



US 20130145806A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
IANNOTTA et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2013/0145806 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 13, 2013**

(54) **SOLVENT SYSTEMS OF N-ALKYL
THIOPHOSPHORIC TRIAMIDES AND
METHODS OF USE IN AGRICULTURAL
APPLICATIONS**

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(21) Appl. No.: **13/711,768**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 12, 2012**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/630,456, filed on Dec.
12, 2011.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
C05B 15/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **C05B 15/00** (2013.01)
USPC **71/27**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Solvent systems for the formulation of alkyl thiophosphoric triamide urease inhibitors, that provide stable dispersion of alkyl thiophosphoric triamides for even distribution (in low or high concentrations) onto fertilizers containing urea in liquid or solid form.

**SOLVENT SYSTEMS OF N-ALKYL
THIOPHOSPHORIC TRIAMIDES AND
METHODS OF USE IN AGRICULTURAL
APPLICATIONS**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/630,456, filed on Dec. 12, 2011, herein incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates to compositions and methods for use of solvent systems containing alkyl thiophosphoric triamides, used to facilitate incorporation of the alkyl thiophosphoric triamides into solid state or liquid state fertilizer formulations.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] In the current agrochemical market, farmers use various fertilizers to impart macronutrients to plants either by application to the soil or application to plant leaves. Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and sulfur are the six macronutrients that must be supplied to the plants and soil manually by farmers. In many crops, the amount of nitrogen supplied is critical to the overall quality and growth of the crop. Nitrogen is supplied in either urea or ammonium phosphate forms. Due to the high water solubility of these salts, however, much of the nitrogen applied is lost to run-off and leaching. In ammonium-based products, if the nitrogen is not lost to leaching or run-off, it is being converted to ammonia gas by an enzyme called urease where the ammonia can bind to soil particles. Conversion occurring near the surface of the soil, however, does not allow for binding and this ammonia is lost to the atmosphere. Urease inhibitors are used to protect a farmer's investment in fertilizers by preventing the breakdown of urea by urease, the soil microbe responsible for converting urea to usable ammonia in the soil. This increases the amount of time the nitrogen remains in the soil and is available to the plant for absorption.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Urease inhibitors can be used with a fertilizer (i.e., incorporated into a urea-containing fertilizer) to slow the conversion of ammonium ions to ammonia gas and thus slow the loss of ammonia to volatilization, thus making it available to plants in the soil longer. Increasing the amount of time that the nitrogen is available to the plant increases the effectiveness of the fertilizer which positively impacts crop yield and quality. Fertilizers, in one embodiment, are common water soluble inorganic fertilizers that provide nutrients such as phosphorus-based, nitrogen-based, potassium-based or sulphur-based fertilizers. Examples of such fertilizers include: for nitrogen as the nutrient: nitrates and or ammonium salts such as ammonium nitrate, including in combination with urea e.g. as Uram type materials, calcium ammonium nitrate, ammonium sulphate nitrate, ammonium phosphates, particularly mono-ammonium phosphate, di-ammonium phosphate and ammonium polyphosphate, ammonium sulphate, and the less commonly used calcium nitrate, sodium nitrate, potassium nitrate and ammonium chloride. It is understood that a fertilizer composition can comprise one or a combination of the fertilizers described herein.

[0005] A typical urease inhibitor, NBPT (N-(n-butyl)-thiophosphoric triamide), however, faces drawbacks in its use as NBPT is extremely difficult to handle. NBPT is a sticky, waxy, heat and water sensitive material, which cannot be used in its solid form, as it is used at low concentrations making it difficult to evenly distribute on urea prills (i.e., large granules) and in soil. In order to evenly distribute the NBPT onto the urea, the NBPT should be dispersed into a carrier prior to being sprayed onto the urea. Thus, the use of a solvent system containing the NBPT is desirable as, in its liquid form, the solvent system is capable of distributing the NBPT into granular urea (e.g., urea prills) and into liquid fertilizers containing urea. By introducing the NBPT to liquid fertilizers containing urea (for example, urea-ammonium nitrate solutions or UAN) in a solvent system, the NBPT is capable of being better dispersed in the liquid fertilizer.

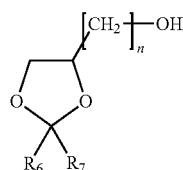
[0006] Thus, it is desirable to have a low cost solvent system containing alkyl thiophosphoric triamide, and in particular, (N-(n-butyl)-thiophosphoric triamide), that has a favorable toxicological and/or ecological profile and desirable characteristics in terms of low volatility, biodegradability or ready biodegradability (i.e., readily biodegradable), low toxicity or low hazard level.

[0007] The present invention described herein will become apparent from the following detailed description and examples, which comprises in one aspect, are formulations comprising a mixture or solution of at least one alkyl thiophosphoric triamide (from about 15% to 35% by weight of formulation) in at least one solvent selected from: at least one dibasic ester (from about 5% to 35% by weight of formulation), at least one dioxolane (from about 25% to 70% by weight of formulation), at least one ester-amide or diamide (from about 10% to 50% by weight of formulation), at least one alkyldimethylamide (from about 10% to 50% by weight of formulation), at least one alkyl lactate (from about 0% to 60% by weight of formulation), ethyl levulinate (from about 0% to 60% by weight of formulation), at least one glycerine or glycerine derivative (from about 0% to 75% by weight of formulation), at least one alkylene carbonate (from about 0% to 60% by weight of formulation), at least one alkoxyalcohol, ether alcohol, dialkyl alcoholamine (for example, dimethyl ethanolamine, diethyl ethanolamine), amine alcohol, amino alcohol or alcohol (from about 0% to 75% by weight of formulation), or any combination thereof.

[0008] In another aspect, described herein are formulations comprising a mixture or solution of at least one alkyl thiophosphoric triamide in at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of:

[0009] a) at least one dibasic ester;

[0010] b) at least one dioxolane compound of formula (1a):



[0011] wherein R_6 and R_7 individually comprises a hydrogen, an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, a phenyl group, wherein n is an integer of from 1 to 10;

[0012] c) at least one ester-amide or diamide, which in one embodiment, is at least one compound of formula (IIa):



[0013] wherein R_3 comprises a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group; wherein R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, wherein R_4 and R_5 can optionally together form a ring; and wherein A is a linear or branched divalent C_2 - C_6 alkyl group;

- [0014] d) at least one alkyldimethylamide;
 [0015] e) at least one alkyl lactate;
 [0016] f) ethyl levulinate;
 [0017] g) 2-butoxyethanol;
 [0018] h) at least one glycerine or glycerine derivative;
 [0019] I) propylene carbonate; and
 [0020] j) any combination thereof.

