M1 mutants that were susceptible at the seedling stage that became resistant with the

950 progression of age were considered APR. Out of about 4,500 M1 plants screened, 7
951 susceptible mutants were found and two became resistant at maturity.
952
953 **Fig 5. Relative strength of the three APR alleles of *hm1* in conferring protection**
954 **against CCR1.**
955 Like $Hm1^{A}$, both new APR alleles (*Hm1-3 and Hm1-4*) were introgressed into B73 for six
956 generations for comparison of their resistance phenotypes. Plants homozygous for the
957 $Hm1^{B73}$ and *hm1-2* alleles were fully resistant and susceptible, respectively. Disease
958 resistance was evaluated three times, at week-2, week-5 and week-9 after planting, and a
959 scale of 1 (completely resistant) to 10 (completely susceptible) was used to rate the
960 interaction phenotypes. Letters represent whether differences among each age group were
961 significant ($p_{adj} < 0.05$). The relative order of strength observed was $Hm1^{B73} > Hm1\text{-}3 >$
962 $Hm1^{A} > Hm1\text{-}4 > hm1\text{-}2$.
963
964 **Fig 6. *In vitro* enzymatic activities of HCTRs encoded by the new APR alleles of**
965 ***hm1*.**
966 Protein extracts from the leaf tissue of near-isogenic lines of the APR alleles *Hm1-3* and
967 *Hm1-4* in the B73 background were used to conduct *in vitro* HCTR assays. The fully
968 resistant ($Hm1^{B73}$) and susceptible (*hm1-2*) alleles of *hm1* were used as controls. HCTR
969 activities, measured at age week-3 and week-7, relied on to determining the amount of
970 HC-toxin reduced via LC-MS/MS. Letters represent whether differences among each age
971 group were significant ($p_{adj} < 0.05$).
972

973 **Fig 7. Resistance of *Hm1*^{A} seedlings to CCR1 in increased by extended photoperiod.**

974 Two-week-old homozygous *Hm1*^{A} seedlings were inoculated with CCR1 and incubated
975 under two different photoperiods of 12 h daylight (12 h L:12 h D) and 18 h daylight (18 h
976 L:6 h D). *Hm1*^{A} seedlings grown under 12 h daylight were susceptible to CCR1 at 72 hpi
977 **(A)** and 96 hpi **(B)**. *Hm1*^{A} seedlings incubated under the extended photoperiod of 18 h
978 light exhibited notably enhanced resistance at both 72 hpi **(C)** and 96 hpi **(D)**.

979

980 **Fig 8. Decreased photoperiod and photosynthesis inhibition by DCMU enhanced the**
981 **susceptibility of APR genotypes to CCR1.**

982 **(A)** Two-week-old homozygous *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* B73 NIL plants were inoculated with
983 CCR1 and incubated with a shortened photoperiod of 4:20 L:D or longer 14:10 L:D
984 photoperiod. Plants grown under a decreased photoperiod were completely susceptible to
985 CCR1 while control plants were relatively less susceptible. **(B)** *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* B73
986 NIL plants were grown for two-weeks in the longer photoperiod conditions (14:10 L:D)
987 and half of the plants were sprayed with DCMU, a photosynthesis inhibiting herbicide.
988 Application of DCMU rendered both *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* plants highly susceptible to
989 CCR1 compared to control plants. Pictures were taken 6 days after inoculation.

990 **TABLES**

991 **Table 1.** The nature of molecular changes in the mutant alleles of *Hm1* generated by
992 mutagenesis and their respective disease/resistance phenotypes to infection by CCR1 at
993 maturity.

