

Derivatives of 4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid, especially for use as hypolipidemic agents, processes for their preparation, pharmaceutical compositions comprising them, tetrahydropyran-2,3,5-triones useful in the preparation of the said derivatives and a process for preparing these tetrahydropyran-2,3,5-triones

This invention relates to novel derivatives of 4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid, to therapeutically acceptable salts thereof, to processes for their preparation, to methods for using the derivatives, to pharmaceutical compositions containing the derivatives and to tetrahydropyran-2,3,5-trione intermediates used in the preparation of the derivatives.

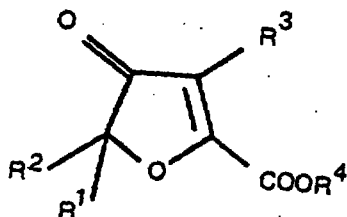
More specifically, the present invention relates to novel derivatives of 4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid having two substituents at position 5 and in addition being optionally further substituted at position 3 with a lower alkyl group as well as certain esters thereof. These derivatives are useful as hypolipidemic agents in a mammal at dosages which do not elicit undesirable side effects.

4,5-Dihydro-4-oxofuran derivatives are extensively described in the literature. Additionally, derivatives of 4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-carboxylic acids have also been disclosed. For example, 4,5-dihydro-2-methyl-4-oxofuran-3-carboxylic acid and its ethyl ester are described by R. E. Rosenkranz *et al.*, *Helv. Chim. Acta.*, 46, 1259 (1963) and references cited therein. In addition, this reference discloses the structure of 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid as a hypothetical intermediate during the decarboxylation of 4-methoxy-5-methylfuran-2-carboxylic acid. The presence of 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid was not confirmed by isolation or other means.

Recently a few furan derivatives were reported to be hypolipidemic agents. More specifically, some derivatives of 2,3,4,5-tetrahydro-3-oxo-4-hydroxy-iminofurans, 2,5-dihydrofurans and 2,3,4,5-tetrahydrofurans are described to have weak to moderate hypolipidemic activity by G. B. Bennett *et al.*, *J. Med. Chem.*, 19, 709 (1976). However, the latter report also states that the furan derivatives, disclosed therein, are devoid of a desirable level of hypolipidemic activity.

The 4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid derivatives of this invention are novel compounds having hypolipidemic activity without affecting liver weight.

Accordingly this invention provides compounds of formula:



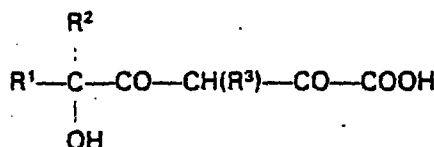
(I)

in which R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> each is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene, phenyl or phenyl mono- or disubstituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together form a  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$  chain wherein m and n each is an integer from one to four and X is methylene, oxa or thia; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical; R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen or lower alkyl; and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, lower alkyl, cyclo(lower)alkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.

A preferred group of compounds of formula I are those in which R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkyl, phenyl or phenyl monosubstituted with halo; R<sup>2</sup> is lower alkyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical; R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen; and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.

A most preferred group of compounds of formula I are those in which R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkyl, phenyl or 4-chlorophenyl; R<sup>2</sup> is lower alkyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical; R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen; and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinyl methyl, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.

The compounds of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen can be prepared by a process, which comprises: cyclizing a compound of formula X



(X)

in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein under acidic conditions.

Compounds of formula I wherein R<sup>4</sup> is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene,

amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene can be prepared by esterifying a compound of formula I wherein R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen. More specifically, the compounds of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> are as defined herein can be prepared by a process, which comprises:

5 reacting a compound of formula II



10 in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein with a di(lower alkyl)oxalate in the presence of a strong inorganic proton acceptor under anhydrous conditions, hydrolyzing the mixture with water at pH 10 to 12, to give a compound of formula X and allowing the latter mixture to stand under acidic conditions to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen; and if desired esterifying the latter compound of formula I to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>4</sup> is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower amino(lower)alkylene, or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene.

20 The compound of formula I wherein R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen may also be prepared by hydrolysing a compound of formula



25 wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined above, under aqueous alkaline conditions at pH 10 to 12, e.g. using KOH or NaOH, and then acidifying to pH 0.5 to 3.

35 The compounds of formula I, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof, lower lipid levels in a mammal when administered to said mammal in an effective hypolipidemic amount.

A convenient form for administering the compounds involves a pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula I or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

40 The term "lower alkyl" as used herein means straight chain alkyl radicals containing from one to six carbon atoms and branched chain alkyl radicals containing three or four carbon atoms and includes methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, isobutyl, n-pentyl, n-hexyl and the like.

The term "lower alkoxy" as used herein means straight chain alkoxy radicals containing from one to six carbon atoms and branched chain alkoxy radicals containing three or four carbon atoms and include a methoxy, ethoxy, isopropoxy, n-butoxy, n-hexyloxy and the like.

45 The term "lower alkylene" as used herein means a divalent organic radical derived from either straight or branched chain aliphatic hydrocarbons containing from one to six carbon atoms by removal of two hydrogen atoms and includes methylene, ethylene, 1-methylpropylene, 2-methylpropylene, 2-ethylpropylene, 2-butylethylene and the like.

50 The term "lower cycloalkyl" as used herein means saturated cyclic hydrocarbon radicals containing from three to six carbon atoms, i.e. cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl and cyclohexyl.

The term "lower alkanol" as used herein means both straight and branched chain alkanols containing from one to four carbon atoms and includes methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, butanol and the like.

55 The term "strong inorganic proton acceptor" as used herein means the inorganic bases or corresponding alkoxides, preferably the alkali metals, the alkali metal hydrides, amides, hydroxides and alkoxides, for example, sodium, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, sodium ethoxide, sodium methoxide, sodium hydride and the like.

The term "organic proton acceptor" as used herein means the organic bases, or amines for instance, triethylamine, pyridine, N-ethylmorpholine, 1,5-diazabicyclo[4.3.0]non-5-ene and the like.

60 The term "therapeutically acceptable addition salt" as used herein includes the therapeutically acceptable acid addition salts of the compound of formula I in which R<sup>4</sup> is amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene. The acid addition salts are prepared by reacting the base form of the appropriate compound of formula I with one or more equivalents, preferably with an excess, of the appropriate acid preferably in an organic

solvent, for example, diethyl ether or an ethanol-diethyl ether mixture. These salts, when administered to a mammal, possess the same pharmacologic activities as the corresponding bases. For many purposes it is preferable to administer the salts rather than the base compounds. Suitable acids to form these salts include the common mineral acids, for instance hydrohalic, sulfuric or phosphoric acid; as well as the organic acids, for instance, formic, acetic, maleic, malic, ascorbic, succinic, fumaric, citric, or tartaric acid; or acids which are sparingly soluble in body fluids and which impart slow-release properties to their respective salts such as pamoic or tannic acid or carboxymethyl cellulose.

The addition salts thus obtained are the functional equivalent of the parent base compound in respect of their therapeutic use. Hence, these addition salts are included within the scope of this invention and are limited only by the requirement that the acids employed in forming the salts be therapeutically acceptable.

Furthermore, the term "therapeutically acceptable addition salt" as used herein also includes the therapeutically acceptable inorganic or organic base addition salts of the compounds of formula I in which  $R^4$  is hydrogen, i.e. compounds of formula I which are acids. These derived salts possess the same activity as the parent acid and are included within the scope of this invention. The acid is transformed in excellent yield into the corresponding therapeutically acceptable salt by neutralisation of said acid with the appropriate inorganic or organic base. The salts are administered in the same manner as the parent acid compounds. Suitable inorganic bases to form these salts include, for example, the hydroxides, carbonates, bicarbonates or alkoxides of the alkali metals or alkaline earth metals, for example, sodium, potassium, magnesium, calcium and the like. Suitable organic bases include the following amines; lower mono-, di- and trialkylamines, the alkyl radicals of which contain up to three carbon atoms, such as methylamine, dimethylamine, trimethylamine, ethylamine, di- and triethylamine, N-methyl-N-ethylamine, and the like; mono-, di and trialkanolamines, the alkanol radicals of which contain up to three carbon atoms, for example, mono-, di- and triethanolamine; alkylene-diamines which contain up to six carbon atoms, such as hexamethylenediamine; phenylalkylamines, for example, benzylamine, phenylethylamine and N-methylphenylethylamine; cyclic saturated or unsaturated bases containing up to six carbon atoms, such as pyrrolidine, piperidine, morpholine, piperazine and their N-alkyl and N-hydroxyalkyl derivatives, such as N-methyl-morpholine and N-(2-hydroxyethyl)-piperidine, as well as pyridine. Furthermore, there may be mentioned the corresponding quaternary salts, such as the tetraalkyl (for example tetramethyl), alkyl-alkanol (for example methyltrimethanol and trimethylmonoethanol) and cyclic ammonium salts, for example the N-methylpyridinium, N-methyl-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)-morpholinium, N,N-dimethylmorpholinium, N-methyl-N-(2-hydroxyethyl)-morpholinium, N,N-dimethylpiperidinium salts, which are characterized by having good water-solubility. In principle, however, there can be used all the ammonium salts which are physiologically compatible.

The transformations to the salts can be carried out by a variety of methods known in the art. For example, in the case of the inorganic salts, it is preferred to dissolve the acid of formula I in water containing at least one equivalent amount of hydroxide, carbonate, or bicarbonate corresponding to the inorganic salt desired. Advantageously, the reaction is performed in a water-miscible, inert organic solvent, for example, methanol, ethanol, dioxane and the like in the presence of water. For example, such use of sodium hydroxide, sodium carbonate or sodium bicarbonate gives a solution of the sodium salt. Evaporation of the solution or addition of a water miscible solvent of a more moderate polarity, for example, a lower alkanol, for instance, butanol, or a lower alkanone, for instance, ethyl methyl ketone, gives the solid inorganic salt if that form is desired.

To produce an amine salt, the acidic compound of formula I is dissolved in a suitable solvent of either moderate or lower polarity, for example, ethanol, methanol, ethyl acetate, diethyl ether and benzene. At least an equivalent amount of the amine corresponding to the desired cation is then added to that solution. If the resulting salt does not precipitate, it can usually be obtained in solid form by addition of a miscible diluent of low polarity, for example, benzene or petroleum ether, or by evaporation. If the amine is relatively volatile, any excess can easily be removed by evaporation. It is preferred to use substantially equivalent amounts of the less volatile amines.

Salts wherein the cation is quaternary ammonium are produced by mixing the acid of formula I with an equivalent amount of the corresponding quaternary ammonium hydroxide in water solution, followed by evaporation of the water.

Also included in this invention are the stereochemical isomers of the compounds of formula I and XI which result from asymmetric centres, contained therein. It is to be understood that all isomers and mixtures thereof arising from such asymmetry are included within the scope of this invention. When two asymmetric centres are present diastereomers are obtainable in substantially pure form by classical separation techniques and by sterically controlled synthesis.

Individual enantiomers are included. These can be separated by fractional crystallization of the diastereomeric salts thereof.

The compounds of formula I, or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, are useful hypolipidemic agents in a mammal upon oral or parenteral administration. Their hypolipidemic properties are readily demonstrated by the following method: male albino rats (eight rats per group), weighing 140—170 g are given a single daily oral dose of the test compound by gavage as a suspension in 2% Tween-80 in water (1.0 ml). (TWEEN is a Registered Trade Mark). In the same

manner, controls are given only 2% Tween-80 in water (1.0 ml) daily. After one week of treatment, animals are decapitated and the blood is collected. The serum is separated by centrifugation and serum cholesterol levels are measured by the method of A. Zlatkis *et al.*, J.Lab.Clin. Med., 41, 486 (1953), as modified for the autoanalyser (Method Np-24). Serum phospholipids are determined by the semi-automated technique of M. Kraml, Clin. Chim. Acta., 13, 442 (1966) and serum triglycerides are measured by the semiautomated method of M. Kraml and L. Cosyns, Clin. Biochem., 2, 373 (1959). The activity of a test compound is assessed by comparing serum cholesterol, phospholipid and/or triglyceride levels in rats treated with the test compound and control rats and the data are analysed for significance by the Student's t-test. The following results demonstrating hypotriglyceridemic activity are calculated by subtracting the serum triglyceride level in treated rats from the control serum triglyceride level, and expressing the difference as a percentage of the control level. The following compounds of formula I at a dose of 1.0 mmole per kilogram of body weight per day lower triglyceride levels by the indicated percentage: 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (42%, described in Example 4), 4,5-dihydro-5(1-methylethyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-5-carboxylic acid (53%, described in Example 4), 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid (37%, described in Example 4), spiro[furan-5(4H),1'(2'H)naphthalene]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid (43% described in Example 4), 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester (53%, described in Example 5) and 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester (61%, described in Example 6).

The compounds of formula I, or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, can be used also in combination with known hypolipidemic agents, for example, clofibrate, for reduction of elevated lipids in a mammal. When used in this combination, the compound of formula I can be administered sequentially or simultaneously in combination with an effective amount of the known hypolipidemic agent. Suitable methods of administration, compositions and dosages of clofibrate (ATROMID—S) is described by Charles E. Baker, Jr. "Physician's Desk Reference", Medical Economics Company, Oradell, N.J. 1977, pp 593—594, for example, 0.5 to 2.0 g per patient per day in divided dosages. The compounds of formula I, or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, in combination with a known hypolipidemic agent, are used in the same manner as described herein for their use as hypolipidemic agents.

When the compounds of formula I of this invention are used as hypolipidemic agents in a mammal, e.g. rats and dogs, they are used alone or in combination with pharmacologically acceptable carriers, the proportion of which is determined by the solubility and chemical nature of the compound, chosen route of administration and standard biological practice. For example, they are administered orally in solid form, e.g. capsule or tablet. They are also administered orally in the form of suspension or solutions, or they may be injected parenterally. For parenteral administration they may be used in the form of a sterile solution containing other solutes, for example, enough saline or glucose to make the solution isotonic.

