



G00002

10 September 2002



166166

A method for formulating particles

The present invention is related to a method for formulating particles from solutions for processing in a fluid bed.

For drying known methods are utilizing among others mixture of solutions where the dried end product is mixed with a return flow with the product. Such a method, however, includes very different resting times for the product which is recirculated in relation to products not being recirculated. Additionally the flow of products substantially is increased through the drying chamber.

The solution is spread out or in other way laid on inert particles having a layer which thereafter is dried. The layer is peeled in the drying chamber thereafter to be taken out as dried powder in a cyclon, or the particles are taken out of the chamber for peeling. Such a method easily pollutes the dried product from the inert particles. Furthermore, the inert particles which substantially do not pollute, are relatively heavy particles needing very large amounts of energy supplied to the fans to maintain the particles in fluidized condition.

With the method according to the present invention substantial advantages are achieved in relation to known methods, whereby the advantages with the known method substantially are maintained and the disadvantages avoided. In this way a strongly reduced retention time is achieved, strongly reduced flow of products through the dryer, no pollution of the product from the inert particles, reduced claim for energy for the fans and furthermore also a possibility to control the density and porosity of the end product.

The above mentioned advantages are achieved with the method according to the invention as defined with features stated in the claims.

The method according to the invention may be utilized to produce frozen fluidizable particles of solutions thereby using an inert medium in such a way that the solutions may be dried

in a fluidized drying chamber. The inert medium as such is disappearing by sublimation during drying or already during the formulation of the particles. The method also may be utilized for particle formation if the need for further processing is not drying, but may be performed in a fluid bed.

This invention provides a method for formulating particles from a solution refrigerated to a start freezing point by an inert medium comprising the steps of :
cooling a solution down to an initial freezing point, mixing the solution under pressure with an inert medium, expanding the resulting solution to form solid, fluidizable frozen particles in the size range of 0.5 to 1.5 mm characterised in that when the inert medium and the solution are in a frozen condition, the inert medium sublimises during the drying process or by expansion.

Equipment necessary for forming the method may be constructed for batch or continuous operation whether two components are mixed in a pressurised container. The pressurised container should have valve for expansion of the mixture to particle shape. This is performed in a cold room in such a way that the particles do not melt.

The mixing relation as well as the pressure in the container and thereby also the temperature of the expanded particles, are adjusted in such a way that the desired density is achieved for the particles. The desired density is desired partly based on the fluidising properties of the particles in the following drying chambers and the defined claims for the dried end product.

By production of inert particles to be covered with the solution, the clean inert particles initially are produced in an equipment corresponding with the equipment described above, or in another way, for example by granulation. The particles are covered with the solution which already is undercooled to the initial freezing point. The thickness and the initial temperature of the layer for the clean inert particles have to be adjusted to ensure that melting is avoided. Addition of the layer may be performed in an ordinary industrial equipment for

this purpose in a batch or continuous production process. Preferably the equipment is arranged in a cold room. The following drying is performed in a normal fluidized drying chamber having a lower temperature than the lowest melting temperature of the particles.

By drying the particle formulation in a closed circuit having low temperature, substantial quality advantages are achieved in relation to known drying processes, especially because volatile components such as aromatic components are preserved.

CLAIMS

1. A method for formulating particles from a solution refrigerated to a start freezing point by an inert medium comprising the steps of :
cooling a solution down to an initial freezing point,
mixing the solution under pressure with an inert medium,
expanding the resulting solution to form solid, fluidizable frozen particles
in the size range of 0.5 to 1.5 mm

characterised in that when the inert medium and the solution are in a frozen condition, the inert medium sublimises during the drying process or by expansion.
2. The method according to claim 1, characterised by an additional step of producing fluidizeable particles of the inert medium and then to cover the particles with the solution.
3. The method according to claim 2, characterised in that the step of covering the particles with the solution is conducted in such a way that the particles do not melt.
4. The method according to any one of the preceding claims characterised in that the inert medium is nitrogen or carbon dioxide.
5. Particles produced by the method of any one of claims 1 to 4.