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5 **main industrial products**
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From vegetable oils to polyurethanes: synthetic routes to polyols and main industrial products

Most of biobased polyols for polyurethanes are synthesized from vegetable oils. In a first part, the present review goes into details of these different synthetic routes to obtain polyols. Firstly, olefinic functionalities of triglycerides could easily be epoxidized, leading to reactive epoxide groups. Secondly, triglycerides double bonds could undergo a wide range of reaction to yield polyols. Finally, the carbonyl group could also be used as a reactive group to yield various polyols. In a second part, the present review is dedicated to the commercial biobased polyols, and, based on the patent literature; focus on the industrial synthetic routes.

Keywords: vegetable oils; biobased polyols; polyurethanes; epoxidized vegetable oils; commercial polyols; oxidation

Introduction

Uncertainty in terms of price and availability of petroleum, in addition to global political and institutional tendencies toward the principles of sustainable development, urge chemical industry to a sustainable chemistry and particularly the use of renewable resources in order to synthesize biobased chemicals and products. A biobased product is a product synthesized from renewable resources (vegetal, animal or fungal) but doesn't mean that it is a biodegradable material. Biodegradability is a special functionality conferred to a material, biobased or not, and biobased sourcing does not entail biodegradability. Biobased sourcing could be measured by renewable carbon content owing to D6866ASTM standards. The use of renewable resources for chemical synthesis results in reduction of environmental impacts such as non-renewable resources consumptions and greenhouse gas emission. But hazards of chemicals should also be taken into account in order to reduce human toxicity and eco-toxicity impacts. Indeed, it is not sufficient to synthesize exactly the same chemicals from renewable

resources, even if they are harmful. Biobased chemicals could also be very dangerous. New processes have to be developed to replace hazardous reactives by harmless, biobased ones. Among this new developments, we report some polyamides, such as polyamide 11 synthesized from castor oil by Arkema Group under the brand name Rilsan¹, biofuels and polyols. Polyols represent increasing industrial developments in various applications and particularly in polyurethanes.

Polyurethanes (PUs), having a relatively short history, of slightly more than 70 years, became one of the most dynamic groups of polymers, exhibiting versatile properties suitable for use in practically all the fields of polymer applications - foams, elastomers, thermoplastics, thermorigids, adhesives, coatings, sealants, fibers and so on. With a global production of 14Mt in 2006, PUs are the 6th most widely used polymer². Additionally, they are used in some specialty applications such as biomedical surgery. PUs are obtained by the reaction of an oligomeric polyol (low molecular weight polymer with terminal hydroxyl groups) and a diisocyanate (or polyisocyanate) (Scheme 1). All these raw materials come from petroleum but recently, chemical industry has paid intensive interest to the production of biobased polyols, mainly synthesized from vegetable oils³⁻⁵.

Insert Scheme 1: Polyurethane synthesis from diol and diisocyanate

Indeed, most of polyols currently used for polyurethanes synthesis are polyether polyols (75%), resulting from the reaction between a “starter” polyol and an alkylene oxide, both petrobased. Other polyols used for polyurethanes synthesis are polyesters polyols (25%), obtained by step growth polycondensation between dicarboxylic acid and polyol in excess⁶. A first approach to increase the renewable content of polyurethanes consists in replacing the “starter” polyol by a biobased polyol from saccharides (sorbitol, sucrose) for the synthesis of partially biobased polyether polyols

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3 (30% renewable carbon). However, it results in low renewable content polyurethanes
4
5 (around 8%). Therefore it is more interesting to work on prepolymers that account for
6
7 higher percentage of renewable content. Polyether polyol could also be obtained by
8
9 polycondensation of propane-1,3-diol coming from glycerin. Furthermore, biobased
10
11 polyester polyols generally result from condensation of biobased dicarboxylic acids
12
13 such as adipic or succinic acid with biobased polyols (propane-1,3-diol).
14
15

16 Finally, another approach to obtain biobased polyols consists in the use of
17
18 natural oils (vegetable or animal) i.e. the most abundant and cheapest renewable organic
19
20 resources⁷.
21
22

23
24 **Insert Scheme 2:** Triglyceride formula with R0, R1 and R3 aliphatic chains of fatty
25
26 acids
27

28 Vegetable oils are coming from various plants (soybean, palm, rapeseed...) and
29
30 contain mainly triglycerides molecules where the three hydroxyl functions of glycerin
31
32 are esterified with fatty acids (Scheme 2). These fatty acids could be saturated – with
33
34 non reactive aliphatic chains (stearic or palmitic acids...) or unsaturated – with aliphatic
35
36 chains bearing double bonds (oleic, linoleic, linolenic, ricinoleic acids...). These natural
37
38 oils, and particularly unsaturated ones, are very interesting since various reactions could
39
40 be performed from their different groups in order to obtain biobased polyols, enabling
41
42 reactions with diisocyanates to get polyurethanes.
43
44
45

46 Fundamental research has investigated vegetable oils functionalization for
47
48 several years and several reviews were published⁷⁻¹⁹. However, none of these review
49
50 report so far current industrial applications of depicted methods, patented processes and
51
52 synthesized biobased polyols. Therefore general presentation of vegetable oil
53
54 functionalization reaction is reported in part A of this review, whereas the industrial
55
56 state of the art of industrial processes and products is reported in part B.
57
58
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Part A: synthetic routes from vegetable oils to polyols

Chemistry routes followed to functionalize vegetable oils are extremely various and are based on several reactions. In order to summarize these routes, we reported the main reactions discussed in this review (Table 1).

Insert Table 1: Mains reactions used on vegetable oils

In order to facilitate reading reaction schemes reported in this review, triglycerides were presented owing to formula of Scheme 3, with aliphatic chain R_0 corresponding to oleic acid (one double bond between carbons 9 and 10). R_1 and R_2 chains could correspond to a fatty acid mono- or poly- unsaturated or non saturated.

Insert Scheme 3: Triglyceride formula with R_0 chain corresponding to oleic acid

I. Routes from epoxidized vegetable oils

Epoxidized soybean oil could be used in addition to other commercial polyols in polyurethanes formulation²⁰. Epoxide group are particularly interesting since after nucleophilic attack, they lead to various molecules owing to the nature of nucleophiles. The first route reported to functionalize triglycerides processes in two steps: epoxidation of double bonds of unsaturated fatty acids (reaction A, Table 1) followed by nucleophilic ring opening of epoxide group (reaction B, Table 1). Thus one or more alcohol functions (owing to nucleophiles) can be added onto the fatty acid aliphatic chain.

I.1. Double bonds epoxidation

Vegetable oils can be epoxidized (reaction A, Table 1), leading to interesting building blocks for biobased chemistry²¹. The most currently used method to epoxidize vegetable oil is based on peracetic acid formed in situ from reaction between acetic acid

1
2
3 and hydrogen peroxide, with ion-exchange resin catalyst, at 60°C in toluene, during 12h
4 (Scheme 4). Double bond conversion into epoxide functions can be quantitative ²².
5
6
7 Vegetable oils can also be epoxidized by micro-waves. This interesting process leads to
8
9 yields higher than 90% within 5mn ²³. Enzymatic epoxidation of vegetable oils were
10
11 also reported ²⁴⁻²⁶ but is not detailed in this review.
12

13
14
15 **Insert Scheme 4:** Synthesis of epoxidized triglycerides
16

17 18 *I.2. Epoxide ring opening in situ*

19
20 Epoxide ring opening can be performed *in situ*, by sulfuric acid and water at 65°C
21 (Scheme 5). In a first step, double bonds are epoxidized (reaction A, Table 1), then
22 epoxide groups are converted in vicinal secondary alcohol ²⁷⁻²⁹ (reaction B, Table 1
23 where NuH is water). This simple method yields hydroxylated vegetable oil ³⁰⁻³⁵. A
24
25 method wit organometallic catalyst was also reported ³⁶.
26
27
28
29
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31

32
33 **Insert Scheme 5:** *In situ* triglyceride epoxide ring opening
34
35

36 37 *I.3. Conversion of epoxide groups by monofunctional reagents*

38 Alcoholysis of epoxidized vegetable oils with mono-alcohol and an acid catalyst
39 also leads to polyols with secondary alcohols (reaction B, Table 1 where NuH is a
40 mono-alcohol). Methanol is often used (Scheme 6), at refluxing temperature, with
41 concentrated sulfuric acid ³⁷⁻³⁹ or p-toluenesulfonic acid ⁴⁰ as catalyst. Following the
42
43 same protocol, other alcohols, such as 2-Ethyl-1-hexanol, are used ^{41,42}.
44
45
46
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50
51 **Insert Scheme 6:** Triglycerides epoxide ring opening by methanol
52

53 For recent years, the most used epoxide ring opening reaction consists in a reaction with
54 methanol (or other mono-alcohol), in water, with fluoroboric acid catalyst (Scheme 6).
55
56 After heating 30 min between 50 and 65°C (refluxing temperature for methanol)
57
58
59
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1
2
3 reaction yield reaches around 80%^{4, 22, 43-48}. The obtained polyester polyol could thus
4
5 react with diisocyanates to lead to polyurethanes, particularly in aqueous cationic
6
7 dispersion for polyurethane films casting with interesting stretching properties⁴⁹.
8