[0021] In one embodiment, Regarding the formula II(a), R_3 can be group chosen from, among others, saturated or unsaturated, linear or branched, optionally cyclic, optionally aromatic hydrocarbon-based groups comprising an average number of carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 36. In a further embodiment, R_3 can be selected from the group consisting of a saturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, an unsaturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a linear C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a branched C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a cyclic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, and an aromatic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group.

[0022] In another embodiment, R_4 and R_5 , which are identical or different, can be groups chosen from, among others, saturated or unsaturated, linear or branched, optionally cyclic, optionally aromatic, optionally substituted hydrocarbon-based groups comprising an average number of carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 36. A can be a linear or branched divalent alkyl group comprising an average number of carbon atoms ranging from 2 to 12. In a further embodiment, R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a saturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, an unsaturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a linear C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a branched C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a cyclic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, or an aromatic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group.

[0023] In one embodiment, alkyl thiophosphoric triamide is N-(n-butyl)-thiophosphoric triamide. The alkyl thiophosphoric triamide can be present in the dispersion in an amount between about 0.5% by weight of the dispersion and about 50% by weight of the dispersion or, in another embodiment, can be present in the dispersion in an amount between about 1% by weight of the dispersion and about 40% by weight of the dispersion, and, in another embodiment, can be present in the dispersion in an amount between about 0.5% by weight of the dispersion and about 20% by weight of the dispersion. In one particular embodiment, the alkyl thiophosphoric triamide is present in the dispersion in an amount between about 1% by weight of the dispersion and about 30% by weight of the dispersion.

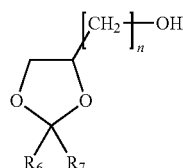
[0024] The at least one dibasic ester can comprises at least two of: dialkyl methylglutarate, dialkyl ethylsuccinate, dialkyl adipate, dialkyl succinate or dialkyl glutarate. In another embodiment, the at least one dibasic ester comprises a blend of dialkyl methylglutarate, dialkyl ethylsuccinate and, optionally, dialkyl adipate. In a further embodiment, the at least one dibasic ester comprises a blend of dialkyl adipate, dialkyl succinate and dialkyl glutarate.

[0025] In one embodiment, the alkyl lactate is a straight pr branched alkyl lactate. In one embodiment, the alkyl lactate is a C_1 - C_8 alkyl lactate. In another embodiment, the alkyl lactate is a C_1 - C_5 alkyl lactate.

[0026] In another aspect, described herein are formulations comprising a mixture or solution of at least one alkyl thiophosphoric triamide in at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of:

[0027] a) at least one dibasic ester selected from dialkyl methylglutarate, dialkyl ethylsuccinate, dialkyl adipate, dialkyl succinate or dialkyl glutarate;

[0028] b) at least one dioxolane compound of formula (Ia):



(Ia)

[0029] wherein R_6 and R_7 individually comprises a hydrogen, an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, a phenyl group, wherein n is an integer of from 1 to 10;

[0030] c) at least one compound of formula (IIa):



[0031] wherein R_3 comprises a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group; wherein R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, wherein R_4 and R_5 can optionally together form a ring; and wherein A is a linear or branched divalent C_2 - C_6 alkyl group;

[0032] d) at least one alkyldimethylamide;

[0033] e) at least one alkyl lactate;

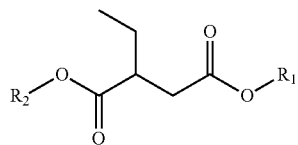
[0034] I) propylene carbonate; and

[0035] j) any combination thereof.

[0036] In one embodiment, the alkyldimethylamide is N,N-Dimethyldodecylamide

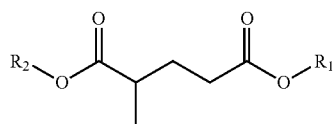
[0037] In one particular embodiment, the dibasic ester is a blend comprising:

[0038] (i) a first dibasic ester of formula:



(I)

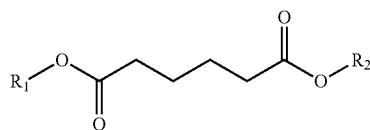
[0039] (ii) a second dibasic ester of formula:



(II)

and

[0040] (iii) optionally, a third dibasic ester of formula:



(III)

[0041] wherein R_1 and R_2 individually comprise a C_1 - C_8 alkyl group.

[0042] In another aspect, described herein are methods for preparing an agricultural composition comprising contacting the formulation of claim 1 with a urea-based fertilizer composition. In one embodiment, urea-based fertilizer composition is in granular or prill form. In another embodiment, the urea-based fertilizer composition is in substantially liquid form.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0043] As used herein, the term “alkyl” means a saturated straight chain, branched chain, or cyclic hydrocarbon radical, including but not limited to, methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, iso-propyl, n-butyl, sec-butyl, t-butyl, pentyl, n-hexyl, and cyclohexyl.

[0044] As used herein, the term “aryl” means a monovalent unsaturated hydrocarbon radical containing one or more six-membered carbon rings in which the unsaturation may be represented by three conjugated double bonds, which may be substituted one or more of carbons of the ring with hydroxy, alkyl, alkenyl, halo, haloalkyl, or amino, including but not limited to, phenoxy, phenyl, methylphenyl, dimethylphenyl, trimethylphenyl, chlorophenyl, trichloromethylphenyl, aminophenyl, and tristyrylphenyl.

[0045] As used herein, the term “alkylene” means a divalent saturated straight or branched chain hydrocarbon radical, such as for example, methylene, dimethylene, trimethylene.

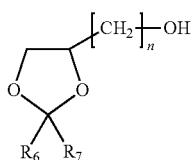
[0046] As used herein, the terminology “(C_r - C_s)” in reference to an organic group, wherein r and s are each integers, indicates that the group may contain from r carbon atoms to s carbon atoms per group.

[0047] As used herein, the terminology “surfactant” means a compound that when dissolved in an aqueous medium lowers the surface tension of the aqueous medium.

[0048] In one embodiment, the solvent system is chosen from one or more of the following components (a through j), below. In another embodiment, the solvent is chosen from at least one components, typically, two or more components.

[0049] a) at least one dibasic ester;

[0050] b) at least one dioxolane compound of formula (Ia):



[0051] wherein R_6 and R_7 individually comprises a hydrogen, an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, a phenyl group, wherein n is an integer of from 1 to 10;

[0052] c) at least one compound of formula (IIa):



[0053] wherein R_3 comprises a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group; wherein R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, wherein R_4 and R_5 can optionally together form a ring; and wherein A is a linear or branched divalent C_2 - C_6 alkyl group;

[0054] d) at least one alkyldimethylamide;

[0055] e) at least one alkyl lactate;

[0056] f) ethyl levulinate;

[0057] g) 2-butoxyethanol;

[0058] h) at least one glycerine or glycerine derivative;

[0059] I) propylene carbonate; and

[0060] j) any combination thereof.