The tablet compositions for oral administrations contain the active ingredient in admixture with non-toxic pharmaceutical excipients known to be suitable in the manufacture of tablets. Suitable pharmaceutical excipients are, for example, starch, milk sugar, certain types of clay and so forth. The tablets can be uncoated or they can be coated by known techniques so as to delay disintegration and absorption in the gastrointestinal tract and thereby provide a sustained action.

The aqueous suspensions for oral use of the compounds of the invention contain the active ingredient in admixture with one or more non-toxic pharmaceutical excipients, for instance, emulsifying and suspending agents, known to be suitable in the manufacture of aqueous suspensions. Suitable excipients are, for example, methyl-cellulose, sodium alginate, gum acacia, lecithin and so forth. The aqueous suspensions can also contain one or more preservatives, one or more colouring agents and/or one or more sweetening agents.

Non-aqueous suspensions for oral use can be formulated by suspending the active ingredient in a vegetable oil, for example, arachis oil, olive oil, sesame oil, or coconut oil; or in mineral oil. The suspension can contain a thickening agent, for example, beeswax, hard paraffin or cetyl alcohol. These compositions can also contain a sweetening agent, flavouring agent and antioxidant.

For parenteral administration, which includes intramuscular, intraperitoneal, subcutaneous and intravenous use, the compounds of the invention can be used in the form of a sterile solution, wherein the pH should be suitably adjusted and buffered. The solution can contain other pharmaceutical excipients, for example, enough saline or glucose to make the solution isotonic.

The dosage of a compound of formula I of this invention as a hypolipidemic agent will vary with the form of administration and the particular host as well as the age and condition of the host under treatment. Generally, treatment is initiated with small dosages substantially less than the optimal dose of the compound. Thereafter, the dosage is increased by small increments until the optimal effect under the circumstances is reached. In general, a compound of this invention is most desirably administered at a concentration that will generally afford effective results without causing any harmful or deleterious side effects. The effective hypolipidemic amount of the compound usually ranges from about 1.0 mg to about 500 mg per kilogram of body weight per day, although as aforementioned variations will occur. However, a dosage level that is in the range of from about 5 mg to about 300 mg per kilogram of body

weight per day is employed most desirably in order to achieve effective results.

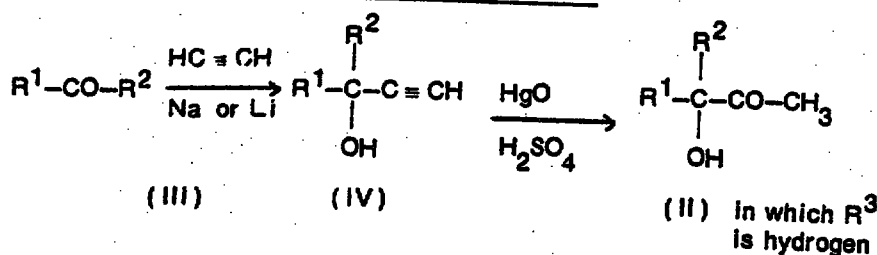
For the preparation of the 4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid derivatives of formula I the preferred starting materials are the  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketones of formula II



in which R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> each is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene, phenyl or phenyl mono- or disubstituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together form a  $-(\text{CH}_2)_m-\text{X}-(\text{CH}_2)_n-$  chain wherein m and n each is an integer from one to four and X is methylene, oxa or thia; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1- or spiro[indan]-1 radical; and R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen or lower alkyl.

The starting materials of formula II in which R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen are either known or they can be prepared as is illustrated in reaction scheme 1.

#### REACTION SCHEME 1

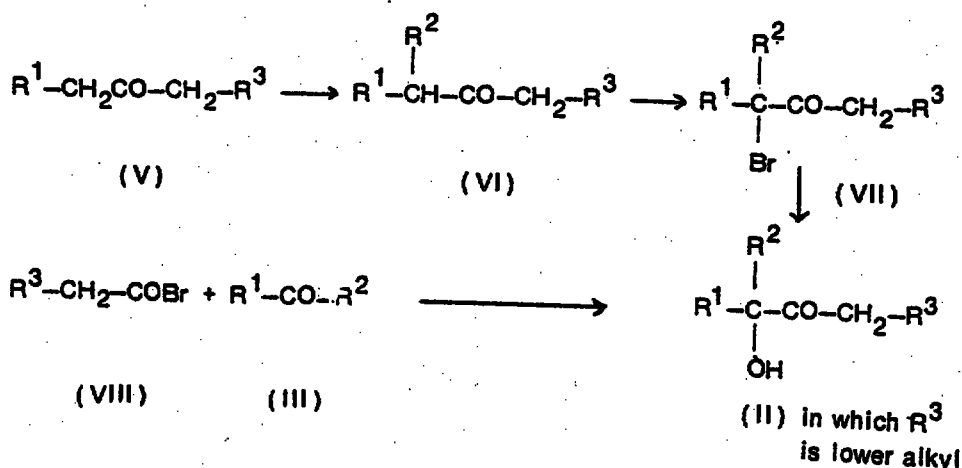


With reference to reaction scheme 1, a number of acetylenic carbinols of formula IV are known and commercially available. Alternatively, acetylenic carbinols are readily available from addition of a metallic acetylide to the ketone of formula III in which R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> are as defined herein using the method described by A. W. Johnson, *Acetylenic Compounds*, Vol. 1, The Acetylenic Alcohols, E. Arnold Co., London, 1946; R. A. Raphael, *Acetylenic Compounds in Organic Synthesis*, London, Butterworth's Sci. Publ., 1955; P. A. Robins and J. Walker, *J. Chem. Soc.*, 177 (1957); and E. D. Bergmann *et al.*, *J. Appl. Chem.*, 3, 39 (1953). In the preferred method a mixture of the compound of formula III and lithium or sodium in a solution of anhydrous liquid ammonia saturated with gaseous acetylene is allowed to react for nine hours and the corresponding compound of formula IV is isolated.

The acetylenic carbinols of formula IV are converted to the corresponding  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketones of formula II, by hydration of the acetylenic carbinol in a mixture of mercuric oxide (red form) or mercuric sulfate, aqueous tetrahydrofuran and sulfuric acid at 60–65°C for one to six hours, according to the procedure described by A. W. Johnson, cited above pp 102–105; E. D. Bergmann and D. F. Herman, *J. Appl. Chem.*, 3, 42 (1953). G. F. Hennian and B. R. Fleck, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 77, 3253 (1955); and G. F. Hennian and E. J. Watson, *J. Org. Chem.*, 23, 656 (1958).

The starting materials of formula II in which R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>3</sup> is lower alkyl are either known or they can be prepared as is illustrated in reaction scheme 2.

#### REACTION SCHEME 2



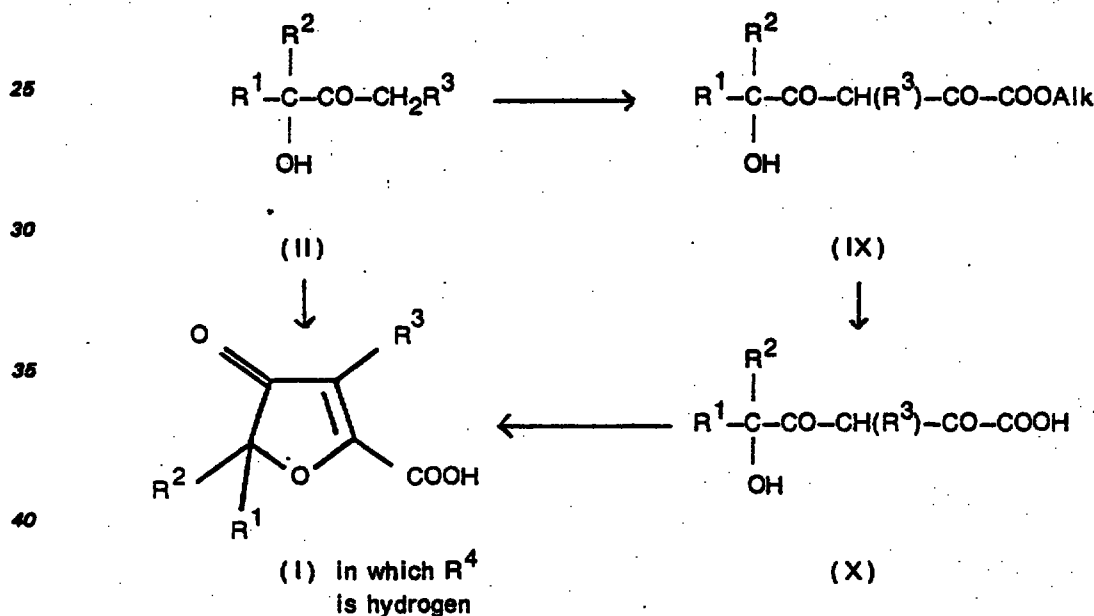
With reference to reaction scheme 2, an organometallic derivative of the compound of formula VIII is condensed with the ketone of formula III to obtain the corresponding  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketone of formula II in which  $R^3$  is lower alkyl according to the conditions described by I. I. Lapkin and T. N. Povarnitsyna, Zh. Obshch. Khim., 38, 99 (1968), cf. Chem. Abstr., 69, 19233z.

The alternative route starting from the compound of formula V is especially suitable for preparing the  $\alpha$ -keto alcohols of formula II in which  $R^1$  or  $R^2$  is phenyl or phenyl mono- or disubstituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl. Alkylation of the compound of formula V, using the method of K. Binovic and S. Vrancea, Chem. Ther., 313 (1968), gives the corresponding compound of formula VI. The latter compound is brominated, according to the conditions described by J. R. Catch *et al.*, J. Chem. Soc. 272 (1948), to obtain the corresponding bromo-ketone of formula VII. Conversion of the latter bromoketone to the corresponding  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketone of formula II is described by J. G. Aston and R. B. Greenberg, J. Amer. Chem. Soc., 62, 2590 (1940); J. Kapron and J. Wiemann, Bull. Soc. Chim. France, 12, 945 (1945); and Y. L. Pascal, Ann. Chim. (Paris), 245 (1968).

In addition to the above described preparations,  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketones of formula II can be prepared by methods described by Y. L. Pascal, cited above and P. Kaufmann, J. Amer. Chem. Soc., 26, 5794 (1954).

Reaction scheme 3 illustrates the conversion of the  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketone of formula II to the corresponding compound of formula I in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein.

### REACTION SCHEME 3



As illustrated by reaction scheme 3, the compound of formula I in which  $R^4$  is hydrogen is prepared from the compound of formula II via the route II $\rightarrow$ IX $\rightarrow$ X $\rightarrow$ I. Although the intermediates of formula IX and X can be isolated and further reacted in separate steps, the compound of formula II can be converted to the corresponding compound of formula I via intermediates IX and X in a single reaction vessel without isolating the latter intermediates.

The first step in the conversion of the  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketone of formula II is the condensation of substantially equimolar amounts of the  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketone and a di(lower alkyl)oxalate, preferably dimethyl or diethyl oxalate, in the presence of one to four molar equivalents of a strong inorganic proton acceptor, preferably sodium hydride, in an anhydrous inert organic solvent. Preferred inert organic solvents can be selected from the di(lower alkyl)ethers or cyclic ethers, for example, diethyl ether, dioxane and tetrahydrofuran. The reaction mixture is maintained at 30 to 70°C, preferably 50 to 60°C, for 10 to 30 hours. The resultant enolate salt is filtered as rapidly as possible, dissolved in water, acidified with a diluted inorganic acid, and the corresponding compound of formula IX is extracted with an inert water immiscible organic solvent, preferably diethyl ether.

Hydrolysis of the latter compound is readily achieved under alkaline conditions, for example with a solution of one to three molar equivalents of potassium or sodium hydroxide in an aqueous solution of a water miscible organic solvent, preferably methanol, ethanol, tetrahydrofuran or dioxane, at 15 to 30°C for 15 to 40 hours. The aqueous solution is washed with a water immiscible organic solvent, preferably diethyl ether, benzene, chloroform, dichloromethane and the like. The pH of the aqueous solution is adjusted to 3 to 5 with a strong acid, e.g. hydrochloric or sulfuric acid. Thereafter, the corresponding compound of formula X is obtained by extraction of the aqueous solution with a water immiscible

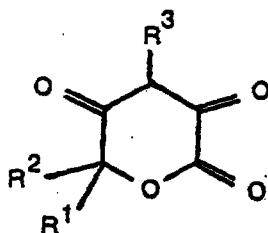
organic solvent, for example one of the previously noted organic solvents.

The latter compound can be cyclized under acidic conditions to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein and  $R^4$  is hydrogen. In one method of achieving this cyclization, a solution of the compound of formula X and 0.1 to 10 molar equivalents, preferably 0.1 to 0.4 molar equivalents, of an acid catalyst, for example, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen bromide, hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, p-toluene-sulfonic acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, polyphosphoric acid and the like, preferably p-toluenesulfonic acid or hydrogen chloride, in an inert organic solvent, preferably benzene or toluene, is maintained at 20 to 100°C for two to 50 hours. In another method, the compound of formula X is cyclized in an aqueous solution containing the acid catalyst at 10 to 50°C for 10 to 50 hours. Preferred acid catalysts for use in the aqueous solutions can be selected from hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, hydrobromic acid and phosphoric acid. The aqueous solution usually requires sufficient acid catalyst so that the solution is maintained at pH 0.5 to 3.0 preferably 1.0 to 2.0.

In a modification of the conversion of the compound of formula II to the corresponding compound of formula I, the above individual steps of condensation, alkaline hydrolysis and cyclization are combined in a process wherein the intermediates of formula IX and X are not isolated.