9
10 The epoxidation of triolein after metathesis reaction (reaction M, Table 1) is an
11
12 interesting example. Epoxide groups are ring opened by methanol in presence of
13
14 fluoroboric acid. This three steps reaction leads to terminal hydroxyl groups that could
15
16 react with diisocyanates to yield polyurethanes with short dangling chains²² (Scheme
17
18 7).
19

20
21 **Insert Scheme 7:** Synthesis of primary terminal alcohols from triolein for polyurethanes
22
23 formulation
24

25
26 The use of heterogeneous catalysts was reported for alcoholysis of epoxidized vegetable
27
28 oils, such as activated clay⁵⁰ or ion-exchange resins⁵¹.
29

30
31 Epoxide ring opening polymerization of epoxidized methyl oleate was also
32
33 reported in presence of HSbF₆. Polymerization is followed by partial reduction of esters
34
35 (Scheme 8), yielding to alcohol functions⁵². This original method allows obtaining
36
37 polyether polyols with interesting functionality comprised between 2 and 5 for
38
39 polyurethane formulation.
40
41

42
43 **Insert Scheme 8:** Epoxide ring opening polymerization of epoxidized methyl oleate
44
45

46
47 Another method used a thiol as nucleophile instead of alcohol⁵³⁻⁵⁵ (reaction B,
48
49 Table 1). Thus reaction of triglycerides with butane-1-thiol was reported at 45°C, during
50
51 1h under nitrogen with perchloric acid catalyst (Scheme 9)⁵⁴.
52

53
54 **Insert Scheme 9:** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening with butane-1-thiol
55

56
57 A secondary amine could also be used as nucleophile (reaction B, Table 1).
58
59 Thus, diethylamine was used for epoxide ring opening of triglycerides with zinc
60

1
2
3 chloride, at 80°C, during 4h⁵⁶ (Scheme 10). In this study, choice of amine, catalyst and
4
5 synthesis parameters were optimized in order to favour epoxide ring opening reaction
6
7 instead of amide formation (reaction J, Table 1). Indeed, reaction of amines with
8
9 triglycerides esters may compete epoxide ring opening.
10

11
12 **Insert Scheme 10 :** Oxirane ring opening with diethylamine

13
14 Reactions with halogen reagents such as HCl or HBr were also reported⁵⁷⁻⁶⁰.
15
16 Brominated and chlorinated polyols exhibit higher densities and viscosities than the
17
18 methoxylated or hydrogenated ones. Epoxide ring opening could also be performed by
19
20 reaction with carboxylic acid (reaction B, Table 1), such as fatty acid⁶¹, acetic acid⁶²,
21
22 cinnamic acid⁶³, acrylic acid⁶⁴ (Scheme 11), lactic acid⁵, levulinic acid⁶⁵ or
23
24 anhydrides^{33, 66}. These reactions lead to saturated polyester polyols with improved
25
26 resistance towards oxidation and interesting antiwear properties for lubricating
27
28 applications. Similarly, epoxidized fatty ester react with carboxylic acid to yield stearates
29
30 with hydroxyl and ester functions on both 9th or 10th carbons of aliphatic chain⁶⁷.
31
32 Propionic, levulinic, hexanoic or octanoic are the most currently used carboxylic acids
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39 **Insert Scheme 11 :** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening with acrylic acid

41
42 *1.4. Hydrogenation of epoxide groups*

43
44 Epoxide groups can also be directly hydrogenated (reaction C, Table 1) from
45
46 dihydrogene addition with Raney nickel catalyst (Scheme 12). In that case, the obtained
47
48 triglycerides exhibit only secondary hydroxyl functions^{57, 58, 70}.
49

50
51 **Insert Scheme 12:** Direct hydrogenation of triglyceride epoxides

52
53 Triglycerides with secondary hydroxyl functions were used for polyurethane
54
55 synthesis³. However, considering the higher reactivity of primary alcohols towards
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3 isocyanates, it is more interesting to functionalize triglycerides with polyfunctional
4
5 reactants in order to insert primary hydroxyl functions on triglycerides chains.
6
7

8 9 *1.5. Conversion of epoxide groups by polyfunctional reagents*

10 Diol could be used as nucleophile for epoxide ring opening in order to insert at least
11
12 both primary and secondary hydroxyl functions on each epoxide group of triglyceride
13
14 (reaction B). Literature reports the reaction with ethan-1,2-diol (Scheme 13). This
15
16 reaction is performed with concentrated sulfuric acid at 100°C^{38, 71}, with
17
18 tetrafluoroboric acid at 50°C to 95°C in 2h⁷²⁻⁷⁴ or with a diethylether-trifluoride borate
19
20 complex between 60°C and 100°C⁷⁵.
21
22

23 24 **Insert Scheme 13:** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening by ethan-1,2-diol

25
26 Various polyols were also described in order to insert three or more hydroxyl
27
28 functions per epoxide group with two or more primary hydroxyl functions⁷⁶. Reactions
29
30 were reported with diethanolamine (2,2'-iminodiethanol), or triethanolamine (2,2',2"-
31
32 nitrilotriethanol), with sulfuric acid at 200°C during 2-4h, or with LiOH catalyst at
33
34 150°C⁷⁷. However, several issues are raised when using polyfunctional molecules⁷⁸:
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36

- 37
38 • A side-reaction of oligomerization occurs between triglycerides bearing primary
39
40 hydroxyl functions and epoxidized triglycerides. This oligomerization is favored
41
42 by high catalyst concentration and low alcohol concentration;
- 43
44 • Side reactions involving ester groups of triglycerides (reaction I, J, Table 1) are
45
46 competitive to epoxide ring opening reactions.
47
48

49
50 The use of different temperatures (ranging from 110°C to 180°C) as well as
51
52 different reaction times (ranging from 5 to 7h) lead to various mixtures of fatty amide
53
54 polyols and glycerin, resulting from the amidification reaction, and amine diols,
55
56 obtained from oxirane ring opening reaction (Scheme 14). It was demonstrated that
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3 epoxide ring opening by diethanolamine is favored by using both high temperature
4
5 (~180°C) and long reaction time (~7h) ⁷⁹.
6

7 **Insert Scheme 14:** Competitive reactions occurring during triglyceride amidification by
8 diethanolamine
9

10
11 A patent ⁸⁰ reports a two steps process to synthesize polyols from vegetable oils.
12 In a first step, vegetable oil is epoxidized by H₂O₂ in acidic conditions. In a second step,
13 epoxide ring opening occurs with polyols or alcoholamines. More than 80% of epoxide
14 groups are converted into primary or secondary hydroxyl functions. The obtained
15 product is a mix of polyesters and polyether polyols, resulting from partial
16 transesterification of triglycerides (reaction I, Table 1) and epoxide ring opening
17 (reaction B, Table 1), respectively.
18
19

20
21 Alcanolamides were also synthesized directly from laurel oil (45% of saturated
22 fatty acids) by reaction with ethanolamine (2-aminoethanol) at room temperature with
23 sodium methoxide catalyst ⁸¹. The same catalyst was used to synthesize
24 diethanolamides from hydroxyl methyl oleate ⁸². Polyols polyamines were also
25 synthesized from epoxidized vegetable oils by reaction with a mixture of amines or
26 alcoholamines at temperatures between 100°C and 200°C. Glycerin co-produced was
27 distilled and epoxidized fatty amides were obtained ^{79, 83, 84}. These products were
28 reacted with diisocyanates to yield crosslinked polyurethanes.
29
30

31
32 A study reports the synthesis of polyols from tallow by reaction with
33 trimethylolpropane (2-(hydroxymethyl)-2-ethylpropane-1,3-diol) in the presence of acid
34 or basic catalyst ⁸⁵. Oxirane ring opening by polyol is favored by an acid catalyst such
35 as p-toluenesulfonic acid (reaction B, Table 1), whereas a basic catalyst such as sodium
36 methoxide favors transesterification of ester group (reaction I, Table 1).
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3 Finally, an hydroxyl-acid such as lactic acid (Scheme 15) is also able to graft
4 hydroxyl groups onto epoxidized vegetable oils. The reaction was performed at 90°C
5 under nitrogen during 6h, leading to an epoxide conversion around 70%⁵.
6
7
8
9

10
11
12 **Insert Scheme 15:** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening with lactic acid

13
14 Finally, epoxide ring opening by difunctional nucleophile yields polyols with
15 higher functionality. Polyols systematically exhibit secondary hydroxyl groups and may
16 also bear primary hydroxyl groups from extra function of nucleophile.
17
18
19

20 21 22 *I.6. Epoxide groups carbonatation*

23 Direct carbonatation of epoxidized soybean oil was also reported (reaction O, Table 1)
24 ⁸⁶⁻⁸⁸. In a second step, polyols are synthesized by ring opening with ethanolamine
25 (Scheme 16).
26
27
28
29