994

Fig. 1

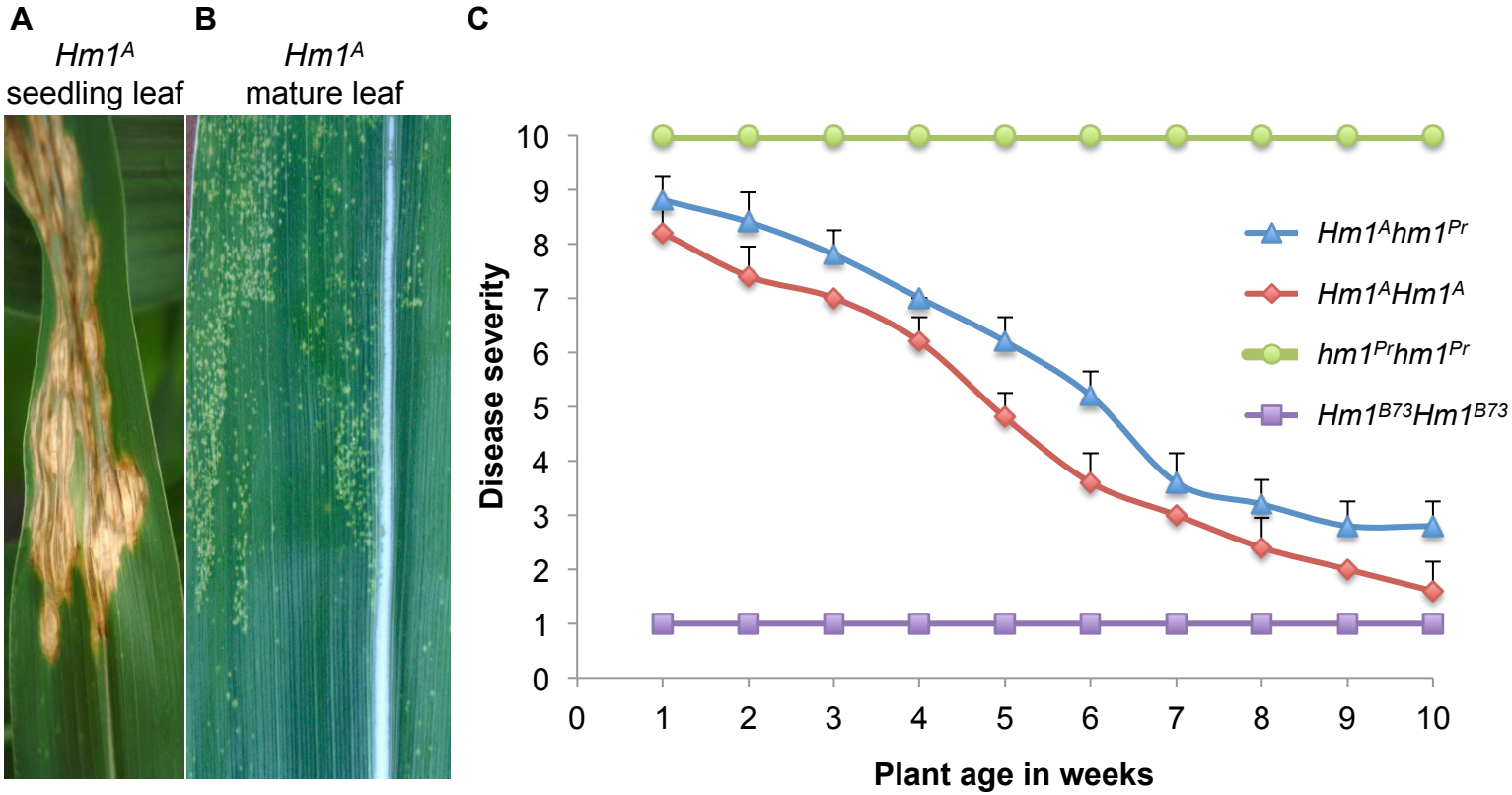