[0061] In one embodiment, a C_1 - C_4 alcohol chosen from t-butyl alcohol, butyl alcohol, iso-propyl alcohol, or propyl alcohol can be added to the solvent. In one typical embodiment, the C_1 - C_4 alcohol is iso-propyl alcohol.

[0062] In one embodiment, the solvent comprises (i) one or a (ii) blend of dibasic esters. In one embodiment, the blend comprises adducts of alcohol and linear diacids, the adducts having the formula $R_1\text{—OOC—A—COO—R}_2$ wherein R_1 and/or R_2 comprise, individually, a C_1 - C_{12} alkyl, more typically a C_1 - C_3 alkyl, and A comprises a mixture of $\text{—(CH}_2\text{)}_4\text{—}$, $\text{—(CH}_2\text{)}_3\text{—}$, and $\text{—(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{—}$. In another embodiment, R_1 and/or R_2 comprise, individually, a C_4 - C_{12} alkyl, more typically a C_4 - C_8 alkyl. In one embodiment, R_1 and R_2 can individually comprise a hydrocarbon group originating from fusel oil. In one embodiment, R_1 and R_2 individually can comprise a hydrocarbon group having 1 to 8 carbon atoms. In one embodiment, R_1 and R_2 individually can comprise a hydrocarbon group having 5 to 8 carbon atoms. In another embodiment, A comprises a least one, typically at least two, of: $\text{—(CH}_2\text{)}_4\text{—}$, $\text{—CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH(CH}_3\text{)—}$, $\text{—CH}_2\text{CH(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)—}$, $\text{—(CH}_2\text{)}_3\text{—}$, $\text{—CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH(CH}_3\text{)—}$, or $\text{—CH}_2\text{CH(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)—}$.

[0063] In one embodiment, the blend comprises adducts of alcohol and branched or linear diacids, the adducts having the formula $R_1\text{—OOC—A—COO—R}_2$ wherein R_1 and/or R_2 comprise, individually, a C_1 - C_{12} alkyl, more typically a C_1 - C_8 alkyl, and A comprises a mixture of $\text{—(CH}_2\text{)}_4\text{—}$, $\text{—CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH(CH}_3\text{)—}$, and $\text{—CH}_2\text{CH(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)—}$. In another embodiment, R_1 and/or R_2 comprise, individually, a C_4 - C_{12} alkyl, more typically a C_4 - C_8 alkyl. It is understood that the acid portion may be derived from such dibasic acids such as adipic, succinic, glutaric, oxalic, malonic, pimelic, suberic and azelaic acids, as well as mixtures thereof.

[0064] The dibasic esters can be obtained by a process comprising an “esterification” stage by reaction of a diacid of formula HOOC—A—COOH or of a diester of formula MeOOC—A—COOMe with a branched alcohol or a mixture of alcohols. The reactions can be appropriately catalyzed. Use is preferably made of at least 2 molar equivalents of alcohols per diacid or diester. The reactions can, if appropriate, be promoted by extraction of the reaction by-products and followed by stages of filtration and/or of purification, for example by distillation.

[0065] The diacids in the form of mixtures can in particular be obtained from a mixture of dinitrile compounds in particular produced and recovered in the process for the manufacture of adiponitrile by double hydrocyanation of butadiene. This process, used on a large scale industrially to produce the greater majority of the adiponitrile consumed worldwide, is described in numerous patents and works. The reaction for the hydrocyanation of butadiene results predominantly in the formulation of linear dinitriles but also in formation of branched dinitriles, the two main ones of which are methylglutaronitrile and ethylsuccinonitrile. The branched dinitrile compounds are separated by distillation and recovered, for example, as top fraction in a distillation column, in the stages for separation and purification of the adiponitrile. The branched dinitriles can subsequently be converted to diacids or diesters (either to light diesters, for a subsequent transesterification).

terification reaction with the alcohol or the mixture of alcohols or the fusel oil, or directly to diesters in accordance with the invention).

[0066] Dibasic esters of the present invention may be derived from one or more by-products in the production of polyamide, for example, polyamide 6,6. In one embodiment, the at least one dibasic ester comprises a blend of linear or branched, cyclic or noncyclic, C₁-C₂₀ alkyl, aryl, alkylaryl or arylalkyl esters of adipic diacids, glutaric diacids, and succinic diacids. In another embodiment, the composition comprises a blend of linear or branched, cyclic or noncyclic, C₁-C₂₀ alkyl, aryl, alkylaryl or arylalkyl esters of adipic diacids, methylglutaric diacids, and ethylsuccinic diacids

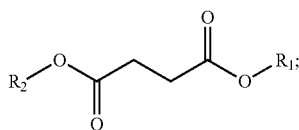
[0067] Generally, polyamide is a copolymer prepared by a condensation reaction formed by reacting a diamine and a dicarboxylic acid. Specifically, polyamide 6,6 is a copolymer prepared by a condensation reaction formed by reacting a diamine, typically hexamethylenediamine, with a dicarboxylic acid, typically adipic acid.

[0068] In one embodiment, the blend of dibasic esters can be derived from one or more by-products in the reaction, synthesis and/or production of adipic acid utilized in the production of polyamide, the composition comprising a blend of dialkyl esters of adipic diacids, glutaric diacids, and succinic diacids (herein referred to sometimes as "AGS" or the "AGS blend").

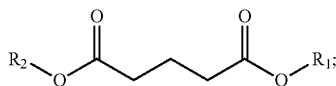
[0069] In one embodiment, the blend of esters is derived from by-products in the reaction, synthesis and/or production of hexamethylenediamine utilized in the production of polyamide, typically polyamide 6,6. The composition comprises a blend of dialkyl esters of adipic diacids, methylglutaric diacids, and ethylsuccinic diacids (herein referred to sometimes as "MGA", "MGN", "MGN blend" or "MGA blend").