30
31 **Insert Scheme 16:** Polyols synthesis from carbonated oil

32 It is to be noted that this reaction leads to carbonated oils that are able to react
33 with polyamines to give interesting nonisocyanate polyurethanes ^{89, 90}. The different
34 methods to functionalize epoxidized vegetable oils are given in Scheme 17.
35
36
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40 **Insert Scheme 17:** Summary of most common functionalizations on epoxidized vegetable oils

41 42 *II. Double bonds oxidation to alcohols*

43
44 The synthesis of polyols from vegetable oils could also be carried out directly by
45 oxidation of double bonds. Various reactions of direct oxidation reaction are reported.
46
47
48
49

50 51 *II.1. Ozonolysis-hydrogenation process*

52 Oxidative cleavage of a double bond by ozone (reaction D, Table 1) leads to aldehyde
53 group ⁹¹. Therefore, the application of this reaction to an unsaturated vegetable oil
54 yields a maximum of three aldehyde functions per triglyceride molecule (one terminal
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3 aldehyde on each fatty acid chain). A following reaction of reduction of aldehyde
4
5 functions into primary alcohols leads to a polyol with a maximum of three hydroxyl
6
7 functions (reaction H, Table 1).
8

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10 Ozonolysis was performed on soybean oil, rapeseed oil or synthetic triglycerides
11
12 yielded polyols with primary hydroxyl groups (Scheme 18). Oxidative cleavage of oleic
13
14 acid by ozone into azelaic (nonanedioic) and pelargonic (nonanoic) acids is the most
15
16 important industrial application of ozonolysis ²⁵.
17

18 **Insert Scheme 18:** Ozonolysis of unsaturated triglycerides leading to terminal primary
19
20 hydroxyl functions
21

22
23 Several ozonolysis methods were reported. Ozonolysis could be performed in a
24
25 mixture of solvents such as methanol and dichloromethane, with sodium borohydride ⁹².
26
27 ⁹³. Another method reports ozonolysis in water, followed by hydrogenation in
28
29 tetrahydrofuran with Raney nickel ⁹⁴. The reaction in ethyl acetate with zinc powder
30
31 yielded polyols with highest hydroxyl functionality ⁹⁵. The ozonolysis with CaCO₃ was
32
33 also reported on soybean oil in the presence of ethylene glycol. The diol was added to
34
35 terminal carbons through an ester covalent bond, leading to a mixture of polyester
36
37 polyols ⁹¹.
38
39
40

41 *II.2. Double bonds oxidation into peroxides and reduction into alcohols*

42
43 Air oxidation of unsaturated vegetable oils leads to triglycerides with hydroxyl
44
45 functions and double bonds ⁹⁶⁻⁹⁸. Oxidation may also yield vegetable oil derivatives
46
47 with enone groups ¹⁸ (Scheme 19). Oxidative methods of vegetable oils are extensively
48
49 reported in the review of Köckritz and Martin ⁹⁹. Double bonds were also oxidized
50
51 (reaction G, Table 1) into allyl hydroperoxides, which were reduced in a second step
52
53 into secondary hydroxyl functions (reaction H, Table 1).
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3 **Insert Scheme 19:** Allyl hydroperoxides synthesis then converted into enone groups or reduced
4 into secondary alcohols
5

6
7 Reaction is performed into a photoreactor equipped with a sodium vapor lamp,
8 under oxygen flow, with thiamine pyrophosphate (TPP) and dichloromethane.
9 Hydroperoxide compound is formed after 4h of irradiation. Then reduction is performed
10 with sodium borohydride in methanol at 0°C. Then, catalytic hydrogenation is
11 performed on platin/carbon (Pt/C) in ethyl acetate solvent during 3h.
12
13
14
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18 19 *II.3. Hydroformylation*

20 The hydroformylation of vegetable oils (reaction E, Table 1) leads to aldehyde functions
21 that can be hydrogenated to yield primary alcohols ⁸ (Scheme 20). Hydroformylation
22 step was performed with a rhodium catalyst ^{100, 101}, such as rhodium triphenylphosphine
23 complex ^{82, 102} or rhodium dicarbonyl acetylacetonate ¹⁰³, at 110°C, under carbon
24 monoxide and hydrogen flow. Hydroformylation was also catalyzed by cobalt complex
25 ¹⁰⁰, but yielded lower conversion (67% instead of 95%), resulting in polyurethanes with
26 lower mechanical properties. The hydrogenation step (reaction N, Table 1) is generally
27 realized under hydrogen flow with Raney nickel ¹⁰¹⁻¹⁰³. The obtained polyols are
28 directly used in polyurethane synthesis ¹⁰³ or are functionalized by further reactions
29 such as esterification ¹⁰⁴. Hydroformylation followed by hydrogenation was also
30 performed on unsaturated fatty acids or esters ¹⁰⁵. Noteworthy, acetalization of the
31 aldehyde function leads to polyacetals ¹⁰⁶.
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48 **Insert Scheme 20:** Hydroformylation followed by reduction on unsaturated triglyceride
49

50 The hydroformylation route, adding a carbon atom on the chain, leads to
51 primary hydroxyl functions compared to epoxide ring opening route that leads to a
52 polyol with a mixture of primary and secondary hydroxyl functions.
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3 Hydroaminomethylation of fatty esters with various amines was also reported,
4 particularly with valinol, yielding the insertion of secondary amine and primary alcohol
5 on the chain (Scheme 21)¹⁰⁷.
6
7

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9
10 **Insert Scheme 21:** Hydroaminomethylation of ethyl oleate by valinol (dioxane, 140°C, 20h,
11 rhodium complex catalyst, yield 95%)
12

13
14 This reaction proceeds in three steps through hydroformylation (reaction E,
15 Table 1) followed by condensation of aldehyde function with primary or secondary
16 amine, and then hydrogenation (reaction N, Table 1) yielding secondary or tertiary
17 amine.
18
19
20
21

22 23 24 *II.4. Fatty acids dimerization*

25
26 Dimerization of fatty acids is a complex reaction realized at high temperature.
27 The catalysts used are homogeneous such as ionic salts of alkali metals or
28 heterogeneous (most currently used) such as clays (montmorillonite or bentonite) or
29 aluminosilicates¹⁰⁸. The synthesized dimers are reduced (reaction H, Table 1) to yield
30 fatty diols dimers (Scheme 22). Several mechanisms of dimerization were reported,
31 owing to used fatty acids.
32
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38

39 **Insert Scheme 22:** Fatty acid dimer (left hand) and fatty diol dimer (right hand)

40
41 Concerning linoleic acid, reaction proceeds as follows (Scheme 23): a
42 conjugated linoleic acid molecule undergo a Diels-Alder reaction (reaction K, Table 1)
43 with another linoleic acid molecule, yielding a cyclohexene adduct¹⁶. Conjugated
44 linoleic acid is obtained from isomerization of linoleic acid¹⁰⁹⁻¹¹³ or by extraction and
45 isolation from some natural oils.
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 **Insert Scheme 23 :** Dimerization reaction of conjugated linoleic acid

53
54 Concerning oleic acid, dimerization is also possible but proceeds through a
55 different mechanism. Reaction occurs with clay catalyst through protonation of double
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 bond. This protonated molecule reacts with another molecule of oleic acid to dimerize
4
5 (Scheme 24).
6

7 **Insert Scheme 24:** Dimerization reaction of oleic acid
8

9
10 Fatty acid dimers can further be reduced into fatty diol dimers (reaction H) in order to
11
12 confer high hydrophobic, stretching and chemical stability properties to polyurethane
13
14 synthesized thereof. Diels-Alder reaction with unsaturated conjugated vegetable oils
15
16 and dienophiles was extensively studied and is industrially performed with maleic
17
18 anhydride (furan-2,5-dione). Indeed, with Lewis acid such as boron trichloride or
19
20 stannous tetrachloride and with catalytic quantity of iodine, it is possible to obtain
21
22 adducts even at low temperature ²⁵. Metal triflates are also interesting catalysts for the
23
24 reaction of methyl conjugate with butanone, leading to cyclic product with yield
25
26 higher than 80% ¹¹⁴. Moreover, oligomerization and polymerization of soybean oil with
27
28 diethyl diazenedicarboxylate at room temperature through Diels-Alder reaction was
29
30 depicted ¹¹⁵.
31
32

33
34 Furthermore, cyclic-trimerization of fatty acids was also reported, yielding an
35
36 aromatic triol with terminal primary hydroxyl functions (Scheme 25) ¹¹⁶. This synthetic
37
38 pathway for fatty triols is one of the most interesting since it leads to aromatic
39
40 molecules from renewable resources ²⁵.
41
42

43 **Insert Scheme 25:** Aromatic triols synthesis from (a) methyl-9-octadecenoate and (b) methyl-
44
45 10-undecenoate
46
47

48 *II.5. Thiol-ene coupling*

49

50 The double bonds of vegetable oils are electron-rich, which allows radical addition of
51
52 various molecules (Scheme 26) ¹¹⁷. Thus, thiol-ene coupling (reaction F, Table 1) is an
53
54 interesting functionalization method.
55

56
57 **Insert Scheme 26:** Mechanism of thiol-ene coupling
58
59
60

1
2
3 The literature contains many references to reactions of fats with thiols¹¹⁸. Thiol
4 addition is particularly interesting since it may proceed through a photoreaction^{117, 119-}
5
6
7¹²². Moreover, thiol-ene coupling is poorly sensitive to oxygen and it was evidenced that
8
9 photoinitiators are not required. This reaction was notably employed to improve anti-
10 wear properties of vegetable oils, directly used after thiol-ene coupling^{53, 54, 123} or after
11 grafting onto metallic surfaces pre-treated with mercaptosilanes^{124, 125}. Several works
12 studied oligomerization¹¹⁹ (Scheme 27) or cross-linking¹²⁶ reactions with
13 polyfunctional thiols.

