

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A METHOD FOR THE ESTERIFICATION OF A FATTY ACID

The method for the esterification of a fatty acid F is carried out in a column (1) with a one or multi-part packing (3, 4). In addition to the function as a reactor, the packing has the function of a stripping section. It is formed as a reaction zone (3) at least in an upper part, in which a heterogeneous catalysis of the fatty acid F is carried out with an alcohol A used in the same molar ratio or in excess. A gaseous alcohol-rich counter-flow (5) is produced in the sump by vaporisation. Water is removed from the reaction zone by means of the counter-flow acting as a stripping gas. The loaded stripping gas (60) is at least partially liquefied at the head of the column. The head product is separated into a water-rich fraction (63) as well as an alcohol-rich fraction (62). The alcohol-rich fraction is returned to the process as a starting material for the esterification and for the production of the stripping gas.