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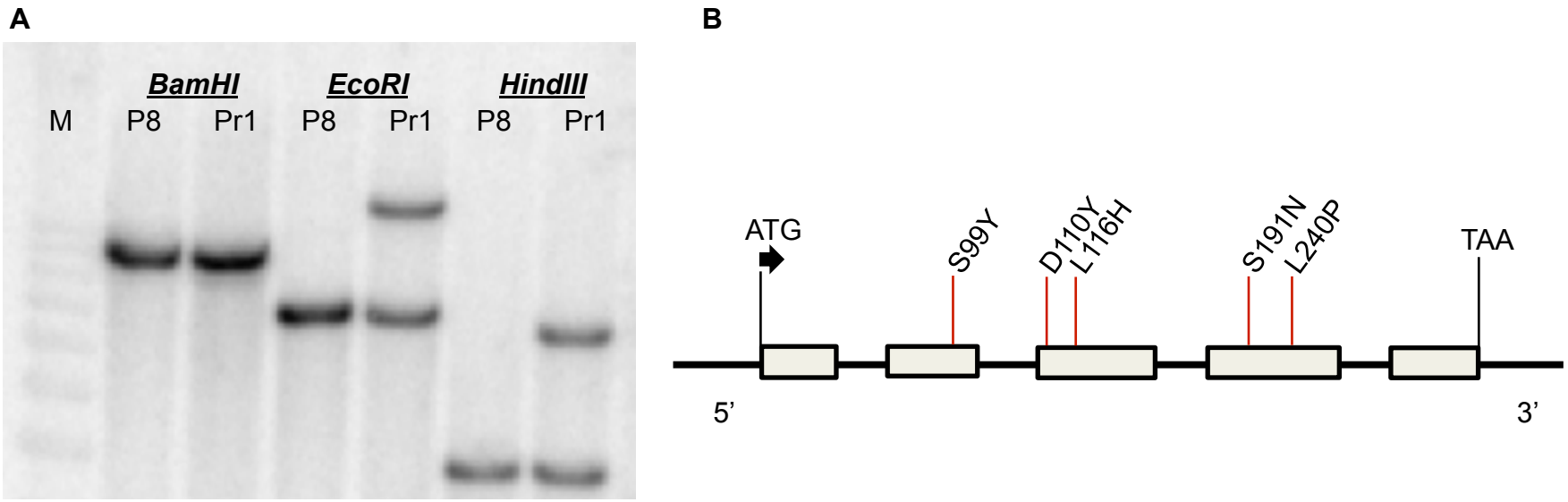
Fig. 2