20
21 **Insert Scheme 27:** Fatty ester trimerization by thiol-ene coupling

22
23 Recently, a study reported the synthesis of telechelic alcohols from allyl 10-
24 undecenoate by thiol-ene coupling with mercaptoethanol¹²⁷. Another work used either
25 mercaptoethanol or 1-thioglycerol to functionalize methyl undecenoate. The resulting
26 monomers were polymerized to yield polyesters with molecular weights ranging from
27 4.000 to 10.000 g/mol¹²⁸. This technique was also applied to the synthesis of di/tri-
28 carboxylic acids used as polyanhydride precursors¹²⁹. The thiol-ene functionalization
29 was also carried out onto polyoxazoline to yield polyols with controlled molecular
30 weight and hydroxyl content¹³⁰ (Scheme 28).

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40
41 **Insert Scheme 28:** Synthesis of the poly-2-oxazoline polyols from 10-undecenoic and decanoic
42 acid

43
44 A study reported the thiol-ene coupling of 2-mercaptoethanol (2-sulfanylethan-
45 1-ol) directly on unsaturated triglycerides to produce interestingly fatty polyols suitable
46 for polyurethane synthesis. In that case, thiol-ene coupling leads in one step to polyols
47 with primary alcohols. This study detailed side-reactions that occurred, leading to
48 various by-products. The mixture of obtained products was directly used in
49 polyurethane synthesis without any purification, since most of by-products are
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1
2
3 hydroxyl-functionalized and react advantageously with diisocyanate molecules (Scheme
4
5 29)¹³¹.

6
7 **Insert Scheme 29:** Products and by-products of thiol-ene coupling of 2-mercaptoethanol on
8
9 fatty acid

10
11 The thiol-ene coupling was also applied to synthesize various polyfunctional
12 precursors suitable for polycondensation polymerization ¹³², for instance pseudo
13 telechelic diols from fatty methyl esters and mercaptoethanol ^{133, 134}, and polyamines
14 from grapeseed oil and cysteamine¹³⁵.

21 22 *II.6. Electrophilic additions*

23
24 Electrophilic additions are generated from a Lewis acid. Therefore,
25 formaldehyde (methanal) addition onto unsaturated fatty acids yields hydroxyl-
26 carboxylic acids (Scheme 30) ^{25, 136}. Friedel-Crafts acylation is also an interesting
27 method to functionalize fatty acids. Indeed, a study reports Friedel-Crafts acylation of
28 oleic acid by acyl chloride with EtAlCl₂ yielding β,γ -unsaturated oxocarboxylic acid.
29
30
31
32

33
34 **Insert Scheme 30:** Formaldehyde addition onto fatty acid

35
36
37 Moreover acylation of undecylenic acid by acyl chlorides or cyclic anhydrides
38 yields unsaturated ketones with carboxylic or hydroxyl terminal group, respectively
39 (Scheme 31) ¹³⁶.

40
41
42 **Insert Scheme 31:** Undecylenic acid acylation

43
44
45 Direct alkylation of vegetable oils with phenol in the presence of acid catalysts
46 was also investigated ¹³⁷. According to a recent study, side reactions take place during
47 this Friedel-Craft alkylation, such as esterification, oligomerization and Diels Alder
48 reactions. The aromatic-aliphatic polyol mixture obtained was nevertheless used for
49 polyurethane synthesis.
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II.7. Metathesis and alkoxy carbonylation

The olefin metathesis of natural vegetable oils is a selective catalytic reaction that can efficiently convert oleochemicals into valuable products^{138, 139}. This reaction provides a convenient route to unsaturated diesters which can be reduced to diols.

A recent study presents the isomerizing alkoxy carbonylation of unsaturated fatty acid esters, yielding C19 and C23 diesters. The diesters have been reduced to diols (reaction H, Table 1) using ruthenium as the catalyst in high yield and purity (>99%)¹⁴⁰. Polyesters and polyamides were synthesized from the obtained precursors (Scheme 32).

Insert Scheme 32: Linear diols from unsaturated fatty esters alkoxy carbonylation

Several functionalization reactions of fatty acids or esters, some of them being advantageously solvent-free, are also reported in the reviewing papers of Schneider²⁵,¹⁴¹ or Metzger and al.¹⁴². They are summarized on Scheme 33.

Insert Scheme 33: Double bond modifications for the synthesis of polyols from vegetable oils and derivatives

III. Reactions of carbonyl group

The synthesis of polyols from vegetable oils could also be obtained by reaction on ester carbonyl group. Various reactions on carbonyl group of vegetable oils are reported.

III.1. Transesterification

The choice of the catalyst is the major concern for the transesterification of fatty esters. Bondioli deeply investigated these catalytic reactions and sum up his results in an interesting review¹⁴³. Firstly, transesterification could be catalyzed by homogeneous catalysts. Thus, transesterification reaction (reaction I, Table 1) is generally realized with alkali catalysts¹⁴⁴ such as sodium methoxyde, sodium or potassium hydroxyde.

1
2
3 The saponification side-reaction is the main drawback of these catalysts ¹⁴³. Hartman
4 reported significant information on different alkali catalysts such as their activity, their
5 solubility, and the saponification rate they entailed ¹⁴⁵. Even if acid catalysis leads to
6 slower reaction time, it is very useful for vegetable oils having a too high acid index ¹⁴⁶.
7
8 The most currently used acid catalyst for fatty acid esterification is concentrated sulfuric
9 acid ¹⁴⁷, due to a low price and high activity. Moreover, solid catalysts exhibit easier
10 work up and present lower corrosion toward reactors. However both drastic temperature
11 and higher pressure are generally required to reach high yields. These catalysts consist
12 in zeolites, metal oxides, composite materials and polysulfonic acids based on organic
13 materials such as glucose ¹⁴⁸. An interesting review compares these different
14 heterogeneous catalysts owing to their activity, selectivity and thermal stability ¹⁴⁹. On
15 account of these different parameters, zirconium sulfate was found to be one of the best
16 catalysts for biodiesel production. Recent works suggested the use of stannous chloride
17 for saturated and unsaturated fatty acids ethanolysis, reaching yields close to 90% at
18 temperature around 80°C ¹⁵⁰. This cheap catalyst is less corrosive than sulfuric acid and
19 could be re-used during several catalytic cycles. Another method ¹⁵¹ proposes cupric
20 acetate monohydrate in ethanol with hydrochloric acid, at room temperature, allowing
21 quantitative conversion in one hour.
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42 Beyond ethanol and methanol ^{152, 153}, a lot of different alcohols were used as
43 reagent for the transesterification of fatty esters, such as glycosylated starch ¹⁵⁴, 1,4-
44 butanediol ¹⁵⁵, a mix of PET/PEG ¹⁵⁶ (polyethyleneterephthalate/polyethyleneglycol), or
45 trimethylolpropane ¹⁵⁷, with various catalysts. Homogeneous ones produce a lot of side-
46 products with a low selectivity ¹⁵⁸, whereas heterogeneous ones give better results ^{153,}
47 ^{159, 160}. The use of glycerin is widespread (Scheme 34), it yields interestingly a mixture
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1
2
3 of mono and di-glycerides that could be directly formulated with diisocyanates with
4
5 chain extender and catalyst to lead to polyurethanes^{3, 158, 161, 162}.

