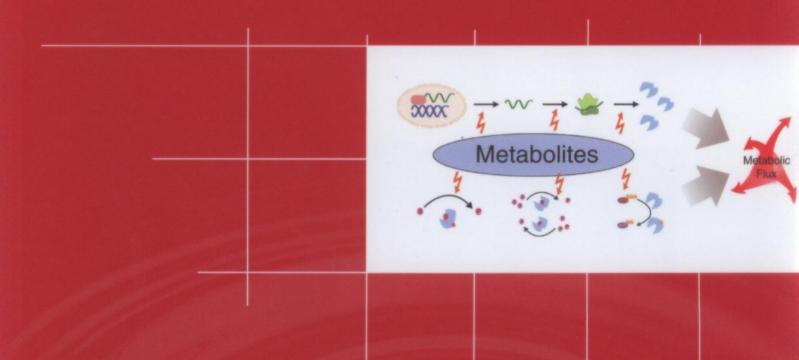
Current Opinion in

August 2015 ISSN 0958-1669

Biotechnology

Jan van der Meer & Greg N Stephanopoulos, Editors



August 2015

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Edited by Sarah-Maria Fendt and Costas D Maranas

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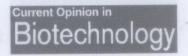
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Abstracted/indexed in: BIOSIS, CAB Abstracts International, CAB Health, Chemical Abstracts, EMBASE, Index Medicus, Medline. Also covered in the abstract and citation database SCOPUS®. Full text available on ScienceDirect®

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Metabolites are involved in the modulation of metabolic fluxes. Based on their concentrations, small molecules directly influence the rates of coupled biochemical reactions. Allosteric interactions between metabolites and enzymes provide an efficient and fast mechanism for controlling metabolic fluxes and allow for an immediate response to environmental perturbations. By interfering with transcriptional and translational regulation, metabolites are also involved in long term regulatory processes. (See Wegner et al., pages 16–22, this issue).