In this modification, the  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketone of formula II is condensed with a di(lower alkyl) oxalate in the same manner as described above. However, the reaction mixture is not filtered but instead is mixed with about an equal volume of water. The resulting aqueous alkaline solution is, if required, adjusted to pH 10 to 12 with, for example, sodium hydroxide and maintained at pH 10 to 12 and at 15 to 30°C for 10 to 40 hours and washed with a water immiscible organic solvent, preferably diethyl ether or benzene. An acid catalyst, preferably hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, sulfuric acid or phosphoric acid, is added to the aqueous solution until the solution reaches pH 0.5 to 3.0, preferably 1.0 to 2.0. The acidic solution is maintained at 10 to 50°C, preferably 20 to 30°C, for 0.5 to 10 hours and extracted with a water immiscible organic solvent, for example, ethyl acetate, diethyl ether, benzene, toluene, chloroform, dichloromethane and the like. The organic extract is evaporated and, if required, purified to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which  $R^4$  is hydrogen.

If the aqueous alkaline solution in the latter preparation is maintained at pH 8 to 9 instead of pH 10 to 12, a corresponding intermediate of formula XI



(XI)

in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein can be isolated after acidification of the aqueous alkaline solution. More specifically, the  $\alpha$ -hydroxyketone of formula II is condensed with a di(lower alkyl)oxalate in the same manner as described above. The reaction mixture is not filtered but instead is mixed with about an equal volume of water and if necessary the resulting aqueous solution is adjusted to pH 8 to 9, for example, with dilute hydrochloric acid or sodium hydroxide. The resulting aqueous solution is preferably maintained at pH 8 to 9 and at 15 to 30°C for one to five hours and washed with a water immiscible organic solvent, in the same manner as described above. The mixture is acidified, maintained at 10 to 50°C, preferably 20 to 30°C, for one to 30 minutes and extracted, in the same manner as described above for II-I, to obtain the corresponding intermediate of formula XI.

Reaction of the intermediate of formula XI under aqueous alkaline conditions at pH 10 to 12 gives the corresponding compound of formula I in which  $R^4$  is hydrogen. For this reaction, a solution of the compound of formula II in aqueous potassium or sodium hydroxide is maintained at pH 10 to 12 and at 15 to 30°C for 10 to 40 hours and washed with a water immiscible organic solvent, in the same manner as described above. Subsequently, acidification of the aqueous solution, maintenance of the acidic solution and extraction, in the same manner as described above for II-I, gives the corresponding compound of formula I in which  $R^4$  is hydrogen.

Compounds of formula XI in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein are also included within this invention, with the proviso that when  $R^3$  is hydrogen, then  $R^1$  is lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene or mono- or di-substituted phenyl as defined herein, or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical.

The acidic compound of formula I in which  $R^4$  is hydrogen is esterified to obtain the corresponding ester of formula I in which  $R^4$  is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene. A number of esterification methods can be used; for example, mixed anhydride; dehydrative coupling reagents, for instance, dicyclohexylcarbodiimide; acid catalysts; diazoalkanes; and acid chloride.

A preferred method of esterification employs an acid catalyst, preferably 0.1 to 1.0 molar equivalents of anhydrous sulfuric acid or hydrogen chloride, and 2 to 50 equivalents of an alcohol selected from a lower alkyl-, lower cycloalkyl-, phenyl(lower)alkyl-, amino(lower)alkyl-, lower alkylamino(lower)alkyl-, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkyl- or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkyl- alcohol at 50 to 100°C for one to ten hours. It should be noted that when amino(lower)alkyl-, lower alkylamino(lower)alkyl-, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkyl- or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylalcohol is used, then a corresponding additional molar amount of the acid catalyst should be present in the reaction vessel. If the reactants are mutually soluble, a solvent for the esterification can be omitted. Otherwise, any anhydrous inert organic solvent can be used, for example, dimethylformamide, benzene, toluene, chloroform and the like.

Another preferred method of esterification proceeds through the acid chloride. In this method, a solution of the acidic compound of formula I in which R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen and 5 to 50 molar equivalents of thionyl chloride is heated at 50 to 80°C for one to ten hours and evaporated to obtain the corresponding acid chloride. A solution of the latter acid chloride, one to ten molar equivalents of the above noted alcohols and an organic proton acceptor, for example, pyridine or triethylamine, in an inert organic solvent, for example, acetone, benzene, dichloromethane, toluene, chloroform or dimethylformamide, preferably acetone, is maintained at 0 to 50°C for two to ten hours. Evaporation and purification affords the compound of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>4</sup> is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino-(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene.

The following Examples numbered 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 illustrate the preparation of compounds of formula I. Example 7 is a reference example which illustrates the general procedure for the process of preparing compounds of formula XI. Examples 1 to 3 illustrate preparation of starting materials.

#### Example 1

3-Hydroxy-4-methyl-3-phenyl-1-pentyne (IV: R<sup>2</sup> = CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> and R<sup>1</sup> = Ph)

A reaction flask, equipped with a dry-ice reflux condenser, is charged with 700 ml of freshly condensed liquid ammonia. The ammonia gas is passed through a tower of potassium hydroxide pellets. Upon stirring, a rapid stream of acetylene gas (dried in a sulfuric acid wash bottle) is introduced into the ammonia for 10 min, then the rate of passage of the acetylene is reduced and a continuous flow of acetylene through the reaction mixture is maintained during the following operations (approx. 9 hr.). Small pieces of sodium (9.2 g) are inserted, and 2 hr later, 2-methyl-1-phenyl-1-propanone (50 g) is added dropwise. The stirring is continued for 6 hr at -33°C then, the stream of acetylene is shut off, and the ammonia is allowed to evaporate in the hood (overnight). After adding cautiously ice-water, the resultant solution is acidified with diluted sulfuric acid, and extracted with diethyl ether. The combined extracts are washed with saturated brine, dried over magnesium sulfate, filtered, and evaporated to yield 45.5 g of the title compound, ir (CHCl<sub>3</sub>) 3600, 3310, 1450, and 1010 cm<sup>-1</sup> and nmr (CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 0.85 and 1.07 (d), 2.10 (heptuplet), 2.35 (s), 2.66(s), 7.27(m) and 7.55 (m).

#### Example 2

3-Hydroxy-4-methyl-3-phenyl-2-pentanone (II: R<sup>2</sup> = CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, R<sup>1</sup> = Ph

To a refluxing mixture of tetrahydrofuran (70 ml), water (5 ml), and conc. sulfuric acid (1.5 g) is added 1 g of red mercuric oxide and the reflux is continued for 5 min. Then, the inside temperature is adjusted to 60—62°C and 10 g of 3-hydroxy-4-methyl-3-phenyl-1-pentyne (described in Example 1) is added. The reaction is exothermic (spontaneous mild reflux) and there is a noticeable clearing of the mixture. Another 1 g of mercuric oxide is added, and the solution is refluxed for 30 min. The reaction mixture is stirred at 60°C for an additional 3 hr, during which time the precipitation of a mercury sludge occurred. After cooling, the slurry is diluted with 100 ml of diethyl ether and filtered through diatomaceous earth. The filter cake is washed with 200 ml of diethyl ether, and the combined filtrates are washed repeatedly with water, dried over magnesium sulfate, filtered, and evaporated to give 10.6 g of the title product, ir (CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 3470 and 1715—1710 cm<sup>-1</sup> and nmr (CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 0.91 (d), 2.15 (s), 2.79 (heptuplet), 4.39 (s) and 7.20—7.65 (m).

#### Example 3

3-Hydroxy-3-phenyl-2-butanone (II: R<sup>2</sup> = Me, R<sup>1</sup> = Ph and R<sup>3</sup> = H).

The title compound is prepared by using a modified method of G. F. Hennion and B. R. Fleck, J. Amer. Chem. Soc., 77, 3258 (1955). To a mixture of methanol (5 ml), water (0.2 ml), sulfuric acid (100 mg), and mercuric sulfate (100 mg) is added at 55°C a solution of 3-hydroxy-3-phenyl-1-butyne (2 g) in 90% aqueous methanol (5 ml) over a period of 90 min. The reaction is slightly exothermic, and the inside temperature is maintained at 55—57°C. During the reaction time, 50 mg of mercuric sulfate is added. When addition of the acetylenic component is complete, another portion (50 mg) of mercuric sulfate is added, and the mixture is stirred at 55°C for 1 hour. During this time 1 ml of water is added. After cooling, the reaction mixture is poured into ice-water and extracted with diethyl ether. The combined extracts are washed with water, dried over magnesium sulfate, filtered and evaporated. The resultant oil is chromatographed on silica gel using benzene. The appropriate eluates are evaporated to

give 0.5 g of the title compound, ir (CHCl<sub>3</sub>) 3450 and 1751 cm<sup>-1</sup> and nmr (CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 1.75 (s), 2.08 (s), 4.50 (s) and 7.40 (m).

In the same manner but replacing 3-phenyl-3-hydroxy-1-butyne with an equivalent amount of 3-hydroxy-3-(4-chlorophenyl)-1-butyne, 3-hydroxy-3-methyl-1-butyne, 1-ethynyl-1-hydroxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene, 3-ethyl-3-hydroxy-1-heptyne, 3-hydroxy-3, 3-diphenyl-1-propyne, 3-cyclohexyl-3-hydroxy-1-hexyne, 4-ethoxy-3-(3-methoxyphenyl)-3-hydroxy-1-butyne, 3-(3,4-diethylphenyl)-3-hydroxy-3-(4-nitrophenyl)-1-propyne, 3-ethynyl-3-hydroxytetrahydrofuran, 1-ethynyl-1-hydroxy-cyclohexane, 1-ethynyl-1-hydroxyindane or 3-cyclopentyl-6-ethoxy-3-hydroxy-1-hexyne, the following compounds of formula II are obtained, respectively: 3-hydroxy-3-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-butanone, ir (CHCl<sub>3</sub>) 3440 and 1710 cm<sup>-1</sup>, 3-hydroxy-3-methyl-2-butanone, 1-acetyl-1-hydroxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene ir (film) 3450 and 1710 cm<sup>-1</sup>, 3-ethyl-3-hydroxy-2-heptanone, 3-hydroxy-3,3-diphenyl-2-propanone, 3-cyclohexyl-3-hydroxy-2-hexanone, 4-ethoxy-3-(3-methoxyphenyl)-3-hydroxy-2-butanone, 3-(3,4-diethylphenyl)-3-hydroxy-3-(4-nitrophenyl)-2-propanone, 3-acetyl-3-hydroxytetrahydrofuran, 1-acetyl-1-hydroxycyclohexane, 1-acetyl-1-hydroxyindane and 3-cyclopentyl-6-ethoxy-3-hydroxy-2-hexanone.

#### Example 4

4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (I: R<sup>2</sup> = Me, R<sup>1</sup> = Ph, and R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> = H)

(a) To a stirred suspension of sodium hydride (10.5 g, 54% in mineral oil) in dry tetrahydrofuran (400 ml) is added dropwise a solution of diethyl oxalate (16 g) and 3-hydroxy-3-phenyl-2-butanone (16.4 g described in Example 3) in tetrahydrofuran (50 ml). The solution temperature is maintained at 55—60°C, and the solution is maintained at this temperature for 18 hr after the addition is complete. The cold reaction mixture is poured into water, the mixture is adjusted to pH 11 with sodium hydroxide and allowed to stand for 24 hours, and washed with diethyl ether. Upon addition of 6N hydrochloric acid, the aqueous solution is adjusted to pH 1. The acidic mixture is kept at 20 to 30°C for 2 hours and extracted with diethyl ether. The ether extract is dried and slowly evaporated to obtain crystals (20 g) of the title compound, mp 174—176°C.

ANAL: calculated for C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>10</sub>O<sub>4</sub>: C, 66.06; H, 4.62%; Found: C, 66.41; H, 4.69%.

(b) A solution of the title compound in diethyl ether and a solution of an equimolar amount of benzylamine in diethyl ether are mixed at 0°C. The precipitate is collected by filtration and crystallized from isopropanol to obtain the benzylamine salt of the title compound, m.p. 192—193°C.

(c) In the same manner but replacing 3-hydroxy-3-phenyl-2-butanone with an equivalent amount of another compound of formula II described in Examples 2 and 3, the following compounds of formula I are obtained, respectively: 4,5-dihydro-5-(1-methylethyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid, mp 151—153°C; 5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid, mp 169°C and nmr (CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 1.75(s), 6.25(s) and 7.45 (m); 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid, mp 180—181°C and ir (Nujol, Registered Trade Mark) 2800 (broad), 1737, 1670 and 1600 cm<sup>-1</sup>; spiro[furan-5(4H), 1'(2'H)-naphthalene]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid, mp 152—154°C and nmr (MeOH-d<sub>4</sub>) δ 2.07(m), 2.84(t), 6.29(s) and 6.8—7.4 (m); 5-butyl-5-ethyl-4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-4-oxo-5,5-diphenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; 5-cyclohexyl-4,5-dihydro-4-oxo-5-propylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5-ethoxymethyl-5-(3-methoxyphenyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5-(3,4-diethylphenyl)-5-(4-nitrophenyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid; 1,7-dioxaspiro[4,4]non-2-ene-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid; 1-oxaspiro[4,5]-dec-2-ene-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid; spiro[furan-5(4H), 1'-indan]-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid; and 5-cyclopentyl-4,5-dihydro-5-(3-ethoxypropyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid.

#### Example 5

4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic Acid Methyl Ester (I: R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> = Me, R<sup>061</sup> = Ph and R<sup>3</sup> = H)

(a) A mixture of 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (0.4 g, described in Example 4), absolute methanol (50 ml), and sulfuric acid (3 drops) is refluxed overnight and evaporated. The residue is diluted with 50 ml of diethyl ether, and the solution is washed quickly with saturated sodium bicarbonate solution and water, dried over magnesium sulfate, filtered, and evaporated. The residue is crystallized from diethyl ether to obtain the title compound (0.32 g) mp 60—62°C and nmr (CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 1.81(s), 3.99(s), 6.25(s) and 7.42(m).