6
7 **Insert Scheme 34:** Transesterification reaction of a triglyceride with glycerin

8
9 Sodium methylate was reported¹⁶³ for transesterification reaction of fatty
10
11 methyl esters with trimethylolpropane, reaching 85% yield at 110°C under reduced
12
13 pressure. Enzymatic catalysts were also reported¹⁶³⁻¹⁶⁶ but are not detailed in this
14
15 review.
16
17

18 19 20 *III.2. Esterification*

21
22 In the case of high molecular weight alcohols, it is more interesting to perform a
23
24 direct esterification of fatty acids (Scheme 35), compared to transesterification, owing
25
26 to the relative volatility of water and alcohols.
27

28 **Insert Scheme 35:** Esterification reaction on fatty acid

29
30 Esterification reaction is generally performed at high temperature (above 200°C)
31
32 and under reduced pressure¹⁴³. The synthesis of polyols from ricinoleic acid and
33
34 ethylene glycol was reported¹⁶⁷ owing a process called fusion without catalyst, at high
35
36 temperature (230°C), in order to synthesize polyurethane adhesives. Either acid or basic
37
38 catalysis are useful for esterification reaction, but they both show some main
39
40 drawbacks, such as products coloration and salts formation, respectively. Two catalysts
41
42 are mainly used for the industrial synthesis of polyesters: stannous oxide and zinc
43
44 powder. Despite their advantages, they also present a disadvantage, i.e. the formation of
45
46 soluble salts, difficult to remove in esters produced.
47
48

49
50 Fatty acids of vegetable oils could also be polymerized in a two steps
51
52 esterification¹⁶⁸ (Scheme 36). In a first step, alcohol and carboxylic acids functions of
53
54 fatty acids are condensed through an esterification reaction. Then in a second step,
55
56 condensed fatty acids are esterified with polyglycerol. This reaction is initiated by a
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 polyol, a polyamine or an alcoholamine and is catalyzed by a titan complex or an
4
5 enzyme¹⁶⁹.
6

7 **Insert Scheme 36:** Self condensation of fatty acids
8
9

10 *III.3. Amidification*

11 Amidification is also an interesting functionalization reaction on vegetable oils (reaction
12
13 J, Table 1). Unlike transesterification between alcohols and esters, amidification is not
14
15 thermodynamically balanced.
16
17

18
19 Thus, amidification could be performed on fatty acids or esters of vegetable oils
20
21 with various amines¹⁷⁰⁻¹⁷³. Unsaturated vegetable oils could also react with an
22
23 alcoholamine and sodium ethoxide at 100°C, leading to an amide bearing hydroxyl
24
25 functions^{82, 174, 175}. Example is reported in scheme 37 with castor oil and diethanolamine
26
27 (2,2'-iminodiethanol). The use of alcoholamine with methyl esters was also reported¹⁷¹,
28
29 thus methyl-9-hydroxystearate and 2-aminoethanol were heated at 85°C for 22h with
30
31 potassium hydroxide to yield alcoholamines.
32
33

34
35 **Insert Scheme 37:** Synthesis of unsaturated amides by amidification/esterification
36
37

38 *III.4. Thioesterification*

39 Esterification could also proceed with a thiol function through thioesterification
40
41 reaction. In this case, a difunctional thiol reagent, such as 2-mercaptoethanol, could
42
43 functionalize vegetable oils, leading to fatty hydroxyl thioesters. A study reported this
44
45 reaction with 2-mercaptoethanol in isopropanol with sodium or potassium hydroxide¹⁷⁶
46
47 (Scheme 38) but did not mention neither esterification by alcohol, nor thiol-ene addition
48
49 onto double bonds, which is very surprising, considering the reaction conditions.
50
51
52

53
54 **Insert Scheme 38:** Thioesterification of triglyceride with 2-mercaptoethanol
55
56
57
58
59
60

III.5. Various reactions

III.5.1. *Fatty alcohols from fatty acids or esters.* The reduction of the carboxylic group of a fatty acid or ester by LiAlH_4 yields a fatty alcohol (reaction H, Table 1), without modifying the unsaturations of the aliphatic chain. These fatty alcohols can also be produced by hydrogenolysis of fatty acids, fatty methyl ester or triacylglycerols¹⁷⁷. Long chain fatty alcohols generally undergo ethoxylation or propoxylation reactions, leading to interesting surfactant properties (reaction L, Table 1). In a last step, alcohols react with chlorosulfonic acid or phosphoric anhydride to yield sulfates or phosphates surfactants, respectively¹⁷⁸ (Scheme 39).

Insert Scheme 39: Surfactant synthesis from fatty alcohols

III.5.2. *Lactones synthesis.* Oleic acid could also be converted into γ -stearolactone by reaction with perchloric acid at 110°C during 3h with a yield higher than 90% (Scheme 40). Reaction mechanism goes through reversible protonation of fatty acid double bonds, shifting and rearrangement of carbocation on chain until the carbonyl group attack. Furthermore, cyclization of methylundecanoate with manganese acetate also yields also a γ -lactone¹⁷⁹.

Insert Scheme 40 : Synthesis of γ -stearolactone

More reactive lactones such as δ -lactones, could also be synthesized from fatty acids bearing double bonds in position 4 or 5, such as 5-eicosenoic acid (20:1). These synthesized lactones could easily react with alcohols or amines to yield respectively hydroxyl esters or hydroxyl amides¹⁷⁸ (Scheme 41).

Insert Scheme 41: Synthesis of hydroxyesters or hydroxylamides from δ -lactones

Furthermore, polylactones could be synthesized in several steps. For example, methyl oleate, after ozonolysis, hydrogenation, saponification and hydrolysis leads to 9-hydroxynonanoic acid. This hydroxyl acid was finally converted into a lactone and then in polyanolactone^{180,181} (Scheme 42).

1
2
3 **Insert Scheme 42:** Synthesis of polynonanolactones

4
5 *III.5.3. AB monomers synthesis.* Recently, ricinoleic and oleic acids were used as
6
7 precursors for AB monomers synthesis leading to polyurethanes synthesis by direct
8
9 polycondensation^{182, 183} (Scheme 43). This multi-step process goes through an azidation
10
11 reaction with NaN₃ at 0°C for 1h. The next step consists of either a self condensation at
12
13 80°C for 24h, or by a transurethane reaction catalyzed by Ti(OBu)₄ at 130°C for 6h.

14
15 **Insert Scheme 43:** Synthesis of AB monomer for polyurethanes synthesis by direct
16
17 polycondensation

18
19
20 The carboxylic group of fatty compounds offers several ways to insert hydroxyl
21
22 functions onto triglycerides and fatty acids, as showed in scheme 44.

23
24 **Insert Scheme 44 :** Summary of various products obtained by functionalization of ester group
25
26 of vegetable oils and derivatives

27
28 To conclude, we reported in this part several methods to functionalize natural
29
30 oils into polyols, through double bonds or carbonyl group of triglycerides. The type of
31
32 alcohol, the functionality and the route followed for functionalization are crucial
33
34 parameters for the final properties of synthesized polyurethanes thereof.

35 36 37 38 **Part B: commercial polyols and industrial state of the art**

39
40 In this part, we focused on commercial polyols synthesized from renewable resources.
41
42 Therefore we have been interested in biobased polyols proposed by different industrial
43
44 companies.

45 46 47 48 ***I. Polyols from saccharides***

49
50 Several polyols are synthesized from various monosaccharides and derivatives, such as
51
52 glucose. Thus, DUPONT has proposed since 2006 CERENOL™, a polyol dedicated to
53
54 polyurethanes synthesis for elastomers and fibers. Dupont synthesized biobased 1,3-
55
56 propanediol (Scheme 45) from corn by glucose fermentation¹⁸⁴. CERENOL™ polyol, a
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 polytrimethylene ether glycol, is synthesized by step growth polymerization of 1,3-
4
5 propanediol with a homogeneous or heterogeneous catalyst, under reduced pressure and
6
7 at high temperature (around 200°C) ¹⁸⁵.
8

9
10 **Insert Scheme 45:** Summary of various products obtained from biomass

11 ROQUETTE proposes polyols for polyurethanes syntheses such as
12
13 NEOSORB® and POLYSORB®. NEOSORB® is a syrup solution of sorbitol. In the
14
15 POLYSORB® range, we find a syrup solution of maltitol and sorbitol and also an
16
17 isosorbide diol (Scheme 45). Sorbitol is coming from hydrogenation of glucose. The
18
19 sorbitol yields isosorbide with an acid catalyst. These polyols are bearing secondary
20
21 alcohol groups and they could react with isocyanates to yield polyurethanes. Generally,
22
23 these polyols are preferably used to synthesize polyols polyethers from alkylene oxide.
24
25
26
27

28 *II. Epoxidation of vegetable oils*

29
30 Most biobased polyols are synthesized from vegetable oils. And most of them are
31
32 synthesized from epoxidized vegetable oils.
33
34

35 Thus, JEFFADD™ B650 is a biobased polyol, exhibiting 65% of renewable
36
37 carbon. This polyol, commercialized since March 2010 by HUNTSMAN Company, is
38
39 dedicated to polyurethane synthesis for rigid foams, sprays, coatings, adhesives, mastics
40
41 and elastomers. This polyol is synthesized by the reaction of epoxidized soybean oil
42
43 bearing 2 to 6 epoxide groups per molecule with an alcohol amine at 120°C during 4
44
45 hours (reaction B where NuH is ethanolamine for instance). Alcohol amines react with
46
47 epoxide groups and yield a mixture of primary and secondary hydroxyl groups¹⁸⁶.
48
49 However, the amine could also react with ester functions of triglycerides by
50
51 amidification reaction, yielding shorter amide polyols (reaction J, Table 1).
52
53
54

55 BIOBASED TECHNOLOGIES developed a range of products: AGROL®
56
57 which is a biobased polyol from soybean oil. AGROL® polyols content of 96% of
58
59
60

1
2
3 renewable carbon, owing to ASTM 6866 standard. The number of hydroxyl group per
4
5 molecule varies from 2 to 7 owing to different products. AGROL® polyols are
6
7 synthesized from soybean oil in two steps. In the first step, double bonds of vegetable
8
9 oils are epoxidized with a peracid (reaction A, Table 1). Oxirane groups are then ring-
10
11 opened by the acid by-product of the first step¹⁸⁷ (reaction B, Table 1). AGROL®
12
13 DIAMOND polyol is prepared from AGROL® polyols by aminolysis of ester functions
14
15 of triglycerides by an alcohol amine (reaction J, Table 1)¹⁸⁸. This explains the high
16
17 hydroxyl index of DIAMOND polyols compared to other AGROL polyols (Table 2).
18
19