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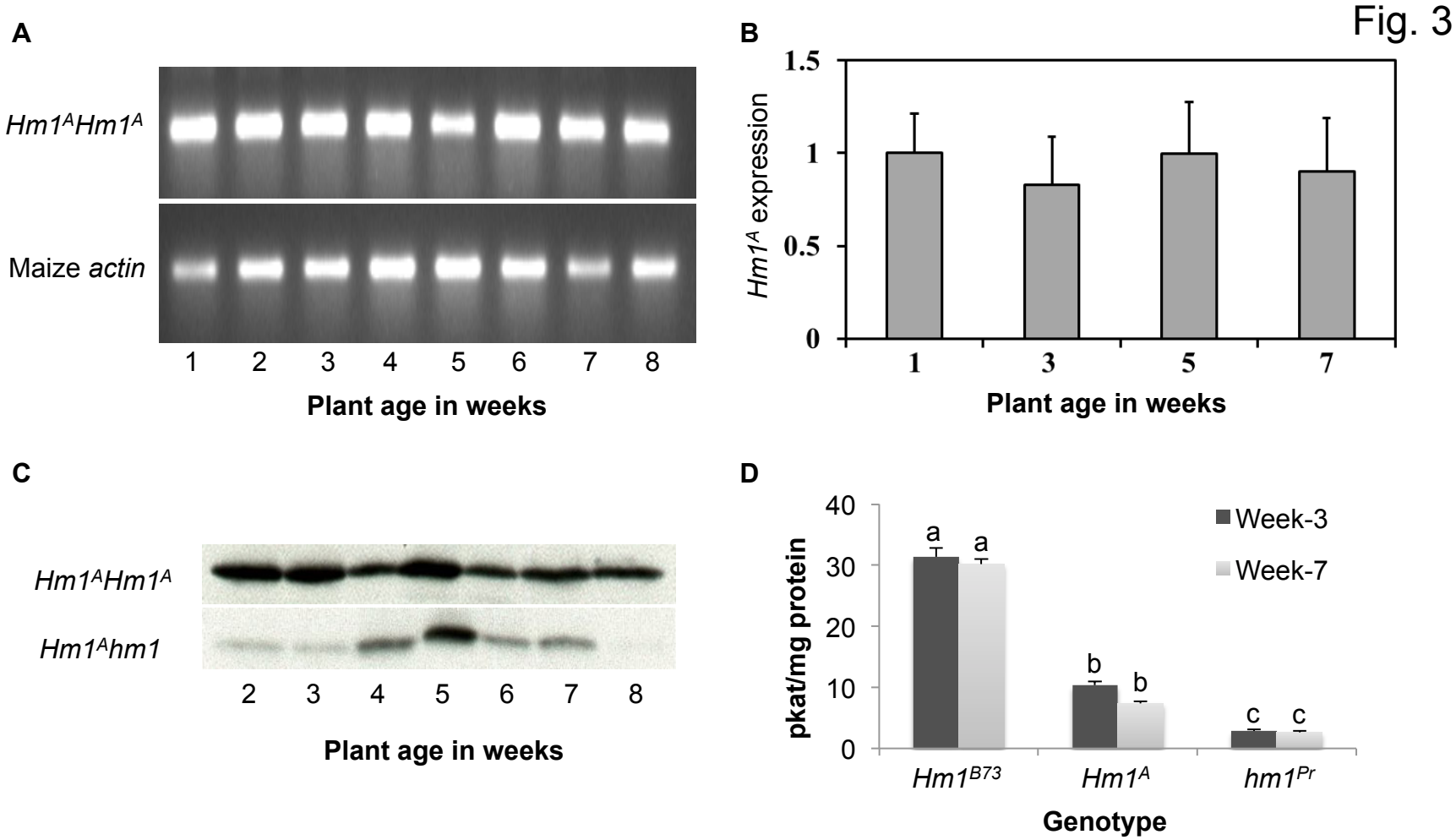

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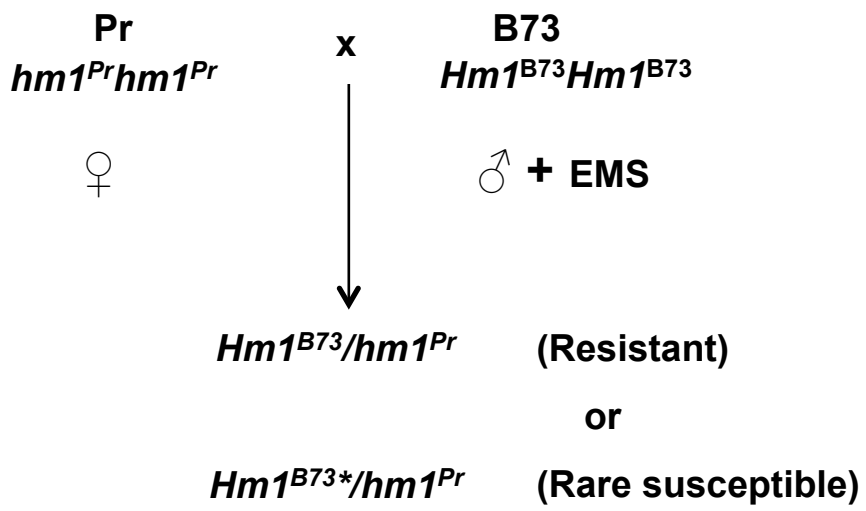

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Pollen collected from the fully resistant inbred B73 ($Hm1^{B73}Hm1^{B73}$) was treated with ethyl methanesulfonate (EMS) and used to pollinate ears of the fully susceptible inbred Pr ($hm1^{Pr}hm1^{Pr}$) in a greenhouse. The resultant M1 seeds ($Hm1^{B73}/hm1^{Pr}$) were planted in the field, inoculated with CCR1, and screened for disease resistance at both the seedling stage and at maturity to identify rare susceptible mutants, designated as $Hm1^{B73*}/hm1^{Pr}$. M_1 mutants that were susceptible at the seedling stage that became resistant with the progression of age were considered APR. Out of about 4,500 M_1 plants screened, 7 susceptible mutants were found and two became resistant at maturity.

