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(83) **Declaration under Rule 28(4) EPC (expert
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(54) **PROCESS FOR PRODUCING A-HYDROXY ACID AMMONIUM SALT**

(57) The present invention provides a method for producing a-hydroxy acid ammonium salt that uses a specific microbial strain capable of accumulating α -hydroxy acid ammonium salt at a high concentration while also maintaining an industrially satisfactory production rate for a long period of time. More specifically, the present invention uses a microbial catalyst originating in a microbial strain which, during conversion of α -hydroxynitrile to α -hydroxy acid ammonium salt, is capable

of maintaining the average production rate of α -hydroxy acid ammonium salt at at least 100 $\mu\text{mol/min}$ per g of dry microbial cell weight for 14 days or more without adding fresh microbial catalyst, and is capable of accumulating the α -hydroxy acid ammonium salt at 20 to 60% by weight. An example of this microbial strain is *Arthrobacter* sp. strain NSSC204.

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