

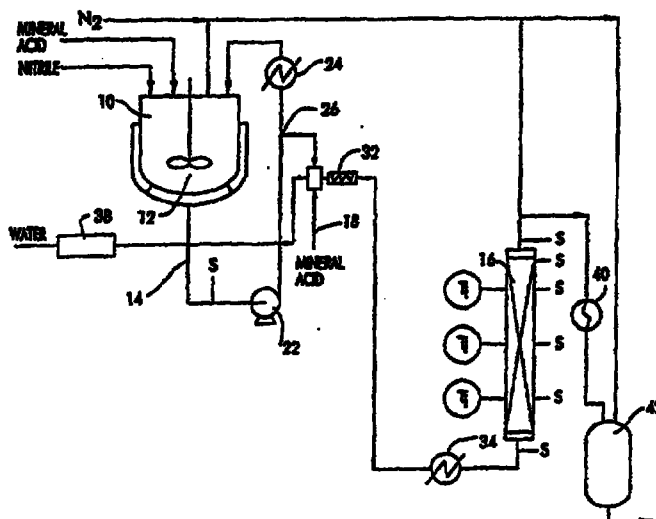
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(54) Title: CONTINUOUS HYDROLYSIS PROCESS FOR PREPARING 2-HYDROXY-4-METHYLTHIOBUTANOIC ACID OR SALTS THEREOF



(57) Abstract

A continuous process for the preparation of 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutanoic acid or a salt thereof which includes introducing an aqueous mineral acid into a nitrile hydrolysis reactor including a continuous stirred tank reactor and introducing 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutanenitrile into the nitrile hydrolysis reactor. 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutanenitrile is continually hydrolyzed within the nitrile hydrolysis reactor to produce a nitrile hydrolysis reactor product stream containing 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutanamide. The nitrile hydrolysis reactor product stream is continuously introduced into an amide hydrolysis flow reactor. 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutanamide is continually hydrolyzed within the amide hydrolysis flow reactor to produce an aqueous hydrolyzate product containing 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutanoic acid. 2-hydroxy-4-methylthiobutanoic acid is recovered from the aqueous hydrolyzate product.