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(57) Abstract

Acylmercaptoalkanoylamino lactam esters or acids are converted to the corresponding mercaptoalkanoylamino lactam ester or acid under basic conditions by including an agent which minimizes the amount of disulfides. Suitable agents are bismercaptans, phosphine or phosphite reducing agents, zinc metal powder, and sodium hydrosulfite. Such agents are also employed in the recrystallization and reprocessing of the mercaptoalkanoylamino lactam acids.