(b) In the same manner but replacing methanol with an equivalent amount of ethanol, propanol or butanol, the following compounds of formula I are obtained, respectively: 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid ethyl ester, 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid propyl ester and 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid butyl ester.

Similarly, but replacing 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid with an equivalent amount of another compound of formula I described in Example 4, the following compounds of formula I are obtained, respectively: 4,5-dihydro-5-(1-methylethyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-

carboxylic acid methyl ester; 5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester, mp 66°C,  $\text{ir}(\text{CHCl}_3)$  1720, 1695 and 1575  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; spiro[furan-5(4H), 1'-(2'H)-naphthalene]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 5-butyl-5-ethyl-4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-4-oxo-5,5-diphenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 5-cyclohexyl-4,5-dihydro-4-oxo-5-propylfuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5-ethoxymethyl-5-(3-methoxyphenyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5-(3,4-diethylphenyl)-5-(4-nitrophenyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 1,7-dioxaspiro[4,4]non-2-ene-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 1-oxaspiro[4,5]dec-2-ene-4-oxo-carboxylic acid methyl ester; spiro[furan-5-(4H), 1'-indan]-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; and 5-cyclopentyl-4,5-dihydro-5-(3-ethoxypropyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester.

#### Example 6

4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic Acid 3-Pyridinylmethyl Ester ( $\text{I}; \text{R}^2 = \text{Me}$ ,  $\text{R}^1 = \text{Ph}$ ,  $\text{R}^3 = \text{H}$  and  $\text{R}^4 = 3\text{-pyridinylmethyl}$ ).

(a) A mixture of 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (8.75 g, described in Example 4) and thionyl chloride (90 ml) is refluxed for 3 hr and evaporated. The residue is dissolved in benzene (100 ml) and evaporated (twice). The infrared spectrum of the residue is indicative of a quantitative conversion of the carboxylic acid into the carbonyl chloride,  $\text{ir}(\text{CHCl}_3)$  1820 and 1795, 1755 and 1715  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . This material is dissolved in 50 ml of dry acetone and added to a mixture of 3-pyridinemethanol (4.8 g), pyridine (3.1 g), and acetone (100 ml) at 0°C. The reaction mixture is stirred at 20 to 30°C temperature for 4 hr and evaporated under reduced pressure. The residue is partitioned between chloroform and saturated sodium bicarbonate solution. The organic phase is collected, dried and evaporated to give 8.8 g of the title compound,  $\text{ir}(\text{CHCl}_3)$  1753, 1742, 1715 (broad), 1595 and 1100  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and nmr ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  1.78(s), 5.45(s), 6.29(s), 7.42(m), 7.84 (doublet of triplets) and 8.60(m).

(b) The title compound (18 g) is dissolved in acetone (20 ml) and a solution of hydrogen chloride in diethyl ether is added until precipitation is complete. The solvent is decanted and the residue is triturated with diethyl ether. The residue is crystallized from acetone to obtain the hydrochloride salt (15 g) of the title compound, mp 124—125°C. ANAL: Calculated for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}_4 \cdot \text{HCl}$ : C, 62.52; H, 4.66; N, 4.05%; Found: C, 62.30; H, 4.53; N, 3.94%.

(c) A solution of the title compound in diethyl ether and a solution of a half molar equivalent of (E)-2-butanedioic acid in isopropanol are combined at -10°C. The resulting precipitate is filtered and crystallized from acetonitrile to obtain the hemi-(E)-2-butanedioate salt, mp 128—130°C, of the title compound.

(d) In the same manner but replacing 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid with an equivalent amount of another compound of formula I described in Example 4, the following compounds of formula I are obtained, respectively:

4,5-dihydro-5-(1-methylethyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester, nmr ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  1.77(s), 5.46(s), 6.29(s), 7.42(m), 7.86(m) and 8.70(m); 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester, mp 109—110°C; spiro[furan-5(4H), 1'-(2'H)-naphthalene]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 5-butyl-5-ethyl-4,5-dihydro-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-4-oxo-5,5-diphenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 5-cyclohexyl-4,5-dihydro-4-oxo-5-propylfuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5-ethoxymethyl-5-(3-methoxyphenyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5-(3,4-diethylphenyl)-5-(4-nitrophenyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 1,7-dioxaspiro[4,4]non-2-ene-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; 1-oxaspiro[4,5]dec-2-ene-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; spiro[furan-5(4H), 1'-indan]-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; and 5-cyclopentyl-4,5-dihydro-5-(3-ethoxypropyl)-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester.

#### Example 7

6-Methyl-6-phenyltetrahydropyran-2,3,5-trione ( $\text{XI}; \text{R}^2 = \text{Me}$ ,  $\text{R}^1 = \text{Ph}$  and  $\text{R}^3 = \text{H}$ )

To a stirred suspension of sodium hydride (10.5 g 54% in mineral oil) in dry tetrahydrofuran (400 ml) is added dropwise a solution of diethyl oxalate (16 g) and 3-hydroxy-3-phenyl-2-butanone (16.4 g described in Example 3) in tetrahydrofuran (50 ml). The solution temperature is maintained at 55—60°C, and the solution is maintained at this temperature for 18 hr after the addition is completed. The cold reaction mixture is poured into water and the mixture is adjusted to pH 8 to 9 with sodium hydroxide or hydrochloric acid. This mixture at pH 8 to 9 is allowed to stand for 24 hr and extracted with diethyl ether. The ether extract is dried, evaporated and crystallized from diethyl ether to obtain the title compound: mp 142—144°C;  $\text{ir}(\text{Nujol})$  3130, 1718 and 1640  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $\text{uv}(\text{MeOH})$   $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  268 nm ( $\epsilon = 8830$ ) and nmr ( $\text{MeOH}-d_3$ )  $\delta$  1.89 (s), 5.92 (s) and 7.34 (s).

ANAL: Calculated for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{10}\text{O}_4$ : C, 66.05; H, 4.62%

Found: C, 66.14; H, 4.83%.

Example 8

4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid ( $R^2 = \text{Me}$ ,  $R^1 = \text{Ph}$ , and  $R^3$  and  $R^4 = \text{H}$ )

A mixture of 6-methyl-6-phenyltetrahydropyran-2,3,5-trione (2.18 g, described in Example 7) in aqueous sodium hydroxide (15 ml) at pH 11 is stirred for 24 hr and washed with diethyl ether. Hydrochloric acid (6N) is added until the solution becomes acidic at pH 1 to 4. The precipitate is collected and crystallized from diethyl ether to obtain the title compound (2.0 g), mp 174—176°C.

Example 9

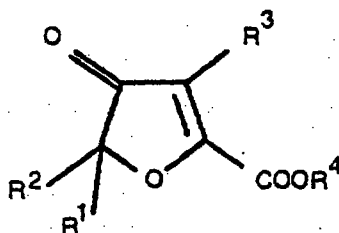
Optical Resolution of 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid.

A solution of (+)- $\alpha$ -methyl benzylamine (3.63 g) in diethyl ether (50 ml) is added to a solution of 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (6.54 g, described in Example 4) in 200 ml of 10% isopropyl alcohol in diethyl ether. The mixture is cooled and the crystals (6.5 g) are collected while saving the mother liquor. The crystals are recrystallized three times from methanol to obtain 5.0 g of the benzylamine salt having a constant rotation of  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = +110^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol) and mp 194—196°C. The latter salt (5.0 g) is stirred into water (100 ml) and diethyl ether (100 ml), and then 6N hydrochloric acid is added until the solution is acidic (pH 1). The ether phase is collected, washed with water until the washings are neutral, dried, evaporated and recrystallized from diethyl ether to give (+)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (2.7 g): mp 87—89°C;  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = +146.4^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol); ir (Nujol) 3440, 3320, 2540, 2440, 1720 and 1669  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; and Anal Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{10}\text{O}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ : C, 61.01%, H, 5.12%, water, 7.62% and Found: C, 61.19%, H, 5.07%, water, 7.85%.

The mother liquors, obtained from the above benzylamine salt, are evaporated. The residue (4.3 g) is dissolved in a solution of water (50 ml) and diethyl ether (50 ml) and 6N hydrochloric acid is added dropwise until the water layer is acidic (pH 1). The ether layer is collected, washed with water until the washings are neutral, dried over magnesium sulfate and evaporated. The residue (2.7 g) is dissolved in 70 ml of 10% isopropyl alcohol-diethyl ether solution and a solution of (-)- $\alpha$ -methyl benzylamine in diethyl ether is added. The solution is cooled and the crystals (3.9 g) are collected and recrystallized three times from methanol to obtain 2.4 g of the benzylamine salt having a constant rotation of  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -108^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol) and mp 198—199°C. The latter salt (2.4 g) is stirred into water (70 ml) and diethyl ether (70 ml), and 6N hydrochloric acid is added until the water phase is acidic (pH 1). The ether phase is separated, washed with water until the washings are neutral and evaporated to give 1.6 g of residue. The residue is recrystallized from diethyl ether to give 1.2 g of (-)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid: mp 87—89°C;  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -144.1^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol); ir (Nujol) 3440, 3320, 2540, 1720 and 1669  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{10}\text{O}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ : C, 61.01% H, 5.12%, water, 7.62% and Found: C, 61.14%, H, 5.05%, water, 5.82%.

Claims for the Contracting States: BE, CH, DE, FR, GB, IT, LU, NL, SE

1. A compound of general formula I



(I)

in which  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  each is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene, phenyl or phenyl mono- or disubstituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together form a  $-(\text{CH}_2)_m-\text{X}-(\text{CH}_2)_n-$  chain wherein  $m$  and  $n$  each is an integer from one to four and  $X$  is methylene, oxo or thia; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical;  $R^3$  is hydrogen or lower alkyl; and  $R^4$  is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof, the term "lower" used in relation to an alkyl or alkoxy group denoting that such a group contains 1 to 6 carbon atoms when a straight chain and 3 or 4 carbon atoms when a branched chain; the term "lower alkylene" denoting a straight or branched chain divalent organic radical derived from aliphatic hydrocarbons containing from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and the term "lower cycloalkyl" denoting a saturated cyclic hydrocarbon radical of 3 to 6 carbon atoms.

2. A compound of general formula I as claimed in Claim 1, in which  $R^1$  is lower alkyl, phenyl or phenyl mono-substituted with halo;  $R^2$  is lower alkyl; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical;  $R^3$  is hydrogen; and  $R^4$  is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.

Example 8

4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid ( $R^2 = \text{Me}$ ,  $R^1 = \text{Ph}$ , and  $R^3$  and  $R^4 = \text{H}$ )

A mixture of 6-methyl-6-phenyltetrahydropyran-2,3,5-trione (2.18 g, described in Example 7) in aqueous sodium hydroxide (15 ml) at pH 11 is stirred for 24 hr and washed with diethyl ether. Hydrochloric acid (6N) is added until the solution becomes acidic at pH 1 to 4. The precipitate is collected and crystallized from diethyl ether to obtain the title compound (2.0 g), mp 174—176°C.

Example 9

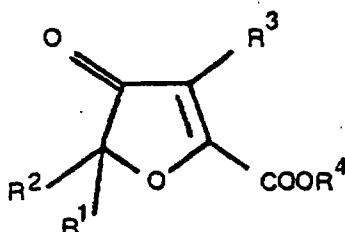
Optical Resolution of 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid.

A solution of (+)- $\alpha$ -methyl benzylamine (3.63 g) in diethyl ether (50 ml) is added to a solution of 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (6.54 g, described in Example 4) in 200 ml of 10% isopropyl alcohol in diethyl ether. The mixture is cooled and the crystals (6.5 g) are collected while saving the mother liquor. The crystals are recrystallized three times from methanol to obtain 5.0 g of the benzylamine salt having a constant rotation of  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = +110^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol) and mp 194—196°C. The latter salt (5.0 g) is stirred into water (100 ml) and diethyl ether (100 ml), and then 6N hydrochloric acid is added until the solution is acidic (pH 1). The ether phase is collected, washed with water until the washings are neutral, dried, evaporated and recrystallized from diethyl ether to give (+)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid (2.7 g): mp 87—89°C;  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = +146.4^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol); ir (Nujol) 3440, 3320, 2540, 2440, 1720 and 1669  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; and Anal Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{10}\text{O}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ : C, 61.01%, H, 5.12%, water, 7.62% and Found: C, 61.19%, H, 5.07%, water, 7.85%.

The mother liquors, obtained from the above benzylamine salt, are evaporated. The residue (4.3 g) is dissolved in a solution of water (50 ml) and diethyl ether (50 ml) and 6N hydrochloric acid is added dropwise until the water layer is acidic (pH 1). The ether layer is collected, washed with water until the washings are neutral, dried over magnesium sulfate and evaporated. The residue (2.7 g) is dissolved in 70 ml of 10% isopropyl alcohol-diethyl ether solution and a solution of (-)- $\alpha$ -methyl benzylamine in diethyl ether is added. The solution is cooled and the crystals (3.9 g) are collected and recrystallized three times from methanol to obtain 2.4 g of the benzylamine salt having a constant rotation of  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -108^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol) and mp 198—199°C. The latter salt (2.4 g) is stirred into water (70 ml) and diethyl ether (70 ml), and 6N hydrochloric acid is added until the water phase is acidic (pH 1). The ether phase is separated, washed with water until the washings are neutral and evaporated to give 1.6 g of residue. The residue is recrystallized from diethyl ether to give 1.2 g of (-)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid: mp 87—89°C;  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -144.1^\circ$  ( $C=2$ , methanol); ir (Nujol) 3440, 3320, 2540, 1720 and 1669  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{10}\text{O}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ : C, 61.01% H, 5.12%, water, 7.62% and Found: C, 61.14%, H, 5.05%, water, 5.82%.