Fig. 5

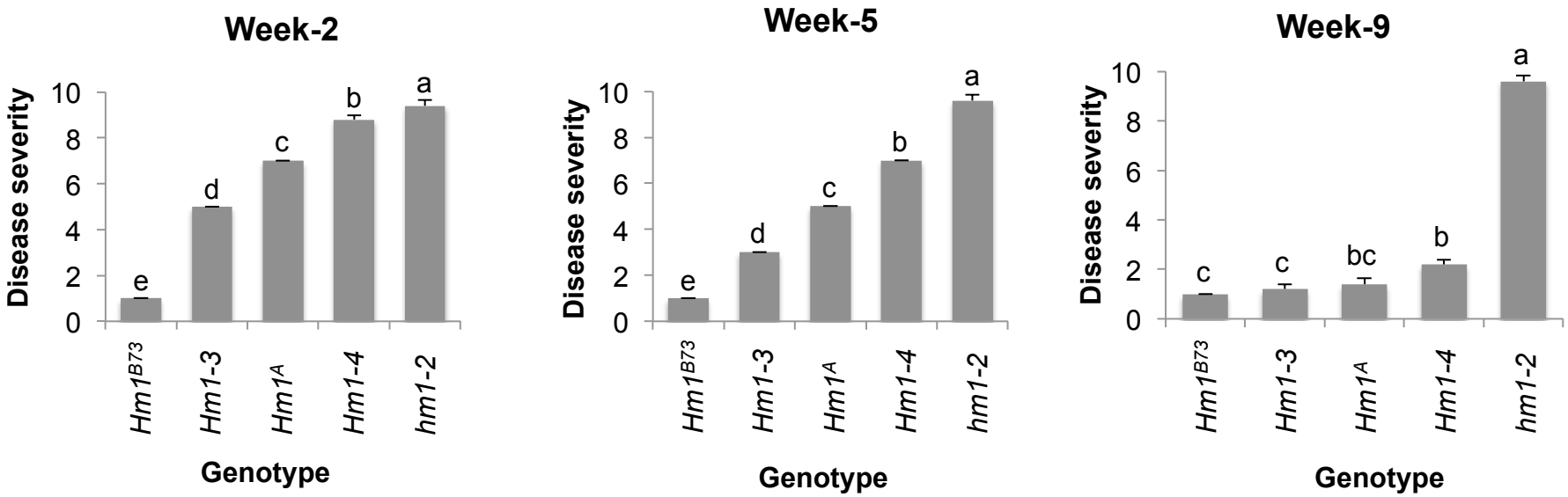
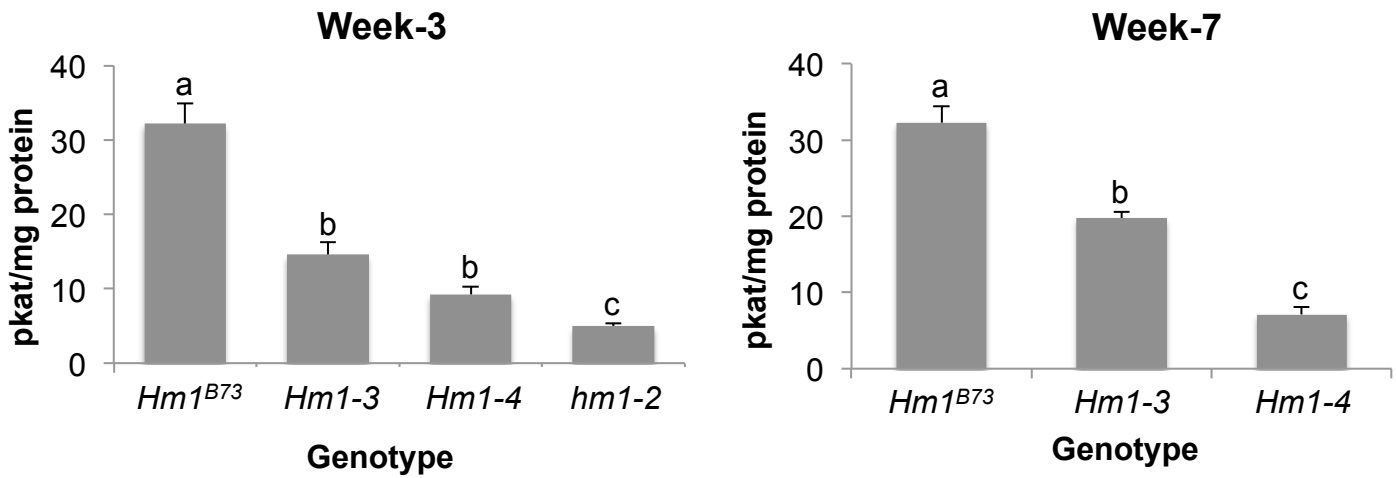