20
21 CARGILL has proposed since 2006 a biobased polyol from soybean oil,
22
23 BIOH®, with a content of renewable carbon higher than 95 % owing to ASTM 6866
24
25 standard. Polyurethane flexible foams elaborated with this polyol exhibit a content of
26
27 renewable carbon between 5% and 20%. This polyol is synthesized from vegetable oils
28
29 by epoxidation followed by epoxide ring opening by methanol in presence of
30
31 fluoroboric acid as catalyst (reaction B, Table 1 where NuH is CH₃OH)^{189,190}. Therefore
32
33 synthesized polyol bears only secondary alcohols functions on aliphatic chain of fatty
34
35 acid. Even if this structure is similar to castor oil, double bonds are absent from this
36
37 polyols which improve thermal stability. Two formulations of this polyol are proposed.
38
39

40
41 COGNIS, and now BASF, proposes an abundant range of biobased polyols from
42
43 vegetable oils and derivatives under the brand name SOVERMOL® for various
44
45 applications such as adhesives, binders, floor coatings, castings, electro potting... The
46
47 chemical route to yield these polyols is also based on epoxidation of vegetable oils
48
49 followed by ring-opening of epoxides by nucleophilic attack of an alcohol (reaction B,
50
51 Table 1 where NuH is CH₃OH for instance). Then, in a third step, hydroxylated oils
52
53 undergo transesterification with the same alcohol³⁷ (reaction I, Table 1).
54
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1
2
3 A large range of biobased products from vegetable oils is also proposed by
4 HOBUM OLEOCHEMICALS. This Company functionalizes vegetable oils such as
5 castor oil, linseed oil and soya bean oil, to synthesize polyols by epoxidation followed
6 by nucleophilic attack (reaction B, Table 1). Nucleophilic reagent could be water,
7 alcohol (mono or diol), alcoholamine or amine ¹⁹¹. These polyols are commercialized
8 under the brand name MERGINOL and are used for polyurethane synthesis for various
9 applications: foams, coatings, dispersions... There are two kinds of polyols in this range,
10 polyester polyols and polyether-polyester polyols.
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20
21 OLEON, owned by SOFIPROTEOL, commercialize three polyols under the
22 brand name RADIA® (formerly NOVENOL® at NOVANCE): two polyesters polyols
23 for soft polyurethane foams (RADIA® 7291 and 7292) and a polyether polyol for rigid
24 polyurethane foam (RADIA® 7293). These polyols are based on different vegetable
25 oils (sunflower, rapeseed, soya bean) and their renewable carbon content varies from
26 96% to 100%. Several patents of NOVANCE^{192, 193} describe the synthesis of polyols
27 from fatty acids or vegetable oils : double bonds of fatty acids or vegetable oils are
28 epoxidized by hydrogen peroxide with a metal catalyst (molybdenum or tungsten), then
29 the epoxides undergo nucleophilic attack by water ¹⁹⁴ (reaction B, Table 1 where NuH is
30 H₂O).
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43 BAYER develops a biobased polyurethane, BAYDUR® PUL 2500, showing
44 20% of renewable carbon and used in flexible and rigid polyurethane foams. It seems
45 that these polyols are synthesized from vegetable oils (preferably soybean oil) by
46 epoxidation followed by hydrogenation to lead secondary alcohols functions (reaction
47 C, Table 1). These alcohol functions are then ethoxylated or propoxylated by alkylene
48 oxide (reaction L, Table 1) with metal cyanide in order to lead to primary alcohol
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3 functions ¹⁹⁵. Another patent of BAYER describes alkoxylation of hydroxylated
4
5 vegetable oils, whatever the hydroxylation method ¹⁹⁶.
6

7 **Insert Table 2:** Properties of commercial polyols from vegetable oils epoxidation
8
9

10 *III. Various functionalization reactions of vegetable oils*

11 DOW CHEMICAL started the production of biobased Renuva™ polyol, synthesized
12 from soybean oil, used for flexible foams, coatings, adhesives, mastics and elastomers.
13 This polyol is synthesized in several steps. Firstly, soybean oil undergoes
14 transesterification with methanol (reaction I) to yield fatty acids methyl esters
15 (FAMES). In a second step, by hydroformylation followed by hydrogenation (reaction
16 E), double bonds of these FAMES are converted in hydroxyl groups. The hydroxyl
17 content depends on the number of double bonds in starting oil. In a third step, these
18 hydroxylated FAMES react with a polyols (such as propan-1,2,3-triol) or a polyamine
19 (such as 1,2-diaminoethane) with a catalyst during about 5 hours under vacuum ^{169, 197}
20 (reaction I or J, Table 1). Owing to recent information from Dow Europe, the
21 production of this polyol has been stopped due to a too high variability of fatty acids
22 double bonds composition. Therefore FAMES with different hydroxyl contents had to
23 be separated before polyols synthesis which entails a too high price for this process.
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41 Concerning BASF, this Company produces LUPRANOL® BALANCE 50, a
42 polyether polyol for rigid foams and mattress that partly comes from castor oil. And
43 now BASF develops Lupranol Balance 35, synthesized by hydroformylation (rhodium
44 or cobalt catalyst) followed by hydrogenation (nickel based catalyst) on castor oil
45 (reaction E, Table 1). This polyol is then etherified (reaction L, Table 1) with alkylene
46 oxide (ethylene or de propylene oxide) with double metal cyanide catalyst (Scheme 46).
47
48 Another polyol polyether is added for the elaboration of polyurethane foams ¹⁹⁸.
49
50
51
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57 **Insert Scheme 46:** Structure of Lupranol® Balance 50 polyol
58
59
60

1
2
3 The functionality of Lupranol is surprisingly claimed lower than 3, whereas the
4 process used by BASF could lead to around 6 hydroxyl groups per molecule. It seems
5 that secondary hydroxyl groups are considered as non reactive, not only towards
6 ethoxylation/propoxylation, but also towards polyurethanes synthesis.
7
8
9

10
11 COGNIS also proposes biobased polyols from fatty acid dimers, under the brand
12 name SOVERMOL®. The chemical route to yield these polyols is based on
13 dimerization fatty acids catalyzed by montmorillonite clay at 250°C (Scheme 24),
14 followed by reduction of carboxylic acid groups into alcohol functions ¹⁹⁹ (reaction H,
15 Table 1).
16
17
18
19
20
21
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23 The US Company URETHANE SOY SYSTEMS proposes biobased SOYOL
24 polyols from soybean oil used in various polyurethane applications: foams, sealing,
25 coatings... The process is based on transesterification of triglycerides with propan-
26 1,2,3-triol previously modified with saccharide (reaction I, Table 1) ²⁰⁰.
27
28
29
30
31

32 CRODA sells several biobased products such as PRIPOL™ fatty acids dimers
33 and PRIPLAST™ polyether polyols, with a renewable carbon content between 36% and
34 100% owing to the formulation. The chemical synthesis of fatty acids dimers was
35 described previously (Scheme 24) CRODA uses acid catalyst at high temperature ²⁰¹.
36 Diols dimers are obtained by reduction (H₂ with nickel) of carboxylic acid function of
37 fatty acids dimers ²⁰² (reaction H, Table 1). Noteworthy, no double bond remains in the
38 final diols.
39
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47 MITSUI patented the synthesis of biobased polyols for polyurethane by
48 transesterification of fatty acids with short polyols (reaction I, Table 1) followed by
49 ethoxylation or propoxylation of terminal hydroxyl groups ²⁰³ (reaction L, Table 1).
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54 **Table 3** : properties of commercial polyols from various reactions on vegetable oils
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CONCLUSION

This review shows that biobased polyols have an important place in the Polyurethanes industry. Indeed, most of biggest chemical groups have developed their own brand of biobased polyols, offering to users new various reactive polyols in order to increase renewable carbon content of final materials. In a first part, the present review goes into details of the different synthetic routes to obtain polyols from vegetable oils. Indeed, Part A describes several methods to graft hydroxyl functions onto vegetable oils and derivatives, owing to their epoxy groups (Scheme 17), double bond sites (Scheme 33) and/or carboxyl functions (Scheme 44).

In a second part, the present review is dedicated to the commercial biobased polyols, and, based on the patent literature; focus on the industrial synthetic routes. Indeed Part B sheds lights on the importance of biobased polyols in polyurethanes industry. The number of patents in this domain is one of the proofs of the main role of biobased polyols in industrial polyurethanes.