Claims for the Contracting States: BE, CH, DE, FR, GB, IT, LU, NL, SE

1. A compound of general formula I



(I)

in which  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  each is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene, phenyl or phenyl mono- or disubstituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together form a  $-(\text{CH}_2)_m-\text{X}-(\text{CH}_2)_n-$  chain wherein  $m$  and  $n$  each is an integer from one to four and  $X$  is methylene, oxa or thia; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical;  $R^3$  is hydrogen or lower alkyl; and  $R^4$  is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof, the term "lower" used in relation to an alkyl or alkoxy group denoting that such a group contains 1 to 6 carbon atoms when a straight chain and 3 or 4 carbon atoms when a branched chain; the term "lower alkylene" denoting a straight or branched chain divalent organic radical derived from aliphatic hydrocarbons containing from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and the term "lower cycloalkyl" denoting a saturated cyclic hydrocarbon radical of 3 to 6 carbon atoms.

2. A compound of general formula I as claimed in Claim 1, in which  $R^1$  is lower alkyl, phenyl or phenyl mono-substituted with halo;  $R^2$  is lower alkyl; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical;  $R^3$  is hydrogen; and  $R^4$  is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.



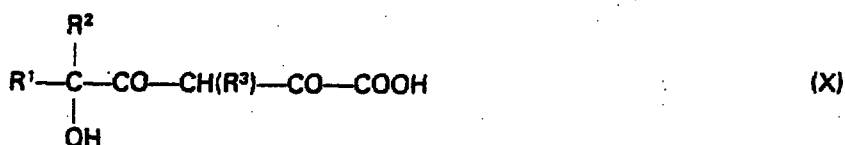
3. A compound of general formula I as claimed in Claim 1, in which R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkyl, phenyl or 4-chlorophenyl; R<sup>2</sup> is lower alkyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical; R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen; and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinylmethyl, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.

4. A compound of formula I as claimed in Claim 1 which is 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid, benzylamine salt; 5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5-(1-methylethyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; spiro[furan-5(4H),1'(2'H)-naphthalene]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester hemi-(E)-2-butenedioate salt; 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; or 5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester.

5. A compound of formula I which is (+)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; (-)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid, 3-pyridinylmethyl ester or the hydrochloride salt thereof; or 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid.

6. A process for preparing a compound within formula I as claimed in Claim 1 which comprises one of the following:

(a) cyclizing a compound of formula X



in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined in Claim 1 under acidic conditions to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, or

(b) esterifying a compound of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein and R<sup>4</sup> is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkyl-amino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl-(lower)alkylene; or

(c) neutralizing a compound of formula I wherein R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen and R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein with a therapeutically acceptable organic or inorganic base to obtain the corresponding therapeutically acceptable organic or inorganic base addition salt; or

(d) reacting a compound of formula I wherein R<sup>4</sup> is amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene with a therapeutically acceptable acid to obtain the corresponding therapeutically acceptable acid addition salt; or

(e) hydrolyzing a compound of formula



wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined above, under aqueous alkaline conditions at pH 10 to pH 12, and then acidifying to pH 0.5 to 3 to obtain a compound of formula I wherein R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen; or

(f) reacting a compound of formula II



in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein with a di(lower alkyl)oxalate in the presence of a strong inorganic proton acceptor under anhydrous conditions in an anhydrous inert organic solvent, hydrolyzing the mixture with water at pH 10 to pH 12 and allowing the mixture to stand under acidic conditions to give a compound of formula I where R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen; the term "strong inorganic proton



acceptor" denoting an inorganic base or a corresponding alkoxide; and if desired separating a stereoisomeric mixture of compounds of formula I.

7. A process (a) or (f) as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said acidic conditions are selected from an inert organic solvent or aqueous solution containing hydrogen chloride, hydrogen bromide, hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, p-toluenesulfonic acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid or polyphosphoric acid.

8. A process (f) as claimed in Claim 6 or Claim 7 wherein the strong inorganic proton acceptor is sodium hydride.

9. A process (f) as claimed in any of Claims 6, 7 and 8 wherein the di(lower)alkyl oxalate is dimethyl oxalate or diethyl oxalate.

10. A process as claimed in any one of Claims 6 to 9 wherein, in the final product, R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkyl, phenyl or phenyl monosubstituted with halogen, R<sup>2</sup> is lower alkyl or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical; R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen, and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene.

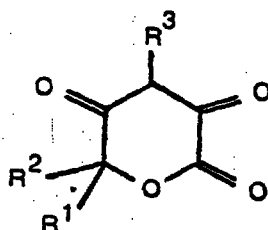
11. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula I or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

12. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in Claim 11 also comprising clofibrate.

13. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in Claim 11 or Claim 12 wherein said compound of formula I is 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester, or the hydrochloric acid addition salt thereof, or the hemi-(E)-2-butenedioate salt thereof.

14. A compound of formula I or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5 for use as a hypolipidemic agent.

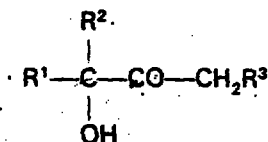
15. A compound of formula XI



(XI)

in which R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> each is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene, phenyl or phenyl mono- or disubstituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together form a  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$  chain wherein m and n each is an integer from one to four and X is methylene, oxa or thia; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical; and R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen or lower alkyl; with the proviso that when R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen, then R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene or mono or di-substituted phenyl as defined herein, or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical, the term "lower" used in relation to an alkyl or alkoxy group denoting that such a group contains 1 to 6 carbon atoms when a straight chain and 3 or 4 carbon atoms when a branched chain; the term "lower alkylene" denoting a straight or branched chain divalent organic radical derived from aliphatic hydrocarbons, containing from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the term "lower cycloalkyl" denoting a saturated cyclic hydrocarbon radical of 3 to 6 carbon atoms.

16. A process for preparing a compound of formula XI as defined in Claim 15 which comprises reacting a compound of formula II



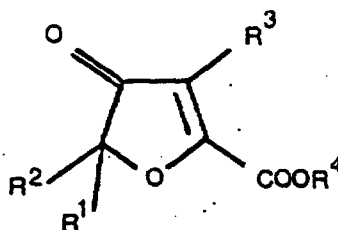
(II)

wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined in Claim 15, with a di(lower alkyl)oxalate in the presence of a strong inorganic proton acceptor under anhydrous conditions in an anhydrous inert organic solvent and then reacting the product with water at a pH from 8 to 9; the term "strong inorganic proton acceptor" denoting an inorganic base or a corresponding alkoxide.



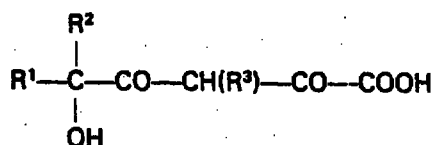
## Claims for the Contracting State: AT

1. A process for preparing a compound within formula I



- or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof, in which  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  each is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene, phenyl or phenyl mono- or di-substituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together form a  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$  chain wherein  $m$  and  $n$  each is an integer from one to four and  $X$  is methylene, oxa or thia; or  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical;  $R^3$  is hydrogen or lower alkyl; and  $R^4$  is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower)alkylamino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, the term "lower" used in relation to an alkyl or alkoxy group denoting that such a group contains 1 to 6 carbon atoms when a straight chain and 3 or 4 carbon atoms when a branched chain; the term "lower alkylene" denoting a straight or branched chain divalent organic radical derived from aliphatic hydrocarbons containing from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the term "lower cycloalkyl" denoting a saturated cyclic hydrocarbon radical of 3 to 6 carbon atoms, which comprises one of the following:

- (a) cyclizing a compound of formula X



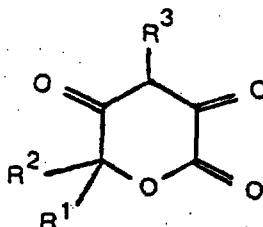
- in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein under acidic conditions to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein and  $R^4$  is hydrogen, or

- (b) esterifying a compound of formula I in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein and  $R^4$  is hydrogen to obtain the corresponding compound of formula I in which  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein and  $R^4$  is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, phenyl(lower)alkylene, amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene; or

- (c) neutralizing a compound of formula I wherein  $R^4$  is hydrogen and  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined herein with a therapeutically acceptable organic or inorganic base to obtain the corresponding therapeutically acceptable inorganic or organic base addition salt; or

- (d) reacting a compound of formula I wherein  $R^4$  is amino(lower)alkylene, lower alkylamino(lower)alkylene, di(lower alkyl)amino(lower)alkylene or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene with a therapeutically acceptable acid to obtain the corresponding therapeutically acceptable acid addition salt; or

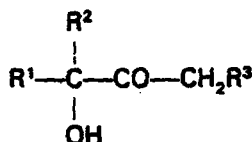
- (e) hydrolyzing a compound of formula



wherein  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are as defined above, under aqueous alkaline conditions at pH 10 to pH 12, and then acidifying to pH 0.5 to 3 to obtain a compound of formula I wherein  $R^4$  is hydrogen, or

- (f) reacting a compound of formula II





in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined herein with a di(lower alkyl)oxalate in the presence of a strong inorganic proton acceptor under anhydrous conditions in an anhydrous inert organic solvent, hydrolyzing the mixture with water at pH 10 to pH 12, and allowing the latter mixture to stand under acidic conditions, to give a compound of formula I where R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen; the term "strong inorganic proton acceptor" denoting an inorganic base or a corresponding alkoxide; and if desired separating a stereoisomeric mixture of compounds of formula I.

2. A process (a) or (f) as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said acidic conditions are selected from an inert organic solvent or aqueous solution containing hydrogen chloride, hydrogen bromide, hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, p-toluenesulfonic acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid or polyphosphoric acid.

3. A process (f) as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2 wherein the strong inorganic proton acceptor is sodium hydride.

4. A process (f) as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the di(lower alkyl)oxalate is dimethyl oxalate or diethyl oxalate.

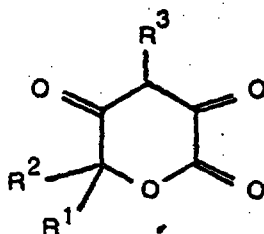
5. A process as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 4 wherein, in the final product, R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkyl, phenyl or phenyl mono-substituted with halo; R<sup>2</sup> is lower alkyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical; R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen; and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinyl(lower)alkylene, or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.

6. A process as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 4 wherein, in the final product, R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkyl, phenyl or 4-chlorophenyl; R<sup>2</sup> is lower alkyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 radical; R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen; and R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen, lower alkyl or 3-pyridinylmethyl or a therapeutically acceptable addition salt thereof.

7. A process according to any one of Claims 1 to 4 in which the compound prepared is selected from 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid, benzylamine salt; 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid; 5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5-(1-methyl-ethyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; spiro[furan-5(4H),1'(2'H)-naphthalene]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylic acid; 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid methyl ester; 4,5-dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester; (+)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; (-)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid; or 5-(4-chlorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester.

8. A process as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 4 wherein the compound of formula I prepared is 4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carboxylic acid 3-pyridinylmethyl ester, or the hydrochloric acid addition salt thereof, or the hemi-(E)-2-butenedioate salt thereof.

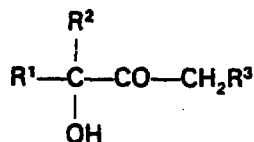
9. A process for preparing a compound of formula XI



(XI)

in which R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> each is lower alkyl, lower cycloalkyl, lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene, phenyl or phenyl mono- or disubstituted with lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, halo, nitro or trifluoromethyl; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together form a  $-(\text{CH}_2)_m-\text{X}-(\text{CH}_2)_n-$  chain wherein m and n each is an integer from one to four and X is methylene, oxa or thia; or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> together with the carbon atom to which they are joined form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical; and R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen or lower alkyl with the proviso that when R<sup>3</sup> is hydrogen, then R<sup>1</sup> is lower alkoxy(lower)alkylene or phenyl, mono- or disubstituted as defined herein or R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> form a spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene]-1 or spiro[indan]-1 radical, the term "lower" used in relation to an alkyl or alkoxy group denoting that such a group contains 1 to 6 carbon atoms when a straight chain and 3 or 4 carbon atoms when a branched chain; the term "lower alkylene" denoting a straight or branched chain divalent organic radical derived from aliphatic hydrocarbons containing from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the term "lower cycloalkyl" denoting saturated cyclic hydrocarbon radicals of 3 to 6 carbon atoms, which comprises reacting a compound of formula II



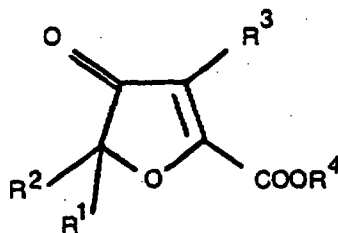


(II)

wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are as defined in Claim 1 with a di(lower alkyl)oxalate in the presence of a strong inorganic proton acceptor under anhydrous conditions in an anhydrous inert organic solvent and then reacting the product with water at a pH from 8 to 9; the term "strong inorganic proton acceptor" denoting an inorganic base or a corresponding alkoxide.

# Patentansprüche für die Vertragsstaaten: BE, CH, DE, FR, GB, IT, LU, NL, SE

## 1. Eine Verbindung der allgemeinen Formel (II)



(II)

worin R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> jeweils nied.Alkyl, nied.Cycloalkyl, nied.Alkoxy(nied.)alkylen, Phenyl oder Phenyl mono- oder disubstituiert mit nied.Alkyl, nied.Alkoxy, Halogen, Nitro oder Trifluormethyl bedeuten; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> miteinander eine  $-(\text{CH}_2)_m-\text{X}-(\text{CH}_2)_n-$ Kette bilden, worin m und n jeweils eine ganze Zahl von 1 bis 4 sind und X Methylen, Oxa oder Thia bedeutet; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1- oder Spiro[indan]-1-Rest bilden; R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff oder nied.Alkyl darstellt; und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff, nied.Alkyl, nied.Cycloalkyl, Phenyl-(nied.)alkylen, Amino(nied.)alkylen, nied.Alkylamino(nied.)alkylen, Di(nied.alkyl)amino(nied.)alkylen oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist, oder ein therapeutisch annehmbares Additionssalz hievon, wobei der in Verbindung mit einer Alkyl- oder Alkoxygruppe verwendete Ausdruck "nied." bedeutet, daß eine derartige Gruppe 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn sie geradkettig ist, und 3 oder 4 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn sie verzweigt ist, enthält; der Ausdruck "nied.Alkylen" einen gerad- oder verzweigt-kettigen zweiwertigen organischen Rest, der von aliphatischen Kohlenwasserstoffen mit 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen abgeleitet ist, und der Ausdruck "nied.Cycloalkyl" einen gesättigten cyclischen Kohlenwasserstoff mit 3 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen bedeuten.