Figure 5. Relative strength of the three APR alleles of *hm1* in conferring protection against CCR1.

Like *Hm1*^{A}, both new APR alleles (*Hm1-3 and Hm1-4*) were introgressed into B73 for six generations for comparison of their resistance phenotypes. Plants homozygous for the *Hm1*^{B73} and *hm1-2* alleles were fully resistant and susceptible, respectively. Disease resistance evaluations were done three times, at week-2, week-5 and week-9 after planting, and a scale of 1 (completely resistant) to 10 (completely susceptible) was used to rate the interaction phenotypes. Letters represent whether differences among each age group were significant ($p_{adj} < 0.05$). The relative order of strength observed was *Hm1*^{B73} > *Hm1-3* > *Hm1*^{A} > *Hm1-4* > *hm1-2*.

Fig. 6



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Protein extracts from the leaf tissue of near-isogenic lines of the APR alleles *Hm1-3* and *Hm1-4* in the B73 background were used to conduct *in vitro* HCTR assays. The fully resistant ($Hm1^{B73}$) and susceptible (*hm1-2*) alleles of *hm1* were used as controls. HCTR activities, measured at age week-3 and week-7, relied on to determining the amount of HC-toxin reduced via LC-MS/MS. Letters represent whether differences among each age group were significant ($p_{adj} < 0.05$).