Among all these methods, epoxidation followed by epoxide ring opening remains the most currently used and patented method, due to the variety of usable nucleophiles in this reaction. Conversely, thiol-ene chemistry is not yet used at the industrial level despite the advantages reported in the first part. The use of biobased polyols for the manufacture of polyurethanes is a real positive point for the environmental impact of polymers. **It is all the more interesting to use biobased polyols in PU synthesis since polyols represent the major part of PU, generally between 60 to 70% in weight of PU.**

Vegetable oils and fats are very important resources for polyols. The vegetable oils with a worldwide production of around 150 million t/year (in 2009 – data from FAO), are used mainly in human food applications (75%). But the technical uses and particularly oleochemical industry are increasing. (13% is used in oleochemical

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3 industry). Vegetable oils lead to polyester polyols. And polyester polyols are the second
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5 most important group of oligopolyols for the production of polyurethanes. The
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7 production of polyester polyols, with a total worldwide production of around
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9 600kt/year, represents around 18% of the polyols used globally in polyurethanes.
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11 Moreover, about 60% of polyester polyols are produced in Europe²⁰⁴. Polyester polyols
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13 were the only polyols available to the polyurethanes industry at the beginning, but now,
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15 in spite of the leading position of polyethers in the total polyols usage in the
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17 polyurethane industry, polyester polyols have stable and specific practical applications
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19 due to some superior characteristics of the resulting polyurethanes²⁰⁴. Indeed, the
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21 superior characteristics of polyester polyol based polyurethanes are explained by a
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23 better crystalline structure in the urethane segment, compared to the majority of
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25 polyether polyols which are amorphous, due to the superior secondary forces between
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27 the polyester chains and also due to a superior thermal and fire resistance, compared to
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29 polyether polyol based polyurethanes. Polyesterbased polyurethanes (flexible foams,
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31 coatings), have a superior solvent resistance compared to the polyether-based
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33 polyurethanes²⁰⁵.

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38 Indeed, purity of triglycerides from vegetable oils could be discussed. But in a
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40 near future, new production units will be installed, for producing high-purity fatty esters
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42 and acids (such as Pivert in Compiègne, France), giving an easy industrial access to
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44 diols for linear PU based on chemical pathways depicted in this manuscript. And even if
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46 one of the limitations of polyester polyols consists of their sensitivity to hydrolysis, the
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48 the use of fatty alcohols to build the polyester structure, creates an extremely high
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50 hydrophobic environment alongside a low concentration of labile ester bonds and
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52 improves hydrolysis resistance.
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3 However, isocyanates are still used and are generally very harmful for human
4 health, particularly for people exposed during polyurethanes synthesis, and could entail
5 adverse health effects such as asthma, dermatitis, conjunctivitis and acute poisoning.
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7 Moreover, REACH regulation prevents the use of major isocyanates such as methylene
8 diphenyl diisocyanate MDI and toluene diisocyanate TDI²⁰⁶. Therefore the synthesis of
9 Polyurethanes from step growth polyaddition of dicyclocarbonates and diamines should
10 be favored. Thus, this old reaction is currently gaining a lot of attention as a substitution
11 route for the synthesis of Polyurethanes and will be industrialized in a next future.
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4 **Table 1:** Mains reactions used on vegetable oils

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6 **Table 2:** Properties of commercial polyols from vegetable oils epoxidation

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9 **Table 3:** properties of commercial polyols from various reactions on vegetable oils

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11 **Scheme 1:** Polyurethane synthesis from diol and diisocyanate

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13 **Scheme 2:** Triglyceride formula with R₀, R₁ and R₃ aliphatic chains of fatty acids

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16 **Scheme 3:** Triglyceride formula with R₀ chain corresponding to oleic acid

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19 **Scheme 4:** Synthesis of epoxidized triglycerides

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21 **Scheme 5:** *In situ* triglyceride epoxide ring opening

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23 **Scheme 6:** Triglycerides epoxide ring opening by methanol

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27 **Scheme 7:** Synthesis of primary terminal alcohols from triolein for polyurethanes
28 formulation

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31 **Scheme 8:** Epoxide ring opening polymerization of epoxidized methyl oleate

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33 **Scheme 9:** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening with butane-1-thiol

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36 **Scheme 10:** Oxirane ring opening with diethylamine

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39 **Scheme 11:** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening with acrylic acid

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42 **Scheme 12:** Direct hydrogenation of triglyceride epoxides

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45 **Scheme 13:** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening by ethan-1,2-diol

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48 **Scheme 14:** Competitive reactions occurring during triglyceride amidification by
49 diethanolamine

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52 **Scheme 15:** Triglyceride epoxide ring opening with lactic acid

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55 **Scheme 16:** Polyols synthesis from carbonated oil

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58 **Scheme 17:** Summary of most common functionalizations on epoxidized vegetable oils

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3 **Scheme 18:** Ozonolysis of unsaturated triglycerides leading to terminal primary
4 hydroxyl functions
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7 **Scheme 19:** Allyl hydroperoxides synthesis then converted into enone groups or
8 reduced into secondary alcohols
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11 **Scheme 20:** Hydroformylation followed by reduction on unsaturated triglyceride
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14 **Scheme 21:** Hydroaminomethylation of ethyl oleate by valinol (dioxane, 140°C, 20h,
15 rhodium complex catalyst, yield 95%)
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18 **Scheme 22:** Fatty acid dimer (left hand) and fatty diol dimer (right hand)
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21 **Scheme 23:** Dimerization reaction of conjugated linoleic acid
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24 **Scheme 24:** Dimerization reaction of oleic acid
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27 **Scheme 25:** Aromatic triols synthesis from (a) methyl-9-octadecenoate and (b) methyl-
28 10-undecenoate
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31 **Scheme 26:** Mechanism of thiol-ene coupling
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34 **Scheme 27:** Fatty ester trimerization by thiol-ene coupling
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37 **Scheme 28:** Synthesis of the poly-2-oxazoline polyols from 10-undecenoic and
38 decanoic acid
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41 **Scheme 29:** Products and by-products of thiol-ene coupling of 2-mercaptoethanol on
42 fatty acid
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44
45 **Scheme 30:** Formaldehyde addition onto fatty acid
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48 **Scheme 31:** Undecylenic acid acylation
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51 **Scheme 32:** Linear diols from unsaturated fatty esters alkoxycarbonylation
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54 **Scheme 33:** Double bond modifications for the synthesis of polyols from vegetable oils
55 and derivatives
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58 **Scheme 34:** Transesterification reaction of a triglyceride with glycerin
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3 **Scheme 35:** Esterification reaction on fatty acid
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5 **Scheme 36:** Self condensation of fatty acids
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8 **Scheme 37:** Synthesis of unsaturated amides by amidification/esterification
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10 **Scheme 38:** Thioesterification of triglyceride with 2-mercaptoethanol
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12 **Scheme 39:** Surfactant synthesis from fatty alcohols
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14 **Scheme 40:** Synthesis of γ -stearolactone
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17 **Scheme 41:** Synthesis of hydroxyesters or hydroxylamides from δ -lactones
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20 **Scheme 42:** Synthesis of polynonanolactones
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23 **Scheme 43:** Synthesis of AB monomer for polyurethanes synthesis by direct
24 polycondensation
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27 **Scheme 44:** Summary of various products obtained by functionalization of ester group
28 of vegetable oils and derivatives
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31 **Scheme 45:** Summary of various products obtained from biomass
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34 **Scheme 46:** Structure of Lupranol® Balance 50 polyol
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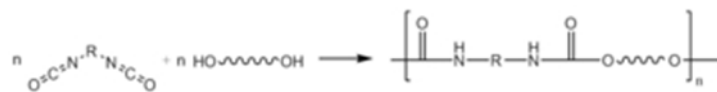
| Reaction | Name | Scheme |
|----------|----------------------------|--------|
| A | Epoxidation | |
| B | Epoxide ring opening | |
| C | Epoxides hydrogenation | |
| D | Ozonolysis - hydrogenation | |
| E | Hydroformylation | |
| F | Thiol-ene coupling | |
| G | Oxidation | |
| H | Reduction | |
| I | (Trans) esterification | |
| J | Amidification | |
| K | Diels Alder cyclization | |