2. Eine Verbindung der allgemeinen Formel (II), wie in Anspruch 1 beansprucht, worin R<sup>1</sup> nied.Alkyl, Phenyl oder Phenyl monosubstituiert mit Halogen ist; R<sup>2</sup> nied.Alkyl bedeutet; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1-Rest bilden; R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff ist; und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff, nied.-Alkyl oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen darstellt, oder ein therapeutisch annehmbares Additionssalz hievon.

3. Eine Verbindung der allgemeinen Formel (II), wie in Anspruch 1 beansprucht, worin R<sup>1</sup> nied.Alkyl, Phenyl oder 4-Chlorphenyl ist; R<sup>2</sup> nied.Alkyl bedeutet; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1-Rest bilden; R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff darstellt; und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff, nied.Alkyl oder 3-Pyridinylmethyl ist, oder ein therapeutisch annehmbares Additionssalz hievon.

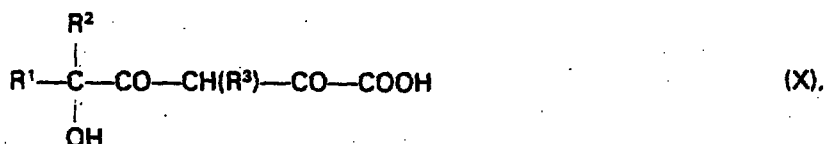
4. Eine Verbindung der Formel (II), wie in Anspruch 1 beansprucht, die 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure-benzylaminsalz; 5-(4-Chlorphenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure; 4,5-Dihydro-5-(1-methyläthyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; Spiro[furan-5(4H,1'(2'H)-naphthalin]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carbonsäure; 4,5-Dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure-methylester; 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure-methylester; 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester-hemi-(E)-2-butendioatsalz; 4,5-Dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester; oder 5-(4-Chlorphenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester ist.

5. Eine Verbindung der Formel (II), die (+)-4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; (-)-4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester oder das Hydrochloridsalz hievon; oder 4,5-Dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure ist.

6. Ein Verfahren zur Herstellung einer Verbindung innerhalb der Formel (II), wie in Anspruch 1 beansprucht, das einen der folgenden Schritte umfaßt:

a) Cyclisieren einer Verbindung der Formel (X)





worin  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  und  $\text{R}^3$  wie in Anspruch 1 definiert sind, unter sauren Bedingungen zum Erzielen der entsprechenden Verbindung der Formel (I), worin  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  und  $\text{R}^3$  die angegebene Bedeutung haben und  $\text{R}^4$  Wasserstoff ist, oder

b) Verestern einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  und  $\text{R}^3$  die angegebene Bedeutung haben und  $\text{R}^4$  Wasserstoff ist, zum Erzielen der entsprechenden Verbindung der Formel (I), worin  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  und  $\text{R}^3$  die angegebene Bedeutung haben und  $\text{R}^4$  nied.Alkyl, nied.Cycloalkyl, Phenyl(nied.)alkylen, Amino(nied.)alkylen, nied.Alkylamino(nied.)alkylen, Di(nied.alkyl)amino(nied.)alkylen oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist; oder

c) Neutralisieren einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin  $\text{R}^4$  Wasserstoff ist und  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  und  $\text{R}^3$  die angegebene Bedeutung haben, mit einer therapeutisch annehmbaren organischen oder anorganischen Base zum Erzielen des entsprechenden therapeutisch annehmbaren organischen oder anorganischen Basen-additionssalzes; oder

d) Umsetzen einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin  $\text{R}^4$  Amino(nied.)alkylen, nied.Alkylamino(nied.)alkylen, Di(nied.alkyl)amino(nied.)alkylen oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist, mit einer therapeutisch annehmbaren Säure zum Erzielen des entsprechenden therapeutisch annehmbaren Säure-additionssalzes; oder

e) Hydrolysieren einer Verbindung der Formel



worin  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  und  $\text{R}^3$  die angegebene Bedeutung haben, unter wässrigen alkalischen Bedingungen bei pH 10 bis pH 12 und dann Ansäuern auf pH 0,5 bis 3 zum Erzielen einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin  $\text{R}^4$  Wasserstoff ist; oder

f) Umsetzen einer Verbindung der Formel (II)



worin  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  und  $\text{R}^3$  die angegebene Bedeutung haben, mit einem Di(nied.alkyl)oxalat in Anwesenheit eines starken anorganischen Protonenakzeptors unter wasserfreien Bedingungen in einem wasserfreien inerten organischen Lösungsmittel, Hydrolysieren der Mischung mit Wasser bei pH 10 bis pH 12 und Stehenlassen der Mischung unter sauren Bedingungen zum Erzielen einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin  $\text{R}^4$  Wasserstoff ist; wobei der Ausdruck "starker anorganischer Protonenakzeptor" eine anorganische Base oder ein entsprechendes Alkoxid bezeichnet; und, wenn gewünscht, Trennen einer stereoisomeren Mischung von Verbindungen der Formel (I).

7. Ein Verfahren (a) oder (f), wie in Anspruch 6 beansprucht, worin die genannten sauren Bedingungen unter einem inerten organischen Lösungsmittel oder einer wässrigen Lösung mit einem Gehalt an Chlorwasserstoff, Bromwasserstoff, Salzsäure, Bromwasserstoffsäure, p-Toluolsulfonsäure, Schwefelsäure, Phosphorsäure oder Polyphosphorsäure gewählt werden.

8. Ein Verfahren (f), wie in Anspruch 6 oder 7 beansprucht, worin der starke anorganische Protonenakzeptor Natriumhydrid ist.

9. Ein Verfahren (f), wie in einem der Ansprüche 6, 7 und 8 beansprucht, worin das Di(nied.)alkyloxalat Dimethyloxalat oder Diäthyloxalat ist.

10. Ein Verfahren, wie in einem der Ansprüche 6 bis 9 beansprucht, worin im Endprodukt  $\text{R}^1$  nied.Alkyl, Phenyl oder Phenyl monosubstituiert mit Halogen ist,  $\text{R}^2$  nied.Alkyl ist oder  $\text{R}^1$  und  $\text{R}^2$  zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1-Rest bilden;  $\text{R}^3$  Wasserstoff bedeutet und  $\text{R}^4$  Wasserstoff, nied.Alkyl oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist.



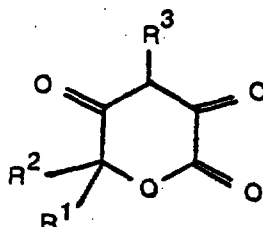
11. Eine pharmazeutische Zusammensetzung, die eine Verbindung der Formel (I) oder ein therapeutisch annehmbares Salz hiervon, wie in einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5 beansprucht, und einen pharmazeutisch annehmbaren Träger aufweist.

12. Eine pharmazeutische Zusammensetzung, wie in Anspruch 11 beansprucht, die auch Clofibrat aufweist.

13. Eine pharmazeutische Zusammensetzung, wie in Anspruch 11 oder Anspruch 12 beansprucht, worin die genannte Verbindung der Formel (I) 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester oder das Salzsäureadditionssalz hiervon oder das Hemi-(E)-2-butendioatsalz hiervon ist.

14. Eine Verbindung der Formel (I) oder ein therapeutisch annehmbares Additionssalz hiervon, wie in einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5 beansprucht, zur Verwendung als ein hypolipidämisches Mittel.

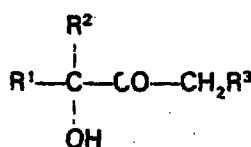
15. Eine Verbindung der Formel (XI)



(XI),

worin R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> jeweils nied. Alkyl, nied. Cycloalkyl, nied. Alkoxy(nied.)alkylen, Phenyl oder Phenyl mono- oder disubstituiert mit nied. Alkyl, nied. Alkoxy, Halogen, Nitro oder Trifluormethyl bedeuten; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> miteinander eine  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$ -Kette bilden, worin m und n jeweils eine ganze Zahl von 1 bis 4 sind und X Methylen, Oxa oder Thia bedeutet; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1- oder Spiro[indan]-1-Rest bilden; und R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff oder nied. Alkyl bedeutet; mit der Maßgabe, daß, wenn R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff ist, dann R<sup>1</sup> nied. Alkoxy(nied.)alkylen oder mono- oder disubstituiertes Phenyl, wie hier definiert, ist, oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1- oder Spiro[indan]-1-Rest bilden, wobei der Ausdruck "nied." in Verbindung mit einer Alkyl- oder Alkoxygruppe bedeutet, daß eine derartige Gruppe 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn es sich um eine gerade Kette handelt, und 3 oder 4 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn es sich um eine verzweigte Kette handelt, enthält; der Ausdruck "nied. Alkyl" einen gerad- oder verzweigt-kettigen zweiwertigen organischen Rest, der von aliphatischen Kohlenwasserstoffen mit einem Gehalt von 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen abgeleitet ist, und der Ausdruck "nied. Cycloalkyl" einen gesättigten cyclischen Kohlenwasserstoffrest mit 3 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen bedeuten.

16. Ein Verfahren zur Herstellung einer Verbindung der Formel (XI), wie in Anspruch 15 definiert, welches die Umsetzung einer Verbindung der Formel (II)

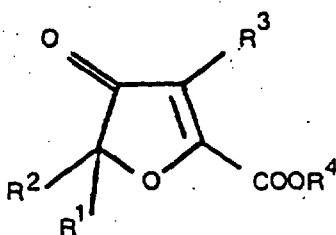


(II),

worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> wie in Anspruch 15 definiert sind, mit einem Di(nied.alkyl)oxalat in Anwesenheit eines starken anorganischen Protonenakzeptors unter wasserfreien Bedingungen in einem wasserfreien inerten organischen Lösungsmittel und anschließendes Umsetzen des Produktes mit Wasser bei einem pH-Wert von 8 bis 9 umfaßt, wobei der Ausdruck "starker anorganischer Protonenakzeptor" eine anorganische Base oder ein entsprechendes Alkoxid bezeichnet.

#### Patentansprüche für den Vertragsstaat: AT

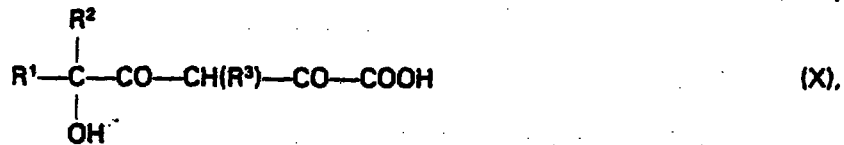
1. Verfahren zur Herstellung einer Verbindung der Formel (I)



(I)



- worin R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> jeweils nied.Alkyl, nied.Cycloalkyl, nied.Alkoxy(nied.)alkylen, Phenyl oder Phenyl mono- oder disubstituiert mit nied.Alkyl, nied.Alkoxy, Halogen, Nitro oder Trifluormethyl bedeuten; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> miteinander eine  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$ -Kette bilden, worin m und n jeweils eine ganze Zahl von 1 bis 4 sind und X Methylen, Oxa oder Thia bedeutet; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1- oder Spiro[indan]-1-Rest bilden; R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff oder nied.Alkyl darstellt; und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff, nied.Alkyl, nied.Cycloalkyl, Phenyl(nied.)alkylen, Amino(nied.)alkylen, nied.Alkylamino(nied.)alkylen, Di(nied.)alkylamino(nied.)alkylen oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist, oder eines therapeutisch annehmbaren Additionssalzes hiervon, wobei der in Verbindung mit einer Alkyl- oder Alkoxygruppe verwendete Ausdruck "nied." bedeutet, daß eine derartige Gruppe 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn sie geradkettig ist, und 3 oder 4 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn sie verzweigt ist, enthält; der Ausdruck "nied.Alkyl" einen gerad- oder verzweigt-kettigen zweiwertigen organischen Rest, der von aliphatischen Kohlenwasserstoffen mit 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen abgeleitet ist, und der Ausdruck "nied.Cycloalkyl" einen gesättigten cyclischen Kohlenwasserstoffrest mit 3 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen bedeuten.
- das einen der folgenden Schritte umfaßt:
- Cyclisieren einer Verbindung der Formel (X)



- worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die angegebene Bedeutung haben, unter sauren Bedingungen zum Erzielen der entsprechenden Verbindung der Formel (I), worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die angegebene Bedeutung haben und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff ist, oder
- Verestern einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die angegebene Bedeutung haben und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff ist, zum Erzielen der entsprechenden Verbindung der Formel (II), worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die angegebene Bedeutung haben und R<sup>4</sup> nied.Alkyl, nied.Cycloalkyl, Phenyl(nied.)alkyl, Amino(nied.)alkylen, nied.Alkylamino(nied.)alkylene, Di(nied.)alkylamino(nied.)alkylen oder Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist; oder
  - Neutralisieren einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff ist und R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die angegebene Bedeutung haben, mit einer therapeutisch annehmbaren organischen oder anorganischen Base zum Erzielen des entsprechenden therapeutisch annehmbaren organischen oder anorganischen Basen-additionssalzes; oder
  - Umsetzen einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin R<sup>4</sup> Amino(nied.)alkylen, nied.Alkylamino(nied.)alkylen, Di(nied.)alkylamino(nied.)alkylen oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist, mit einer therapeutisch annehmbaren Säure zum Erzielen des entsprechenden therapeutisch annehmbaren Säureadditionssalzes; oder
  - Hydrolysieren einer Verbindung der Formel



- worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die angegebene Bedeutung haben, unter wässrigen alkalischen Bedingungen bei pH 10 bis pH 12 und dann Ansäuern auf pH 0,5 bis 3 zum Erzielen einer Verbindung der Formel (II), worin R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff ist; oder
- Umsetzen einer Verbindung der Formel (II)

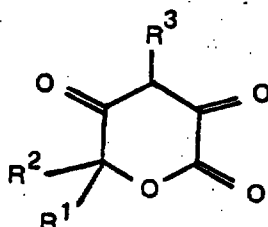


- worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die angegebene Bedeutung haben, mit einem Di(nied.)alkyl)oxalat in Anwesenheit eines starken anorganischen Protonenakzeptors unter wasserfreien Bedingungen in einem wasserfreien inerten organischen Lösungsmittel, Hydrolysieren der Mischung mit Wasser bei pH 10 bis pH 12 und



Stehenlassen der Mischung unter sauren Bedingungen zum Erzielen einer Verbindung der Formel (I), worin R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff ist; wobei der Ausdruck "starker anorganischer Protonenakzeptor" eine anorganische Base oder ein entsprechendes Alkoxid bezeichnet; und, wenn gewünscht, Trennen einer stereoisomeren Mischung von Verbindungen der Formel (I).