Fig. 7

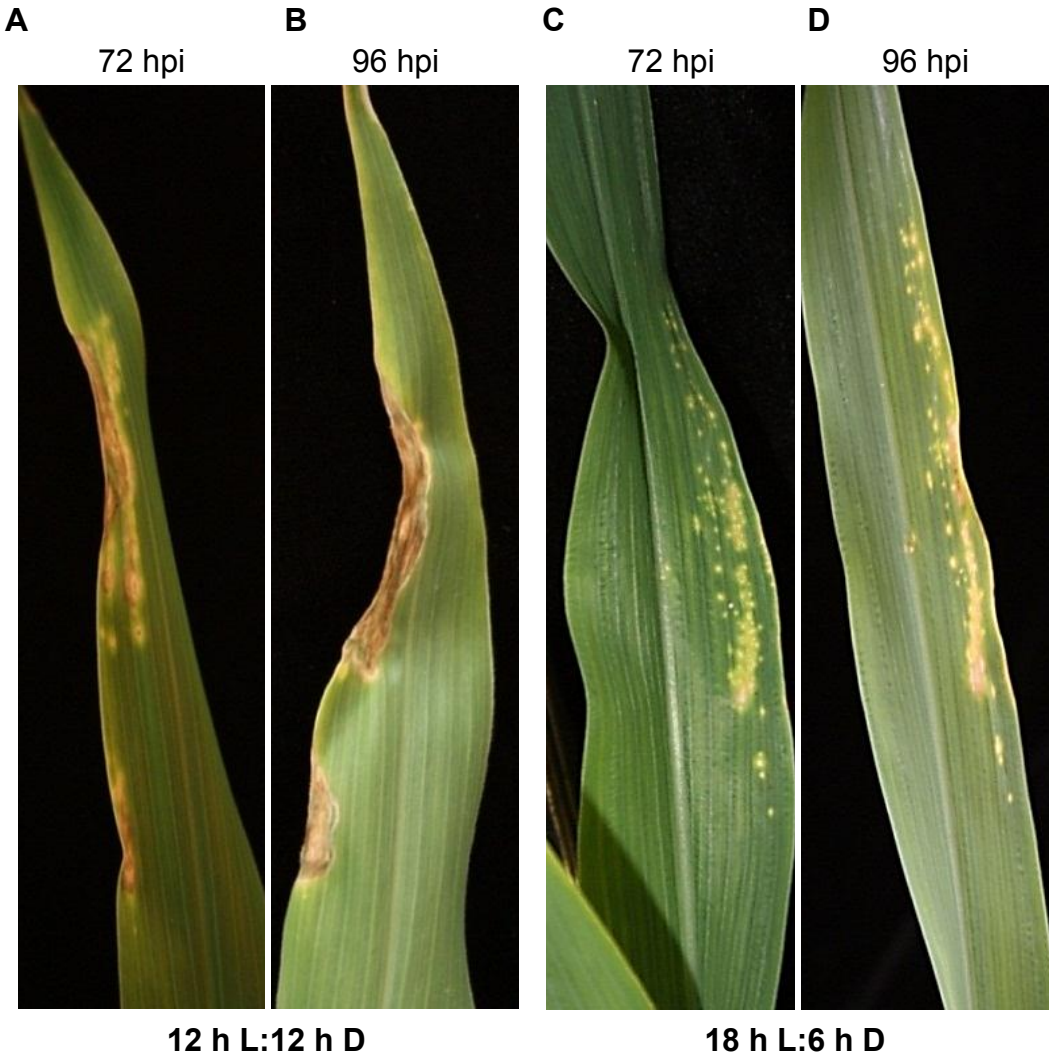

Figure 7. Resistance of *Hm1*^{A} seedlings to CCR1 in increased by extended photoperiod.

Two-week-old homozygous *Hm1*^{A} seedlings were inoculated with CCR1 and incubated under two different photoperiods of 12 h daylight (12 h L:12 h D) and 18 h daylight (18 h L:6 h D). *Hm1*^{A} seedlings grown under 12 h daylight were susceptible to CCR1 at 72 hpi **(A)** and 96 hpi **(B)**. *Hm1*^{A} seedlings incubated under the extended photoperiod of 18 h light exhibited notably enhanced resistance at both 72 hpi **(C)** and 96 hpi **(D)**.