[0070] In certain embodiments, the dibasic ester blend comprises:

[0071] a diester of formula I:

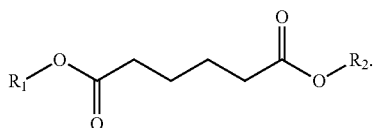


[0072] a diester of formula II:



and

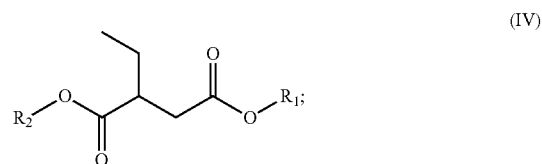
[0073] a diester of formula III:



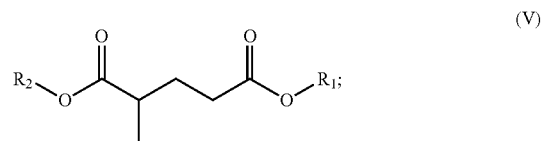
[0074] R₁ and/or R₂ can individually comprise a hydrocarbon having from about 1 to about 8 carbon atoms, typically, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, isobutyl, n-butyl, isoamyl, hexyl, heptyl or octyl. In such embodiments, the blend typically comprises (by weight of the blend) (i) about 15% to about 35% of the diester of formula I, (ii) about 55% to about 70% of the diester of formula II, and (iii) about 7% to about 20% of the diester of formula III, and more typically, (i) about 20% to about 28% of the diester of formula I, (ii) about 59% to about 67% of the diester of formula II, and (iii) about 9% to about 17% of the diester of formula III. The blend is generally characterized by a flash point of 98° C., a vapor pressure at 20° C. of less than about 10 Pa, and a distillation temperature range of about 200-300° C.

[0075] In certain other embodiments, the dibasic ester blend comprises:

[0076] a diester of the formula IV:

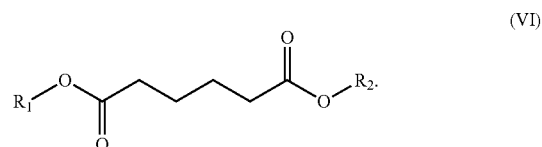


[0077] a diester of the formula V:



(I) and, optionally,

[0078] a diester of the formula VI:



(II)

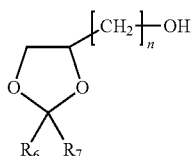
[0079] R₁ and/or R₂ can individually comprise a hydrocarbon having from about 1 to about 8 carbon atoms, typically, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, isobutyl, n-butyl, isoamyl, hexyl, heptyl, or octyl. In such embodiments, the blend typically comprises (by weight of the blend) (i) from about 5% to about 30% of the diester of formula IV, (ii) from about 70% to about 95% of the diester of formula V, and (iii) from about 0% to about 10% of the diester of formula VI. More typically, the blend typically comprises (by weight of the blend): (i) from about 6% to about 12% of the diester of formula IV, (ii) from about 86% to about 92% of the diester of formula V, and (iii) from about 0.5% to about 4% of the diester of formula VI.

[0080] Most typically, the blend comprises (by weight of the blend): (i) about 9% of the diester of formula IV, (ii) about

89% of the diester of formula V, and (iii) about 1% of the diester of formula VI. The blend is generally characterized by a flash point of 98° C., a vapor pressure at 20° C. of less than about 10 Pa, and a distillation temperature range of about 200-275° C.

[0081] In another embodiment, the solvent can include other solvents, including but not limited to aliphatic or acyclic hydrocarbons solvents, halogenated solvents, aromatic hydrocarbon solvents, cyclic terpenes, unsaturated hydrocarbon solvents, halocarbon solvents, polyols, alcohols including short chain alcohols, ketones or mixtures thereof.

[0082] The dioxane compound utilized as the solvent or in the solvent blend as described herein includes those of formula (I), below:



[0083] in which: R₆ and R₇, which are identical or different, represent hydrogen or a C₁-C₁₄ group or radical. In one embodiment, R₆ and R₇ are individually selected from an alkyl group, alkenyl group or phenyl radical. In some embodiments, “n” is an integer of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12. Typically, “n” is an integer ranging from 1 to 4 or “n” is an integer ranging from 1 to 2.

[0084] In one particular embodiment, R₆ and R₇ are radicals individually selected from methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl or isobutyl radical.

[0085] In one embodiment the dioxolane compound is of formula (I) is 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolane-4-methanol. In another embodiment, the dioxolane compound of formula (I) is 2,2-diisobutyl-1,3-dioxolane-4-methanol (also known by the acronym IIPG, for the synonym 1-isobutyl-isopropylidene glycerol).

[0086] In one embodiment, a compound utilized as the solvent or as a component in the solvent blend is a compound of general formula (II):



[0087] According to one embodiment, the expression “compound” denotes any compound corresponding to the general formula (II). In other embodiments, the term “compound” also refers to mixtures of several molecules corresponding to general formula (II). It may therefore be a molecule of formula (II) or a mixture of several molecules of formula (II), wherein both fall under the definition of the term “compound” when referring to formula (II).

[0088] The R₃, R₄ and R₅ groups can be, in some embodiments, identical or, in other embodiment, different. In one embodiment, may be groups chosen from C₁-C₂₀ alkyl, aryl, alkaryl or arylalkyl groups or the phenyl group. In another embodiment, may be groups chosen from C₁-C₁₂ alkyl, aryl, alkaryl or arylalkyl groups or the phenyl group. Mention is made especially of Rhodiasolv® PolarClean (Manufactured by Rhodia Inc. of Cranbury, N.J.). The R₄ and R₅ groups may optionally be substituted. In one particular embodiment, the groups are substituted with hydroxyl groups.

[0089] In one embodiment, R₃ group is chosen from methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, isobutyl, n-pentyl,

isopentyl, isoamyl, n-hexyl, cyclohexyl, 2-ethylbutyl, n-octyl, isooctyl, 2-ethylhexyl, tridecyl groups.

[0090] R₄ and R₅ groups, which are identical or different, in one embodiment, may especially be chosen from methyl, ethyl, propyl (n-propyl), isopropyl, n-butyl, isobutyl, n-pentyl, amyl, isoamyl, hexyl, cyclohexyl or hydroxyethyl groups. The R₄ and R₅ groups may also be such that they form, together with the nitrogen atom, a morpholine, piperazine or piperidine group. According to some embodiments, R₄ and R₅ are each methyl, or R₄ and R₅ are each ethyl, or R₄ and R₅ are each hydroxyethyl.

[0091] According to one embodiment, if A comprises a linear group of formula —CH₂—CH₂— and/or of formula —CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂— and/or of formula —(CH₂)_s— then it is a mixture of A groups. According to one particular embodiment, if A is linear, then it is a mixture of A groups, for example a mixture of two or three —CH₂—CH₂— (ethylene); CH₂—CH₂—CH₂— (n-propylene); and —CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂— (n-butylene) groups (or isomers thereof).

[0092] According to a first particular embodiment of the invention, the A group is a divalent linear alkyl group chosen from the groups of the following formulae: —CH₂—CH₂— (ethylene); —CH₂—CH₂—CH₂— (n-propylene); —CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂— (n-butylene), and mixtures thereof.

