

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
30 June 2022 (30.06.2022)



(10) International Publication Number
WO 2022/139675 A1

(51) International Patent Classification:

C08G 63/08 (2006.01) B01D 3/34 (2006.01)
C07D 319/12 (2006.01) C08G 63/78 (2006.01)
C07B 57/00 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:

PCT/SG2020/050779

(22) International Filing Date:

24 December 2020 (24.12.2020)

(25) Filing Language:

English

(26) Publication Language:

English

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,

AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DJ, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, IT, JO, JP, KE, KG, KH, KN, KP, KR, KW, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, WS, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

(54) Title: PROCESS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF LACTIDE

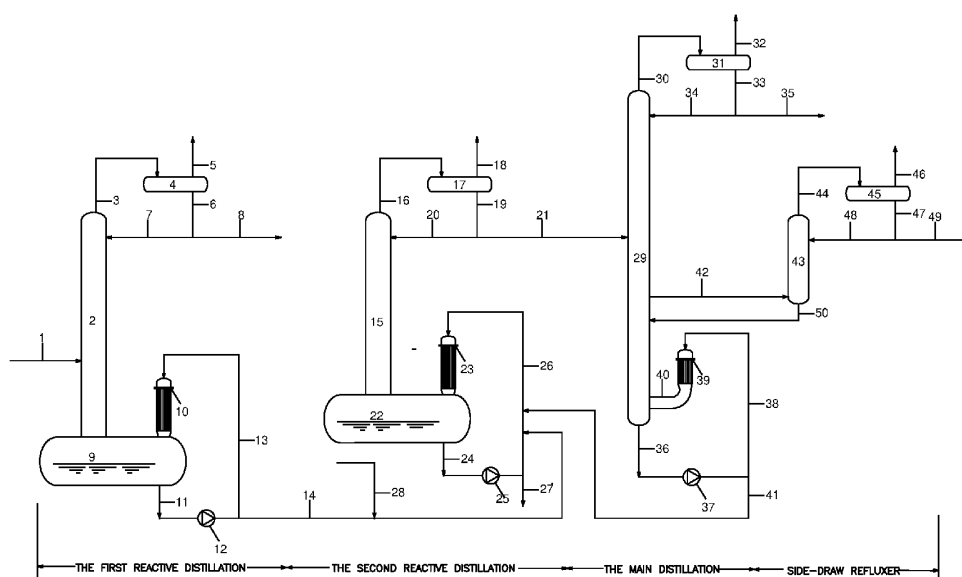


FIG.1

(57) Abstract: This invention relates to a process for the continuous production of optically pure lactide from an aqueous solution of lactic acid by means of two reactive distillations followed by a main distillation column with a side-draw refluxer. The first reactive distillation is used for the preparation of lactic acid oligomers and the second reactive distillation used for the depolymerization of the thus obtained lactic acid oligomers to lactide. The crude lactide generated from the second reactive distillation is further purified in the main distillation column with a side-draw refluxer being connected to.

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Published:

- *with international search report (Art. 21(3))*
- *with amended claims (Art. 19(1))*