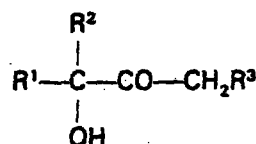
2. Ein Verfahren (ä) oder (f), wie in Anspruch 1 beansprucht, worin die genannten sauren Bedingungen unter einem inerten organischen Lösungsmittel oder einer wässrigen Lösung mit einem Gehalt an Chlorwasserstoff, Bromwasserstoff, Salzsäure, Bromwasserstoffsäure, p-Toluolsulfonsäure, Schwefelsäure, Phosphorsäure oder Polyphosphorsäure gewählt werden.
3. Ein Verfahren (f), wie in Anspruch 1 oder 2 beansprucht, worin der starke anorganische Protonenakzeptor Natriumhydrid ist.
4. Ein Verfahren (f), wie in einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3 beansprucht, worin das Di(nied.)alkyloxalat Dimethyloxalat oder Diäthyloxalat ist.
5. Ein Verfahren, wie in einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4 beansprucht, worin im Endprodukt R<sup>1</sup> nied.Alkyl, Phenyl oder Phenyl monosubstituiert mit Halogen ist, R<sup>2</sup> nied.Alkyl ist oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1-Rest bilden; R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff bedeutet und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff, nied.Alkyl oder 3-Pyridinyl(nied.)alkylen ist, oder ein therapeutisch annehmbares Additionssalz hiervon.
6. Ein Verfahren, wie in einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4 beansprucht, worin im Endprodukt R<sup>1</sup> nied.Alkyl, Phenyl oder 4-Chlorphenyl ist; R<sup>2</sup> nied.Alkyl darstellt; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1-Rest bilden; R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff bedeutet; und R<sup>4</sup> Wasserstoff, nied.Alkyl oder 3-Pyridinylmethyl ist, oder ein therapeutisch annehmbares Additionssalz hiervon.
7. Ein Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, in welchem die hergestellte Verbindung unter 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure-benzylaminsalz; 4,5-Dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure; 5-(4-Chlorphenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure; 4,5-Dihydro-5-(1-methyläthyl)-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; Spiro - [furan - 5(4H), 1'(2'H)-naphthalin]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carbonsäuremethylester; 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäuremethylester; 4,5-Dihydro-5,5-dimethyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester; (+)-4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; (-)-4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure; oder 5-(4-Chlorphenyl)-4,5-dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxofuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester gewählt ist.
8. Ein Verfahren, wie in einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4 beansprucht, worin die hergestellte Verbindung der Formel (I) 4,5-Dihydro-5-methyl-4-oxo-5-phenylfuran-2-carbonsäure-3-pyridinylmethylester oder das Salzsäureadditionssalz hieron oder das Hemi-(E)-2-butendioatsalz hieron ist.
9. Ein Verfahren zum Herstellen einer Verbindung der Formel (XI)



(XI)

worin R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> jeweils nied.Alkyl, nied.Cycloalkyl, nied.Alkoxy(nied.)alkylen, Phenyl oder Phenyl mono- oder disubstituiert mit nied.Alkyl, nied.Alkoxy, Halogen, Nitro oder Trifluormethyl bedeuten; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> miteinander eine  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$ -Kette bilden, worin m und n jeweils eine ganze Zahl von 1 bis 4 sind und X Methylen, Oxa oder Thia bedeutet; oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> zusammen mit dem Kohlenstoffatom, an das sie gebunden sind, einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1- oder Spiro[indan]-1-Rest bilden; und R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff oder nied.Alkyl bedeutet; mit der Maßgabe, daß wenn R<sup>3</sup> Wasserstoff ist, dann R<sup>1</sup> nied.Alkoxy(nied.)alkylen oder mono- oder disubstituiertes Phenyl, wie hier definiert, ist, oder R<sup>1</sup> und R<sup>2</sup> einen Spiro[1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalin]-1- oder Spiro[indan]-1-Rest bilden, wobei der Ausdruck "nied." in Verbindung mit einer Alkyl- oder Alkoxygruppe bedeutet, daß eine derartige Gruppe 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn es sich um eine gerade Kette handelt, und 3 oder 4 Kohlenstoffatome, wenn es sich um eine verzweigte Kette handelt, enthält; der Ausdruck "nied.Alkylen" einen gerad- oder verzweigt-kettigen zweiwertigen organischen Rest, der von aliphatischen Kohlenwasserstoffen mit einem Gehalt von 1 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen abgeleitet ist, und der Ausdruck "nied.Cycloalkyl" einen gesättigten cyclischen Kohlenwasserstoffrest mit 3 bis 6 Kohlenstoffatomen bedeuten, welches die Umsetzung einer Verbindung der Formel (II)



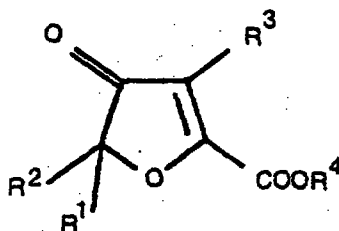


(III).

worin R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> und R<sup>3</sup> die in Anspruch 1 angegebene Bedeutung haben, mit einem Di(nied.alkyl)oxalat in Anwesenheit eines starken anorganischen Protonenakzeptors unter wasserfreien Bedingungen in einem wasserfreien inerten organischen Lösungsmittel und anschließend die Umsetzung des Produktes mit Wasser bei einem pH von 8 bis 9 umfaßt, wobei der Ausdruck "starker anorganischer Protonenakzeptor" eine anorganische Base oder ein entsprechendes Alkoxid bezeichnet.

# Revendications pour les Etats contractants: BE, CH, DE, FR, GB, IT, LU, NL, SE

## 1. Un composé de formule générale:



dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> représentent chacun un groupe alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur, (alkoxy inférieur)alkylène inférieur, phényle ou phényle mono- ou disubstitué avec un radical alkyle inférieur, alkoxy inférieur, halogéno, nitro ou trifluorométhyle; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment ensemble une chaîne  $-(\text{CH}_2)_m-\text{X}-(\text{CH}_2)_n-$  dans laquelle m et n représentent chacun un nombre entier de 1 à 4 et X est un groupe méthylène, oxa ou thia; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1 ou spiro[indane]-1; R<sup>3</sup> est l'hydrogène ou un radical alkyle inférieur; et R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène, un radical alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur, phényl-alkylène inférieur, amino-alkylène inférieur, (alkylamino inférieur)-alkylène inférieur, di(alkyle inférieur)amino-alkylène inférieur ou 3-pyridinyl-alkylène inférieur, ou un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce composé, le terme "inférieur" utilisé pour qualifier un groupe alkyle ou alkoxy signifiant que ce groupe contient 1 à 6 atomes de carbone lorsqu'il s'agit d'une chaîne droite et 3 ou 4 atomes de carbone lorsqu'ils s'agit d'une chaîne ramifiée; l'expression "alkylène inférieur" désignant un radical organique divalent à chaîne droite ou ramifiée dérivé d'hydrocarbures aliphatiques contenant 1 à 6 atomes de carbone et l'expression "cycloalkyle inférieur" désignant un radical d'hydrocarbures cycliques saturés de 3 à 6 atomes de carbone.

2. Un composé de formule générale I suivant la revendication 1, dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup> est un radical alkyle inférieur, phényle ou phényle monosubstitué avec un radical halogéno; R<sup>2</sup> est un groupe alkyle inférieur; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1; R<sup>3</sup> est l'hydrogène; et R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène, un groupe alkyle inférieur ou un groupe 3-pyridinylalkylène inférieur, ou un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce composé.

3. Un composé de formule générale I suivant la revendication 1, dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup> est un groupe alkyle inférieur, phényle ou 4-chlorophényle; R<sup>2</sup> est un groupe alkyle inférieur; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1; R<sup>3</sup> est l'hydrogène; et R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène, un groupe alkyle inférieur ou un groupe 3-pyridinylméthyle, ou un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce composé.

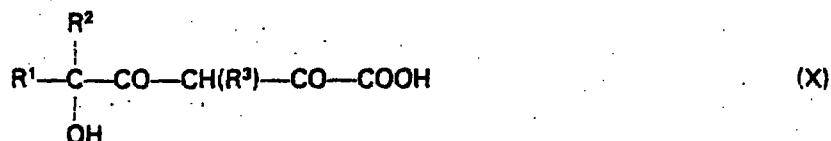
4. Un composé de formule I suivant la revendication 1, qui est l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; le sel de benzylamine de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide 5-(4-chlorophényl)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-(1-méthyléthyl)-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide spiro[furanne-5(4H),1'(2'H)-naphtalène]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylique; l'ester de méthyle de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5,5-diméthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique; l'ester de méthyle de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; le sel héli-(E)-2-butenedioïque de l'ester de 3-pyridinylméthyle de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'ester de 3-pyridinylméthyle de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5,5-diméthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique; ou l'ester de 3-pyridinylméthyle de l'acide 5-(4-chlorophényl)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique.

5. Un composé de formule I, qui est l'acide (+)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide (-)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique, son ester de 3-pyridinylméthyle ou son chlorhydrate; ou l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5,5-diméthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique.



6. Un procédé de préparation d'un composé de formule I suivant la revendication 1, qui est l'un des procédés suivants:

(a) cyclisation d'un composé de formule X



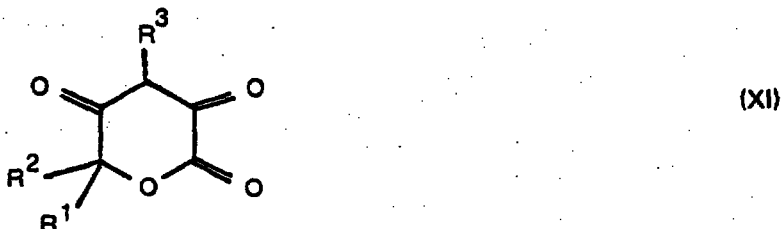
dans laquelle  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  et  $\text{R}^3$  ont les définitions données dans la revendication 1, dans des conditions acides pour obtenir le composé correspondant de formule I dans laquelle  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  et  $\text{R}^3$  sont tels que définis ici et  $\text{R}^4$  est l'hydrogène, ou

(b) estérification d'un composé de formule I dans laquelle  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  et  $\text{R}^3$  sont tels que définis ici et  $\text{R}^4$  est l'hydrogène, pour obtenir le composé correspondant de formule I dans laquelle  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  et  $\text{R}^3$  sont tels que définis ici et  $\text{R}^4$  est un groupe alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur, phényl-alkylène inférieur, aminoalkylène inférieur, (alkyle inférieur)aminoalkylène inférieur, di(alkyle inférieur)amino-alkylène inférieur ou 3-pyridinyl-alkylène inférieur; ou

(c) neutralisation d'un composé de formule I dans laquelle  $\text{R}^4$  est l'hydrogène et  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  et  $\text{R}^3$  sont tels que définis ici, avec une base organique ou inorganique thérapeutiquement acceptable pour obtenir le sel d'addition de base organique ou inorganique thérapeutiquement acceptable correspondant; ou

(d) réaction d'un composé de formule I dans laquelle  $\text{R}^4$  est un groupe amino-alkylène inférieur, (alkyle inférieur)amino-alkylène inférieur, di(alkyle inférieur)aminoalkylène inférieur ou 3-pyridinyl-alkylène inférieur, avec un acide thérapeutiquement acceptable pour obtenir le sel d'addition d'acide thérapeutiquement acceptable correspondant; ou

(e) hydrolyse d'un composé de formule:



dans laquelle  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  et  $\text{R}^3$  sont tels que définis ci-dessus, dans des conditions alcalines aqueuses à un pH de 10 à 12, puis acidification à un pH de 0,5 à 3 pour obtenir un composé de formule I dans laquelle  $\text{R}^4$  est l'hydrogène; ou

(f) réaction d'un composé de formule II



dans laquelle  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$  et  $\text{R}^3$  sont tels que définis ici avec un oxalate de di(alkyle inférieur) en présence d'un accepteur de protons inorganique fort dans des conditions anhydres dans un solvant organique inerte anhydre, hydrolyse du mélange avec de l'eau à un pH de 10 à 12 et repos du mélange dans des conditions acides pour former un composé de formule I dans laquelle  $\text{R}^4$  est l'hydrogène; l'expression "accepteur de protons inorganique fort" désignant une base inorganique ou un alcoolate correspondant;

et le cas échéant, séparation d'un mélange stéréo-isomérique de composés de formule I.