[0093] According to such embodiment, the compound is a mixture according to the following mixture of molecules:

[0094] R₃OOC—(CH₂)₂—CONR₄R₅;

[0095] R₃OOC—(CH₂)₃—CONR₄R₅; and

[0096] R₃OOC—(CH₂)₄—CONR₄R₅

[0097] According to another particular embodiment of the invention, the A group is a divalent branched alkyl group chosen from the groups of the following formulae: —CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CH₂—; —CH(C₂H₅)—CH₂—; and, optionally, —CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—; as well as mixtures thereof.

[0098] According to such embodiment, the compound is a mixture according to the following mixture of molecules:

[0099] R₃OOC—CH(CH₃)(CH₂)₂—CONR₄R₅;

[0100] R₃OOC—CH(C₂H₅)CH₂—CONR₄R₅; and, optionally,

[0101] R₃OOC—(CH₂)₄—CONR₄R₅

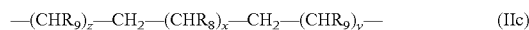
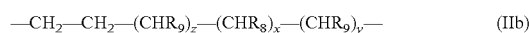
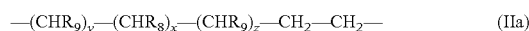
[0102] According to one particular variant in this first embodiment, the compound of the invention is chosen from the following compounds:

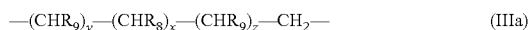
[0103] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0104] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0105] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂, as a mixture with MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂ and/or with MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂.

[0106] According to another embodiment of the invention, the A group is a divalent branched alkylene group having one of the following formulae (IIa), (IIb), (IIc), (IIIa) and (IIIb), or a mixture of at least two groups chosen from the groups of formulae (IIa), (IIb) and (IIc) or from the groups of formulae (IIIa) and (IIIb), or a mixture of at least two groups, one chosen from the groups of formulae (IIa), (IIb) and (IIc) and the others chosen from the groups of formulae (IIIa) and (IIIb):





[0107] where:

[0108] x is an integer greater than 0;

[0109] y is an average integer greater than or equal to 0;

[0110] z is an average integer greater than or equal to 0; R₈, which is identical or different, is a C₁-C₆, preferably C₁-C₄, alkyl group; and R₉, which is identical or different, is a hydrogen atom or a C₁-C₆, preferably C₁-C₄, alkyl group. In this particular embodiment, the A group is preferably a group such that y and z are 0.

[0111] In one embodiment, in formula (IIa) and/or in the formula (IIb): x is 1; y and z are 0; R₈ is methyl.

[0112] In another embodiment, in the formula (IIIa) and/or in the formula (IIIb): x is 1; y and z are 0; R₈ is ethyl.

[0113] According to another embodiment, the compound of the invention is chosen from the following compounds, and mixtures thereof:

[0114] MeOOC-A_{MG}-CONMe₂;

[0115] MeOOC-A_{ES}-CONMe₂;

[0116] PeOOC-A_{MG}-CONMe₂;

[0117] PeOOC-A_{ES}-CONMe₂;

[0118] CycloOOC-A_{MG}-CONMe₂;

[0119] CycloOOC-A_{ES}-CONMe₂;

[0120] EhOOC-A_{MG}-CONMe₂;

[0121] EhOOC-A_{ES}-CONMe₂;

[0122] PeOOC-A_{MG}-CONEt₂;

[0123] PeOOC-A_{ES}-CONEt₂;

[0124] CycloOOC-A_{MG}-CONEt₂;

[0125] CycloOOC-A_{ES}-CONEt₂;

[0126] BuOOC-A_{MG}-CONEt₂;

[0127] BuOOC-A_{ES}-CONEt₂;

[0128] BuOOC-A_{MG}-CONMe₂;

[0129] BuOOC-A_{ES}-CONMe₂;

[0130] EtBuOOC-A_{MG}-CONMe₂;

[0131] EtBuOOC-A_{ES}-CONMe₂;

[0132] n-HeOOC-A_{MG}-CONMe₂;

[0133] n-HeOOC-A_{ES}-CONMe₂;

[0134] where

[0135] A_{MG} represents an MG_a group of formula —CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CH₂—, or MG_b group of formula —CH₂—CH₂—CH(CH₃)— or a mixture of MG_a and MG_b groups;

[0136] A_{ES} represents an ES_a group of formula —CH(C₂H₅)—CH₂—, or ES_b group of formula —CH₂—CH(C₂H₅)— or a mixture of ES_a and ES_b groups;

[0137] Pe represents a pentyl group, preferably an isopentyl or isoamyl group;

[0138] Cyclo represents a cyclohexyl group;

[0139] Eh represents a 2-ethylhexyl group;

[0140] Bu represents a butyl group, preferably an n-butyl or tert-butyl group;

[0141] EtBu represents an ethylbutyl group; and

[0142] n-He represents an n-hexyl group.

[0143] It is mentioned that according to one particular embodiment, the compound of the invention is a compound different from the following compounds:

[0144] MeOOC—CHEt—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0145] MeOOC—CH₂—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0146] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂; and

[0147] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0148] if the latter are not used as a mixture with other compounds corresponding to formula (II).

[0149] It is mentioned that according to one even more particular variant of one or the other of the particular embodiments of the invention, the compound of the invention is a novel compound of the invention, different from the following compounds or mixtures, if the latter, individually, are not used as a mixture with other compounds corresponding to formula (II):

[0150] MeOOC—CHEt—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0151] MeOOC—CH₂—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0152] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0153] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0154] mixture of PhOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂ and PhOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0155] EtOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0156] MeOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0157] Me-CH(OMe)—OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0158] Cyclohexyl-OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0159] Ph-CH₂—OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0160] p-cresyl-OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0161] mixture of EtOOC—CHEt—CH₂—CONEt₂, EtOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂ and EtOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂; and

[0162] MeOOC—CH₂—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONH(n-butyl).

[0163] It is mentioned that according to one even more particular variant of one or the other of the particular embodiments of the invention, the compound of the invention is a novel compound of the invention, different from the following compounds or mixtures, if the latter, individually, are not used as a mixture with other compounds corresponding to formula (II):

[0164] C₄H₉—OOC—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂

[0165] C₆H₁₃—OOC—(CH₂)₈—CON(C₃H₇)₂

[0166] C₈H₁₇—OOC—(CH₂)₈—CON(C₄H₉)₂

[0167] C₈H₁₇—OOC—(CH₂)₈—CON(C₈H₁₇)₂.

