

- 63 -

Abstract

A process for preparing surfactant alcohols and surfactant alcohol ethers by derivatization of olefins having about 10 to 20 carbon atoms or of mixtures of such olefins and optional
5 subsequent alkoxylation is described. As features, the process involves

- (a) subjecting a C₄-olefin mixture with a 1-butene/2-butene ratio of ≥ 1.2 to a metathesis,
 - 10 (b) separating off olefins having 5 to 8 carbon atoms from the metathesis mixture,
 - (c) subjecting the separated-off olefins individually or in a mixture to a dimerization to give olefin mixtures having 10 to 16 carbon atoms,
 - 15 (d) subjecting the resulting olefin mixture, optionally after a fractionation, to derivatization to give a mixture of surfactant alcohols and
 - (e) optionally alkoxyating the surfactant alcohols.
- 20 The olefin mixture obtained in the dimerization comprises a high content of branched components and less than 10% by weight of compounds which contain a vinylidene group.

Also described is the use of surfactant alcohols and surfactant alcohol ethers to give surfactants by glycosidation or polyglycosidation, sulfation or phosphorylation.