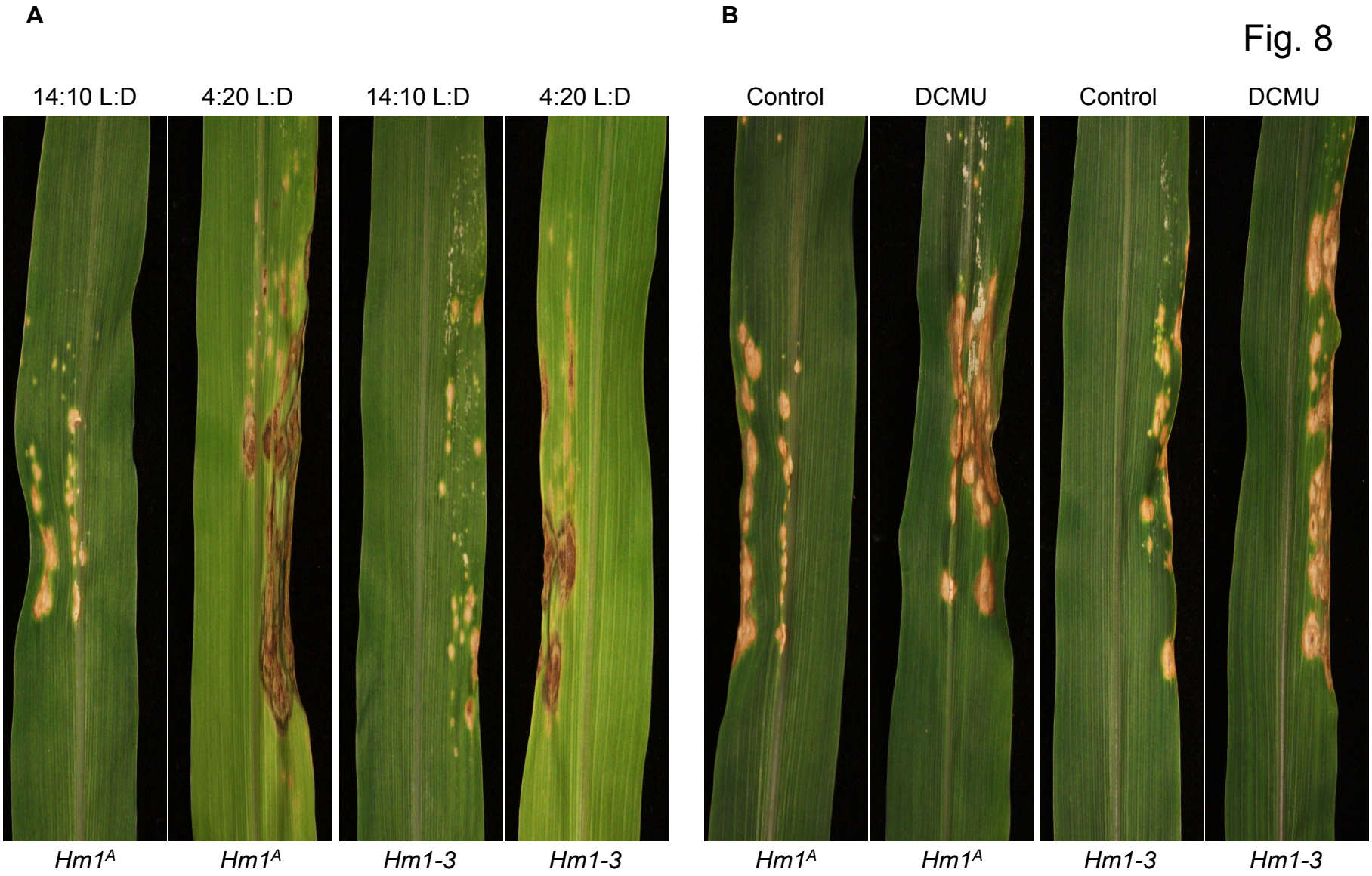

Figure 8. Decreased photoperiod and photosynthesis inhibition by DCMU enhanced the susceptibility of APR genotypes to CCR1.

(A) Two-week-old homozygous *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* B73 NIL plants were inoculated with CCR1 and incubated with a shortened photoperiod of 4:20 L:D or longer 14:10 L:D photoperiod. Plants grown under a decreased photoperiod were completely susceptible to CCR1 while control plants were relatively less susceptible. **(B)** *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* B73 NIL plants were grown for two-weeks in the longer photoperiod conditions (14:10 L:D) and half of the plants were sprayed with DCMU, a photosynthesis inhibiting herbicide. Application of DCMU rendered both *Hm1*^{A} and *Hm1-3* plants highly susceptible to CCR1 compared to control plants. Pictures were taken 6 days after inoculation.