[0168] In one embodiment, it is possible to use the following compounds as a mixture with other compounds corresponding to formula (II):

[0169] MeOOC—CHEt—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0170] MeOOC—CH₂—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0171] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0172] MeOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CONMe₂;

[0173] mixture of PhOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂ and PhOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0174] EtOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0175] MeOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0176] Me-CH(OMe)—OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0177] Cyclohexyl-OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0178] Ph-CH₂—OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0179] p-cresyl-OOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0180] mixture of EtOOC—CHEt—CH₂—CONEt₂, EtOOC—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂ and EtOOC—CH₂—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0181] MeOOC—CH₂—CH(CH₃)—CH₂—CONH(n-butyl);

[0182] C₄H₉—OOC—CH₂—CH₂—CONEt₂;

[0183] C₆H₁₃—OOC—(CH₂)₈—CON(C₃H₇)₂;

[0184] C₈H₁₇—OOC—(CH₂)₈—CON(C₄H₉)₂; and

[0185] C₈H₁₇—OOC—(CH₂)₈—CON(C₈H₁₇)₂.

[0186] It is mentioned that according to one still more particular variant of one or the other of the particular embodiments of the invention, the following compounds or mixtures are not used:

- [0187] $\text{MeOOC}-\text{CHEt}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONMe}_2$;
 [0188] $\text{MeOOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONMe}_2$;
 [0189] $\text{MeOOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONMe}_2$;
 [0190] $\text{MeOOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONMe}_2$;
 [0191] mixture of $\text{PhOOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$ and $\text{PhOOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0192] $\text{EtOOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0193] $\text{MeOOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0194] $\text{Me}-\text{CH}(\text{OMe})-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0195] $\text{Cyclohexyl}-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0196] $\text{Ph}-\text{CH}_2-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0197] $p\text{-cresyl}-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0198] mixture of $\text{EtOOC}-\text{CHEt}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$, $\text{EtOOC}-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$ and $\text{EtOOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$; and
 [0199] $\text{MeOOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{CH}_3)-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONH}(\text{n-butyl})$.

[0200] It is mentioned that according to one still more particular variant of one or the other of the particular embodiments of the invention, the following compounds or mixtures are not used:

- [0201] $\text{C}_4\text{H}_9-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CONEt}_2$;
 [0202] $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{13}-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CON}(\text{C}_3\text{H}_7)_2$;
 [0203] $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{17}-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CON}(\text{C}_4\text{H}_9)_2$;
 [0204] $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{17}-\text{OOC}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}_2-\text{CON}(\text{C}_8\text{H}_{17})_2$.
 [0205] According to one embodiment, the esteramide has a melting point that is less than or equal to 20°C ., preferably 5°C ., preferably 0°C .

[0206] In one particular embodiment, R_3 is a group chosen from saturated or unsaturated, linear or branched, optionally cyclic, optionally aromatic hydrocarbon-based groups comprising an average number of carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 36. R_4 and R_5 , which are identical or different, are groups chosen from saturated or unsaturated, linear or branched, optionally cyclic, optionally aromatic, optionally substituted hydrocarbon-based groups comprising an average number of carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 36. It is possible for R_4 and R_5 to form a ring together, and in some embodiment, the ring is optionally substituted and/or optionally comprises a heteroatom. In some embodiments, A is a linear or branched divalent alkyl group comprising an average number of carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 20, in some embodiments, from 2 to 12, in other embodiments, from 2 to 8, in yet other embodiments, from 2 to 4.

[0207] In one embodiment, the solvent comprises amides, alkyl amides, or dialkyl amides. In an alternative embodiment, one component in the solvent blend comprises an amide, alkyl amide, and/or dialkyl amide. In one particular embodiment, the solvent or solvent blend is alkyldimethylamide (ADMA). The alkyl group is a C_1-C_{50} alkyl group, more typically a C_2-C_{30} alkyl group, even more typically, a C_2-C_{20} alkyl group. In one particular embodiment, the alkyldimethylamide is N,N-dimethyldecanamide (miscibility 0.034%) or N,N-dimethyloctanamide (miscibility 0.43%), or mixtures thereof. Mention is made especially of the compounds sold by Rhodia, Rhodiasolv® ADMA810 and Rhodiasolv® ADMA10.

[0208] In another embodiment, the solvent system can contain one or more surfactants. The surfactant can be any num-

ber of cationic, amphoteric, zwitterionic, anionic or nonionic surfactants, derivatives thereof, as well as blends of such surfactants.

[0209] In one embodiment, the nonionic surfactants generally includes one or more of for example amides such as alkanolamides, ethoxylated alkanolamides, ethylene bisamides; esters such as fatty acid esters, glycerol esters, ethoxylated fatty acid esters, sorbitan esters, ethoxylated sorbitan; ethoxylates such as alkylphenol ethoxylates, alcohol ethoxylates, tristyrylphenol ethoxylates, mercaptan ethoxylates; end-capped and EO/PO block copolymers such as ethylene oxide/propylene oxide block copolymers, chlorine capped ethoxylates, tetra-functional block copolymers; amine oxides such lauramine oxide, cocamine oxide, stearamine oxide, stearamidopropylamine oxide, palmitamidopropylamine oxide, decylamine oxide; fatty alcohols such as decyl alcohol, lauryl alcohol, tridecyl alcohol, myristyl alcohol, cetyl alcohol, stearyl alcohol, oleyl alcohol, linoleyl alcohol and linolenyl alcohol; and alkoxyated alcohols such as ethoxylated lauryl alcohol, trideceth alcohols; and fatty acids such as lauric acid, oleic acid, stearic acid, myristic acid, cetearic acid, isostearic acid, linoleic acid, linolenic acid, ricinoleic acid, elaidic acid, arichidonic acid, myristoleic acid and mixtures thereof.

[0210] In another embodiment, the non-ionic surfactant is a glycol such as polyethylene glycol (PEG), alkyl PEG esters, polypropylene glycol (PPG) and derivatives thereof. In one embodiment, the surfactant is an alcohol ethoxylate, an alkyl phenol ethoxylate or a terpene alkoxyate. In one exemplary embodiment, the surfactant is a C_6-C_{13} alcohol ethoxylate and, more typically, a C_8-C_{12} alcohol ethoxylate.

[0211] In another embodiment, the surfactant is a cationic surfactant. The cationic surfactant includes but is not limited to quaternary ammonium compounds, such as cetyl trimethyl ammonium bromide (also known as CETAB or cetrimonium bromide), cetyl trimethyl ammonium chloride (also known as cetrimonium chloride), myristyl trimethyl ammonium bromide (also known as myrtrimonium bromide or Quaternium-13), stearyl dimethyl distearyldimonium chloride, dicetyl dimonium chloride, stearyl octyldimonium methosulfate, dihydrogenated palmolethyl hydroxyethylmonium methosulfate, isostearyl benzylimidonium chloride, cocoyl benzyl hydroxyethyl imidazolium chloride, dicetyl dimonium chloride and distearyldimonium chloride; isostearylaminopropalkonium chloride or olealkonium chloride; behentrimonium chloride; as well as mixtures thereof.