7. Procédé (a) ou (f) suivant la revendication 6, dans lequel les conditions acides sont choisies entre un solvant organique inerte ou une solution aqueuse contenant du chlorure d'hydrogène, du bromure d'hydrogène, de l'acide chlorhydrique, de l'acide bromhydrique, de l'acide p-toluènesulfonique; de l'acide sulfurique, de l'acide phosphorique ou de l'acide polyphosphorique.

8. Procédé (f) suivant la revendication 6 ou la revendication 7, dans lequel l'accepteur de protons inorganique fort est l'hydrure de sodium.

9. Procédé (f) suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 6, 7, et 8, dans lequel l'oxalate di(alkyle inférieur) est l'oxalate de diméthyle ou l'oxalate de diéthyle.

10. Procédé suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 6 à 9, dans lequel, dans le produit final,  $\text{R}^1$  est un groupe alkyle inférieur, phényle ou phényle monosubstitué avec un halogène,  $\text{R}^2$  est un groupe



alkyle inférieur ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1; R<sup>3</sup> est l'hydrogène et R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène, un groupe alkyle inférieur ou un groupe 3-pyridinyl-alkylène inférieur.

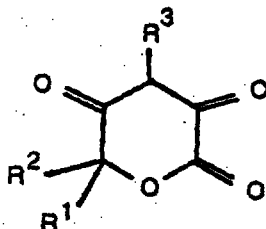
11. Composition pharmaceutique, comprenant un composé de formule I ou un sel thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce composé, suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, et un support pharmaceutiquement acceptable.

12. Composition pharmaceutique suivant la revendication 11, contenant également du clofibrate.

13. Composition pharmaceutique suivant la revendication 11 ou la revendication 12, dans laquelle ledit composé de formule I est l'ester de 3-pyridinylméthyle de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique ou son sel d'addition d'acide chlorhydrique ou son sel hémi-(E)-2-butenedioïque.

14. Un composé de formule I ou un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce composé suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, destiné à être utilisé comme agent hypolipidémique.

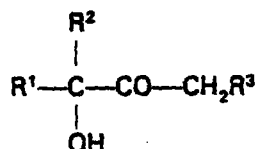
15. Un composé de formule XI



(XI)

dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> représentent chacun un groupe alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur, (alkoxy inférieur)alkylène inférieur, phényle ou phényle mono- or disubstitué avec un radical alkyle inférieur, alkoxy inférieur, halogéno, nitro ou trifluorométhyle; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment ensemble une chaîne  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$  dans laquelle m et n représentent chacun un nombre entier de 1 à 4, et X est un groupe méthylène, oxa ou thia; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1 ou spiro[indane]-1; et R<sup>3</sup> est l'hydrogène ou un groupe alkyle inférieur; à condition que lorsque R<sup>3</sup> est l'hydrogène, R<sup>1</sup> soit un groupe (alkoxy inférieur)alkylène inférieur ou un groupe phényle mono- or disubstitué tel que défini ici, ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1 ou spiro[indane]-1, le terme "inférieur" utilisé pour qualifier un groupe alkyle ou alkoxy signifiant que ce groupe contient 1 à 6 atomes de carbone lorsqu'il est en chaîne droite et 3 ou 4 atomes de carbone lorsqu'il est en chaîne ramifiée; l'expression "alkylène inférieur" désignant un radical organique divalent à chaîne droite ou ramifiée dérivé d'hydrocarbures aliphatiques contenant 1 à 6 atomes de carbone et l'expression "cycloalkyle inférieur" désignant un radical d'hydrocarbures cycliques saturés de 3 à 6 atomes de carbone.

16. Procédé de préparation d'un composé de formule XI suivant la revendication 15, qui consiste à faire réagir un composé de formule II

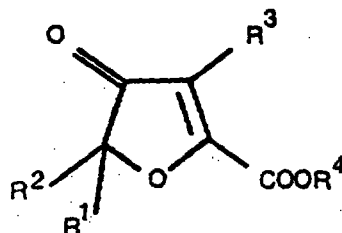


(II)

dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que définis dans la revendication 15, avec un oxalate de di(alkyle inférieur) en présence d'un accepteur de protons inorganique fort dans des conditions anhydres dans un solvant organique inerte anhydre, puis à faire réagir le produit avec de l'eau à un pH de 8 à 9; l'expression "accepteur de protons inorganique fort" désignant une base inorganique ou un alcoolate correspondant.

#### Revendications pour l'Etat contractant: AT

1. Procédé de préparation d'un composé de formule I



(I)



ou d'un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce composé, formule dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> représentent chacun un groupe alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur, (alkoxy inférieur)-alkylène inférieur, phényle ou phényle mono- ou substitué avec un radical alkyle inférieur, alkoxy inférieur, halogéno, nitro ou trifluorométhyle; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment ensemble une chaîne

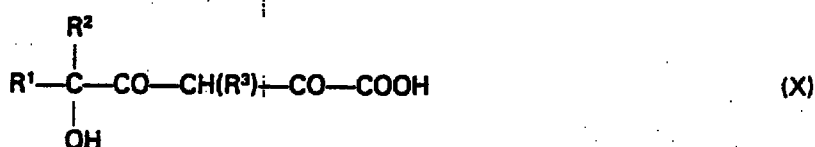
5 —(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>m</sub>—X—(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>— dans laquelle m et n représentent chacun un nombre entier de 1 à 4 et X est un groupe méthylène, oxa ou thia; ou bien R<sup>1</sup> et R<sup>2</sup> forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1 ou spiro[indane]-1; R<sup>3</sup> est l'hydrogène ou un radical alkyle inférieur; et R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène, un radical alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur phényl-alkylène inférieur, aminoalkylène inférieur, (alkylamino inférieur)-alkylène inférieur, di-

10 (alkyle inférieur)amino-alkylène inférieur ou 3-pyridinylalkylène inférieur, ou un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce composé, le terme "inférieur" utilisé pour qualifier un groupe alkyle ou alkoxy signifiant que ce groupe contient 1 à 6 atomes de carbone lorsqu'il s'agit d'une chaîne droite et 3 ou 4 atomes de carbone lorsqu'il s'agit d'une chaîne ramifiée; l'expression "alkylène inférieur" désignant un radical organique divalent à chaîne droite ou ramifiée dérivé d'hydrocarbures aliphatiques

15 contenant 1 à 6 atomes de carbone et l'expression "cycloalkyle inférieur" désignant un radical d'hydrocarbures cycliques saturés de 3 à 6 atomes de carbone.

qui consiste en l'une des opérations suivantes:

(a) cyclisation d'un composé de formule X



dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> ont les définitions données dans la revendication 1, dans des conditions acides pour obtenir le composé correspondant de formule I dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que définis ici et R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène, ou

(b) estérification d'un composé de formule I dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que définis ici et R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène, pour obtenir le composé correspondant de formule I dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que définis ici et R<sup>4</sup> est un groupe alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur, phényl-alkylène inférieur, aminoalkylène inférieur, (alkyle inférieur)amino-alkylène inférieur, di(alkyle inférieur)amino-alkylène inférieur ou 3-pyridinyl-alkylène inférieur; ou

(c) neutralisation d'un composé de formule I dans laquelle R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène et R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que définis ici, avec une base organique ou inorganique thérapeutiquement acceptable pour obtenir le sel d'addition de base organique ou inorganique thérapeutiquement acceptable correspondant; ou

(d) réaction d'un composé de formule I dans laquelle R<sup>4</sup> est un groupe amino-alkylène inférieur, (alkyle inférieur)amino-alkylène inférieur, di(alkyle inférieur)aminoalkylène inférieur ou 3-pyridinyl-alkylène inférieur, avec un acide thérapeutiquement acceptable pour obtenir le sel d'addition d'acide

40 thérapeutiquement acceptable correspondant; ou

(e) hydrolyse d'un composé de formule:



dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que définis ci-dessus, dans des conditions alcalines aqueuses à un

55 pH de 10 à 12, puis acidification à un pH de 0,5 à 3 pour obtenir un composé de formule I dans laquelle R<sup>4</sup> est l'hydrogène; ou

(f) réaction d'un composé de formule II



65 dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que défini ici avec un oxalate de di(alkyle inférieur) en présence d'un





0 006 305

accepteur de protons inorganique fort dans des conditions anhydres dans un solvant organique inerte anhydre, hydrolyse du mélange avec de l'eau à un pH de 10 à 12 et repos du mélange dans des conditions acides pour former un composé de formule I dans laquelle  $R^4$  est l'hydrogène; l'expression "accepteur de protons inorganique fort" désignant une base inorganique ou un alcoolate correspondant;

et le cas échéant, séparation d'un mélange stéréo-isomérique de composés de formule I.

2. Procédé (a) ou (f) suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel les conditions acides sont choisies entre un solvant organique inerte ou une solution aqueuse contenant du chlorure d'hydrogène, du bromure d'hydrogène, de l'acide chlorhydrique, de l'acide bromhydrique, de l'acide p-toluènesulfonique, de l'acide sulfurique, de l'acide phosphorique ou de l'acide polyphosphorique.

3. Procédé (f) suivant la revendication 1 ou la revendication 2, dans lequel l'accepteur de protons inorganique fort est l'hydrure de sodium.

4. Procédé (f) suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans lequel l'oxalate de di(alkyle inférieur) est l'oxalate de diméthyle ou l'oxalate de diéthyle.

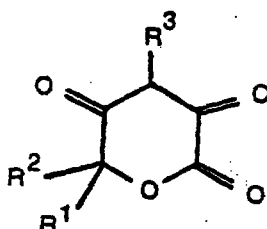
5. Procédé suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel, dans le produit final est un groupe alkyle inférieur, phényle ou phényle monosubstitué avec un halogène,  $R^2$  est un groupe alkyle inférieur, ou bien  $R^1$  et  $R^2$  forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1;  $R^3$  est l'hydrogène et  $R^4$  est l'hydrogène, un groupe alkyle inférieur ou un groupe 3-pyridinyl-alkylène inférieur; ou un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce produit.

6. Procédé suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel, dans le produit final,  $R^1$  est un groupe alkyle inférieur, phényle ou 4-chlorophényle;  $R^2$  est un groupe alkyle inférieur; ou bien  $R^1$  et  $R^2$  forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont reliés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1;  $R^3$  est l'hydrogène; et  $R^4$  est l'hydrogène, un groupe alkyle inférieur ou un groupe 3-pyridinylméthyle, ou un sel d'addition thérapeutiquement acceptable de ce produit.

7. Procédé suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel le composé préparé est choisi entre l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; le sel de benzylamine de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5,5-diméthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide 5-(4-chlorophényl)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-(1-méthyl-éthyl)-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide spiro[furanne-5(4H),1'(2'H)-naphtalène]-3',4'-dihydro-4-oxo-2-carboxylique; l'ester méthylique de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5,5-diméthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique; l'ester méthylique de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'ester 3-pyridinylméthylique de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5,5-diméthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide (+)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; l'acide (-)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique; ou l'ester 3-pyridinylméthylique de l'acide 5-(4-chlorophényl)-4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxofuranne-2-carboxylique.

8. Procédé suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel le composé de formule I préparé est l'ester 3-pyridinylméthylique de l'acide 4,5-dihydro-5-méthyl-4-oxo-5-phénylfuranne-2-carboxylique ou son sel d'addition d'acide chlorhydrique ou son sel héli-(E)-2-butènedioïque.

9. Procédé de préparation d'un composé de formule XI

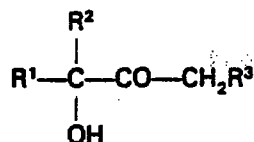


(XI)

dans laquelle  $R^1$  et  $R^2$  représentent chacun un groupe alkyle inférieur, cycloalkyle inférieur, (alkoxy inférieur)alkylène inférieur, phényle ou phényle mono- ou disubstitué avec un radical alkyle inférieur, alkoxy inférieur, halogéno, nitro ou trifluorométhyle; ou bien  $R^1$  et  $R^2$  forment conjointement une chaîne  $-(CH_2)_m-X-(CH_2)_n-$  dans laquelle m et n représentent chacun un nombre entier de 1 à 4 et X est un groupe méthylène, oxa ou thia; ou bien  $R^1$  et  $R^2$  forment, conjointement avec l'atome de carbone auquel ils sont liés, un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1 ou spiro[indane]-1; et  $R^3$  est l'hydrogène ou un radical alkyle inférieur, à condition que lorsque  $R^3$  est l'hydrogène,  $R^1$  soit un groupe (alkoxy inférieur)alkylène inférieur ou phényle mono- ou disubstitué comme défini ici, ou bien  $R^1$  et  $R^2$  forment un radical spiro[1,2,3,4-tétrahydronaphtalène]-1 ou spiro[indane]-1, le terme "inférieur" utilisé pour qualifier un groupe alkyle ou alkoxy signifiant qu'un tel groupe contient 1 à 6 atomes de carbone lorsqu'il est en chaîne droite ou 3 ou 4 atomes de carbone lorsqu'il est en chaîne ramifiée; l'expression "alkylène inférieur" désignant un radical organique divalent à chaîne droite ou à chaîne ramifiée dérivé d'hydrocarbures aliphatiques contenant 1 à 6 atomes de carbone, et l'expression "cycloalkyle inférieur"

désignant des radicaux d'hydrocarbures cycliques saturés ayant 3 à 6 atomes de carbone, qui consiste à faire réagir un composé de formule II

5



10 dans laquelle R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> et R<sup>3</sup> sont tels que définis dans la revendication 1, avec un oxalate de di(alkyle inférieur) en présence d'un accepteur de protons inorganique fort, dans des conditions anhydres, dans un solvant organique inerte anhydre, puis à faire réagir le produit avec de l'eau à un pH de 8 à 9; l'expression "accepteur de protons inorganique fort" désignant une base inorganique ou un alcoolate correspondant.

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

65

