**S2 Table. β-Galactosidase activities of random 12AC lac⁺ clones in S. meliloti RmF728.** Cosmid pJC8 was used as a negative control. Clone numbers in bold font also complemented *E. coli* DH5α (Rif<sup>+</sup>) in M9-lactose medium. Underlined clone numbers were completely sequenced. Whole cells of triplicate samples were permeabilized by SDS and reacted with ONPG. Specific activity was represented as \((1000xA_{420})/(\text{timexOD}_{600}\times\text{culture volume})\).

| 12AC lac⁺ clone | β-Galactosidase specific activity ± standard deviation |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 12              | 9902 ± 1052                                          |
| 16              | 4379 ± 643                                           |
| **34**          | **15596 ± 1633**                                     |
| 55              | 4388 ± 260                                           |
| 77              | 3958 ± 700                                           |
| 78              | 4301 ± 814                                           |
| 86              | 3226 ± 470                                           |
| 94              | 3292 ± 610                                           |
| 99              | 3671 ± 626                                           |
| 114             | 3558 ± 123                                           |
| 115             | 3240 ± 212                                           |
| 128             | 3596 ± 508                                           |
| **160**         | **3094 ± 15**                                        |
| **161**         | **3916 ± 174**                                       |
| 169             | 3606 ± 433                                           |
| 172             | 3903 ± 327                                           |
| **177**         | **15445 ± 796**                                      |
| 183             | 3331 ± 440                                           |
| 199             | 3851 ± 155                                           |
| 204             | 3357 ± 140                                           |
| 234             | 3589 ± 352                                           |
| 253             | 1801 ± 177                                           |
| 266             | 4001 ± 343                                           |
| 270             | 4351 ± 717                                           |
| 271             | 3835 ± 344                                           |
| 305             | 3679 ± 52                                            |
| 306             | 3770 ± 107                                           |
| 319             | 3788 ± 408                                           |
| 150B            | 3544 ± 633                                           |
| 150W            | 3889 ± 545                                           |
| 175B            | 4163 ± 582                                           |
| 195W            | 4211 ± 1099                                          |
| 203W            | 4112 ± 251                                           |
| **206B**        | **15598 ± 1104**                                     |
| 206W            | 4147 ± 309                                           |
| **24B**         | **16973 ± 1348**                                     |
| 267A            | 3707 ± 468                                           |
| **35B**         | **16647 ± 664**                                      |
| 36W             | 3772 ± 310                                           |