[0212] In another embodiment, the surfactant is an anionic surfactant. The anionic surfactant includes but is not limited to linear alkylbenzene sulfonates, alpha olefin sulfonates, paraffin sulfonates, alkyl ester sulfonates, alkyl sulfates, alkyl alkoxy sulfates, alkyl sulfonates, alkyl alkoxy carboxylates, alkyl alkoxyated sulfates, monoalkyl phosphates, dialkyl phosphates, sarcosinates, sulfosuccinates, isethionates, and taurates, as well as mixtures thereof. Commonly used anionic surfactants that are suitable as the anionic surfactant component of the composition of the present invention include, for example, ammonium lauryl sulfate, ammonium laureth sulfate, triethylamine lauryl sulfate, triethylamine laureth sulfate, triethanolamine lauryl sulfate, triethanolamine laureth sulfate, monoethanolamine lauryl sulfate, monoethanolamine laureth sulfate, diethanolamine lauryl sulfate, diethanolamine laureth sulfate, lauric monoglyceride sodium sulfate, sodium lauryl sulfate, sodium laureth sulfate, potassium lauryl sulfate, potassium laureth sulfate, sodium-monoalkyl

phosphates, sodium dialkyl phosphates, sodium lauroyl sarcosinate, lauroyl sarcosine, cocoyl sarcosine, ammonium cocyl sulfate, ammonium lauryl sulfate, sodium cocyl sulfate, sodium trideceth sulfate, sodium tridecyl sulfate, ammonium trideceth sulfate, ammonium tridecyl sulfate, sodium cocoyl isethionate, disodium laureth sulfosuccinate, sodium methyl oleoyl taurate, sodium laureth carboxylate, sodium trideceth carboxylate, sodium lauryl sulfate, potassium cocyl sulfate, potassium lauryl sulfate, monoethanolamine cocyl sulfate, sodium tridecyl benzene sulfonate, and sodium dodecyl benzene sulfonate. Branched anionic surfactants are particularly preferred, such as sodium trideceth sulfate, sodium tridecyl sulfate, ammonium trideceth sulfate, ammonium tridecyl sulfate, and sodium trideceth carboxylate.

[0213] Any amphoteric surfactant that is acceptable for use includes but is not limited to derivatives of aliphatic secondary and tertiary amines in which the aliphatic radical can be straight chain or branched and wherein one of the aliphatic substituents contains from about 8 to about 18 carbon atoms and one contains an anionic water solubilizing group. Specific examples of suitable amphoteric surfactants include the alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, ammonium or substituted ammonium salts of alkyl amphocarboxy glycines and alkyl amphocarboxypropionates, alkyl amphodipropionates, alkyl amphodiacetates, alkyl amphoglycines, and alkyl amphopropionates, as well as alkyl iminopropionates, alkyl iminodipropionates, and alkyl amphopropylsulfonates, such as for example, cocoamphoacetate cocoamphopropionate, cocoamphodiacetate, lauroamphoacetate, lauroamphodiacetate lauroamphodipropionate, lauroamphodiacetate, cocoamphopropyl sulfonate caproamphodiacetate, caproamphoacetate, caproamphodipropionate, and stearamphoacetate.

[0214] Suitable zwitterionic surfactants include alkyl betaines, such as cocodimethyl carboxymethyl betaine, lauryl dimethyl carboxymethyl betaine, lauryl dimethyl alpha-carboxy-ethyl betaine, cetyl dimethyl carboxymethyl betaine, lauryl bis-(2-hydroxy-ethyl)carboxy methyl betaine, stearyl bis-(2-hydroxy-propyl)carboxymethyl betaine, oleyl dimethyl gamma-carboxypropyl betaine, and lauryl bis-(2-hydroxypropyl)alpha-carboxyethyl betaine, amidopropyl betaines, and alkyl sultaines, such as cocodimethyl sulfopropyl betaine, stearyldimethyl sulfopropyl betaine, lauryl dimethyl sulfoethyl betaine, lauryl bis-(2-hydroxy-ethyl)sulfopropyl betaine, and alkylamidopropylhydroxy sultaines.

[0215] The solvent system described herein are characterized by having improved stability of NBPT; improved solubility characteristics; low toxicity of the solvents; good storage characteristics; and good adsorption characteristics onto the urea-containing fertilizers and excellent miscibility with liquid urea containing fertilizer formulations.

[0216] Experiments

[0217] The solvent systems embodied herein were screened to assess compatibility with NBPT. To prepare each sample, the components (NBPT, solvents, and dye) were combined and stirred at room temperature until uniform. The samples were then vacuum-filtered through Whatman 1 filtration paper to remove any undissolved pigment. A combination of solvents was used to meet the concentration requirements and stability characteristics. The solvents tested that resulted in some degree of success with select molecular structures are as follows:

TABLE 1

R0985-165-01		
NBPT	21.0%	26.25
Rhodiasolv		
Polarclean	30.5%	38.11
Purasolv EL	48.2%	60.26
Dye	0.3%	0.38
	100.0%	125.0

[0218] From Table 1, Polarclean is Methyl-5-(dimethylamino)-2-methyl-5-oxopentanoate and Purasolv EL is an Ethyl-(S)-lactate.

TABLE 2

R0985-165-02		
NBPT	21.0%	26.25
Rhodiasolv ADMA	30.9%	38.66
Purasolv EL	43.5%	54.38
Water	3.2%	4.00
Urea	1.1%	1.34
Dye	0.3%	0.38
	100.00%	125.0

TABLE 3

R0985-165-03		
NBPT	21.00%	26.25
Rhodiasolv ADMA	27.50%	34.38
Purasolv EL	51.20%	64.00
Dye	0.3%	0.38
	100.00%	125.00

TABLE 4

R0985-167-01		
NBPT	21.00%	26.25
Augeo SL-191	59.16%	73.95
Rhodiasolv LI-TEC	19.54%	24.43
Dye	0.3%	0.38
	100.00%	125.00

[0219] From Table 4, Rhodiasolv LI-TEC is a proprietary blend of dibasic esters comprising a dialkyl methylglutarate as the primary dibasic ester, along with one or more additional dibasic esters.

TABLE 5

R0985-167-02		
NBPT	26.65%	32.50
Augeo SL-191	54.65%	69.15
Rhodiasolv LI-TEC	18.4%	22.98
Dye	0.3%	0.38
	100.00%	125.00

[0220] From the Tables above, all blend components are suitable for use in fertilizer applications in the United States. The formulations, and specially Table 5, meets stability and

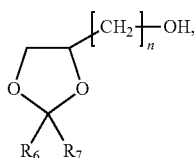
requirements and application requirements, as compatible with urea prills, UAN, and passes the smell test.

[0221] The present invention, therefore, is well adapted to carry out the objects and attain the ends and advantages mentioned, as well as others inherent therein. While the invention has been depicted and described and is defined by reference to particular preferred embodiments of the invention, such references do not imply a limitation on the invention, and no such limitation in scope is to be inferred.

What is claimed is:

1. A composition comprising:

- a) at least one alkyl thiophosphoric triamide; and
- b) a solvent comprising at least one dioxolane compound of formula (Ia):



wherein R_6 and R_7 individually comprises a hydrogen, an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, or a phenyl group, wherein n is an integer of from 1 to 10.

2. The composition of claim 1 further comprising a solvent selected from the group consisting of:

- a) at least one dibasic ester;
- b) at least one compound of formula (IIa):



wherein R_3 comprises a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group; wherein R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, wherein R_4 and R_5 can optionally together form a ring; and wherein A is a linear or branched divalent C_2 - C_6 alkyl group;

- c) at least one alkyldimethylamide;
- d) at least one alkyl lactate;
- e) ethyl levulinate;
- f) at least one alkoxyalcohol, ether alcohol, amine alcohol, amino alcohol or alcohol;
- g) at least one glycerine or glycerine derivative;
- h) at least one alkylene carbonate; and
- i) any combination thereof.

3. The composition of claim 1 wherein the alkyl thiophosphoric triamide is N-(n-butyl)-thiophosphoric triamide.

4. The composition of claim 1 wherein the alkyl thiophosphoric triamide is present in an amount between about 0.5% by weight of the composition and about 50% by weight of the composition.

5. The composition of claim 1 wherein the alkyl thiophosphoric triamide is present in an amount between about 1% by weight of the composition and about 30% by weight of the composition.

6. The composition of claim 2 wherein R_3 is selected from the group consisting of a saturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, an unsaturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a linear C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a branched C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a cyclic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, and an aromatic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group.

7. The composition of claim 2 wherein R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a saturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, an unsaturated

C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a linear C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a branched C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a cyclic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, or an aromatic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group.

8. The composition of claim 2 wherein the at least one dibasic ester comprises at least two of: dialkyl methylglutarate, dialkyl ethylsuccinate, dialkyl adipate, dialkyl succinate or dialkyl glutarate.

9. The composition of claim 2 wherein the at least one dibasic ester comprises a blend of dialkyl methylglutarate, dialkyl ethylsuccinate and, optionally, dialkyl adipate.

10. The composition of claim 2 wherein the at least one dibasic ester comprises a blend of dialkyl adipate, dialkyl succinate and dialkyl glutarate.

11. The composition of claim 2 wherein the alkyl lactate is a C_1 - C_8 alkyl lactate.

12. The composition of claim 2 wherein the alkoxyalcohol is 2-butoxyethanol.

13. The composition of claim 2 wherein the at least one alkylene carbonate is propylene carbonate.

14. The composition of claim 1 wherein the composition is a flowable liquid composition.

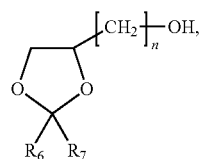
15. The composition of claim 14 wherein the flowable liquid composition is a homogenous solution.

16. The composition of claim 14 wherein the flowable liquid composition is a mixture.

17. The composition of claim 2 wherein the amine alcohol is selected from the group consisting of ethanolamine, propanolamine, dialkyl alkanolamines, methanolamine, and any combination thereof.

18. A composition comprising a dispersion of at least one alkyl thiophosphoric triamide in at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of:

- a) at least one dibasic ester selected from dialkyl methylglutarate, dialkyl ethylsuccinate, dialkyl adipate, dialkyl succinate or dialkyl glutarate;
- b) at least one dioxolane compound of formula (Ia):



wherein R_6 and R_7 individually comprises a hydrogen, an alkyl group, an alkenyl group, or a phenyl group, wherein n is an integer of from 1 to 10;

c) at least one compound of formula (IIa):



wherein R_3 comprises a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group; wherein R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, wherein R_4 and R_5 can optionally together form a ring; and wherein A is a linear or branched divalent C_2 - C_6 alkyl group;

- d) at least one alkyldimethylamide;
- e) at least one alkyl lactate;
- f) propylene carbonate; and
- g) any combination thereof.

19. The composition of claim 18 wherein the alkyl thiophosphoric triamide is N-(n-butyl)-thiophosphoric triamide.

20. The composition of claim 18 wherein the alkyl thio-phosphoric triamide is present in the dispersion in an amount between about 0.5% by weight of the dispersion and about 50% by weight of the dispersion.

21. The composition of claim 18 wherein the alkyl thio-phosphoric triamide is present in the dispersion in an amount between about 1% by weight of the dispersion and about 30% by weight of the dispersion.

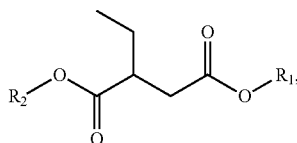
22. The composition of claim 18 wherein R_3 is selected from the group consisting of a saturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, an unsaturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a linear C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a branched C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a cyclic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, and an aromatic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group.

23. The composition of claim 18 wherein R_4 and R_5 individually comprise a saturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, an unsaturated C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a linear C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a branched C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, a cyclic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group, or an aromatic C_1 - C_{36} alkyl group.

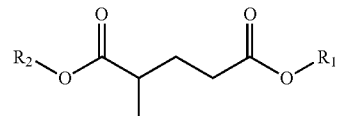
24. The composition of claim 18 wherein the at least one alkyldimethylamide is N,N-Dimethyldodecylamide.

25. The composition of claim 18 wherein the at least one dibasic ester is a blend comprising:

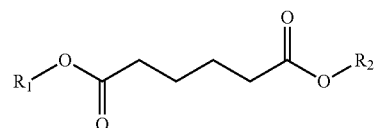
(i) a first dibasic ester of formula:



(ii) a second dibasic ester of formula:



(iii) optionally, a third dibasic ester of formula:



wherein R_1 and R_2 individually comprise a C_1 - C_8 alkyl group.

26. A method for preparing an agricultural composition comprising contacting the composition of claim 1 with a nitrogen-based fertilizer composition.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein the nitrogen-based fertilizer composition is in granular form.

28. The method of claim 26 wherein the nitrogen-based fertilizer composition is in substantially liquid form.

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