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| L | Ethoxylation / propoxylation | $R_1OH \xrightarrow{\text{R-epoxide}} R_1\left(\text{O}-\text{CH}_2-\text{CH}(\text{OH})\right)_n \quad R = \text{H}, \text{CH}_3$ |
| M | Metathesis | $\begin{array}{c} R_1 & R_3 \\ & \backslash / \\ & \text{C} = \text{C} \\ & / \backslash \\ R_2 & R_4 \end{array} \xrightarrow{\text{ethylene, cat.}} \begin{array}{c} R_1 \\ \\ \text{C} = \\ \\ R_2 \end{array} + \begin{array}{c} R_3 \\ \\ \text{C} = \\ \\ R_4 \end{array}$ |
| N | Hydrogenation | $\begin{array}{c} R_1 & R_3 \\ & \backslash / \\ & \text{C} = \text{C} \\ & / \backslash \\ R_2 & R_4 \end{array} \xrightarrow{\text{H}_2, \text{cat}} \begin{array}{c} R_1 & R_3 \\ & \\ \text{C} - & \text{C} \\ & \\ R_2 & R_4 \end{array}$ |
| O | Carbonatation | $\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \backslash / \\ \text{C} \\ / \backslash \\ R_1 & R_3 \\ & \\ R_2 & R_4 \end{array} \xrightarrow{\text{CO}_2} \begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \\ \text{O} - \text{C} - \text{O} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ R_1 & R_3 \\ & \\ R_2 & R_4 \end{array}$ |

| Company | Commercial product | I _{OH} (mg KOH/g) | I _a (mg KOH/g) | Density (g/cm ³) | Viscosity (cP) | f |
|----------|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----|
| HUNTSMAN | Jeffadd B650 | 650 | 0 | 1.080 | 30000 | - |
| | Agrol 2.0 | 65-75 | <1 | 0.955 | 230 | 2.0 |
| | Agrol 3.6 | 107-117 | <1 | 0.975 | 720 | 3.6 |
| BIOBASED | Agrol 4.3 | 125-137 | <1 | 0.976 | 1320 | 4.3 |
| TECH | Agrol 5.6 | 151-170 | <1 | 0.994 | 4770 | 5.6 |
| | Agrol 7.0 | 175-195 | <1 | 1.023 | 21500 | 7.0 |
| | Agrol Diamond | 320-350 | <1 | 1.017 | 3400 | 3.0 |
| CARGILL | BiOH X-0500 | 56 | 0.3 | 1.000 | 4500 | 2.0 |
| | BiOH X-0210 | 235 | 1.7 | 1.010 | 8900 | 4.4 |
| BASF | Sovermol 320 | 300-320 | <6 | - | 800-1200 | 2.8 |
| (COGNIS) | Sovermol 650 | 186-206 | 0-1 | 0.91-0.92 | 3700-4600 | 2.2 |
| | Sovermol 750 | 300-330 | <2 | 0.98-1.02 | 700-1400 | 3.0 |
| | Sovermol 760 | 370-410 | <2 | 1-1.04 | 1500-3000 | 3.5 |
| | Sovermol 805 | 160-185 | <3 | 0.98-1.02 | 2800-4000 | 3.5 |
| | Sovermol 810 | 220-240 | <3 | - | 700-1100 | 3.3 |
| | Sovermol 815 | 200-230 | <3 | 0.98-1.02 | 1300-1900 | 3.3 |
| | Sovermol 818 | 223-248 | <3 | 0.975-1.02 | 650-850 | 2.6 |
| | Sovermol 819 | 230-250 | >3 | 0.96-1.02 | 750-950 | 2.6 |
| | Sovermol 860 | 190-220 | <1.5 | 0.98-1.02 | 200-650 | 2.5 |
| | Sovermol 908 | 200-212 | <0.2 | - | 1800-2800 | 2.0 |
| | Sovermol 1005 | 117-130 | <3 | 0.94-0.96 | 600-900 | 2.2 |
| | Sovermol 1014 | 155-168 | <4 | - | 600-800 | 2.5 |
| | Sovermol 1055 | 180-190 | <1 | 0.90-0.91 | 10-20 | - |
| | Sovermol 1058 | 180-200 | <1 | 0.87-0.89 | 0-15 | - |
| | Sovermol 1083 | 160-180 | <3 | 0.98-1.02 | 1800-2500 | 3.3 |

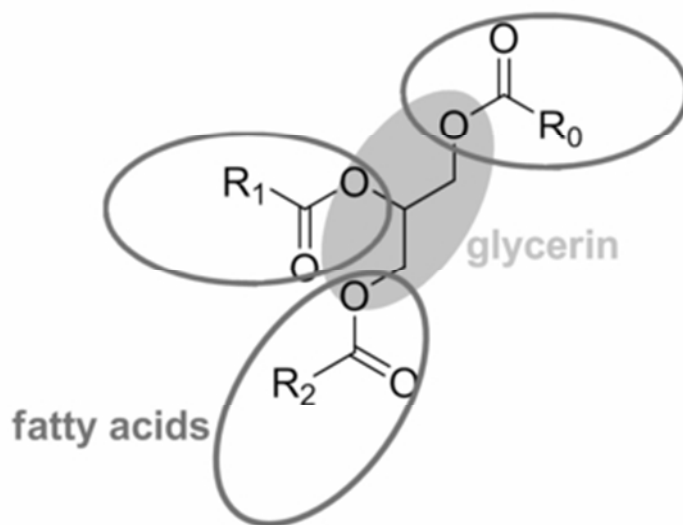
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|----|-------|---------------|---------|------|-----------|---------------|
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| 3 | | Sovermol 1092 | 268-298 | <2 | 0.97-1.02 | 650-950 2.8 |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 5 | | Sovermol 1095 | 225-245 | <2 | 1-1.01 | 1700-2300 3.3 |
| 6 | | | | | | |
| 7 | | Sovermol 1102 | 210-245 | <3 | 0.98-1.02 | 150-650 2.1 |
| 8 | | | | | | |
| 9 | | Sovermol 1111 | 150-170 | <3 | 0.96-0.97 | 300-700 3.0 |
| 10 | | | | | | |
| 11 | | Sovermol 1140 | 190-230 | <3 | - | 600-1400 2.7 |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | Merginol 207 | 80 | <1 | - | 3000 3.1 |
| 15 | | | | | | |
| 16 | | Merginol 208 | 50 | <1 | - | 1000 1.2 |
| 17 | | | | | | |
| 18 | | Merginol 900 | 310 | <3 | - | 800 2.8 |
| 19 | | | | | | |
| 20 | | Merginol 901 | 300 | <2 | - | 900 3.0 |
| 21 | | | | | | |
| 22 | | Merginol 903 | 230 | <3 | - | 150 2.1 |
| 23 | | | | | | |
| 24 | | Merginol 904 | 240 | <3 | - | 2500 3.4 |
| 25 | | | | | | |
| 26 | | Merginol 905 | 170 | <2 | - | 3000 3.2 |
| 27 | | | | | | |
| 28 | | Merginol 908 | 210 | <3 | - | 1400 3.4 |
| 29 | | | | | | |
| 30 | HOBUM | Merginol 909 | 230 | <3 | - | 800 3.3 |
| 31 | | | | | | |
| 32 | | Merginol 910 | 400 | <2 | - | 2800 3.5 |
| 33 | | | | | | |
| 34 | | Merginol 980 | 210 | <3 | - | 150 1.8 |
| 35 | | | | | | |
| 36 | | Merginol 1012 | 200 | <2 | - | 500 2.8 |
| 37 | | | | | | |
| 38 | | Merginol 1021 | 220 | <2 | - | 500 2.9 |
| 39 | | | | | | |
| 40 | | Merginol 8364 | 43 | <1 | - | 3000 3.1 |
| 41 | | | | | | |
| 42 | | Merginol 8570 | 65 | <2 | - | 1800 2.7 |
| 43 | | | | | | |
| 44 | | Merginol 8580 | 60 | <2 | - | 1600 2.7 |
| 45 | | | | | | |
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| 49 | | Radia 7291 | 55-70 | <2.5 | - | <14000 2.5 |
| 50 | | | | | | |
| 51 | OLEON | Radia 7292 | 40-55 | <2.5 | - | <150 2.5 |
| 52 | | | | | | |
| 53 | | Radia 7293 | 300-350 | <1 | - | 600-800 4.0 |
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| Company | Commercial product | I _{OH} (mg KOH/g) | I _a (mg KOH/g) | Viscosity (cP) |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| BASF | Lupranol balance 50 | 50 | <0.06 | 725 |
| Urethane Sos System | Soyol 1001 | 53-60 | 3-5 | 800-1500 |
| | Soyol 2001 | 60-80 | <5 | 1200-2500 |
| | Soyol 2101 | 55-70 | <3 | 1500-3000 |
| | Soyol 2102 | 55-70 | <3 | 1500-3000 |
| | Soyol 2999 | 55-70 | <1.5 | 1500-3000 |
| Croda | Priplast 1838 | 60 | 0.3 | - |
| | Priplast 3196 | 39 | 0.3 | 40020 |
| Cognis | Sovermol 110 | 625-645 | - | Solid at 25°C |
| | Sovermol 909/910 | 90-112/50-60 | - | Solid at 25°C |
| | Sovermol 908 | 180-210 | - | 1800-2800 |



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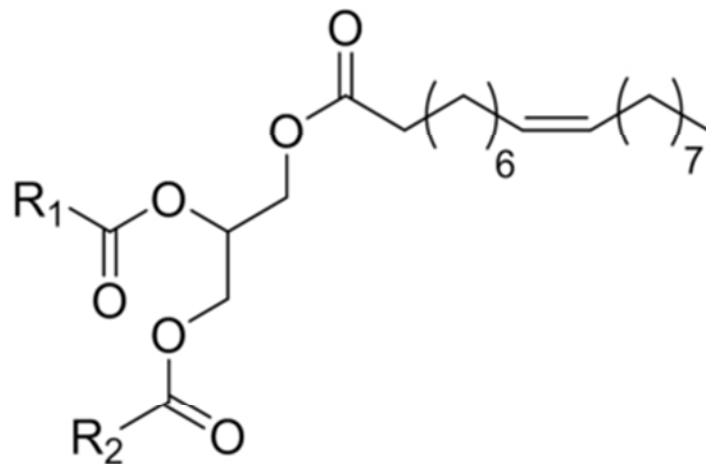
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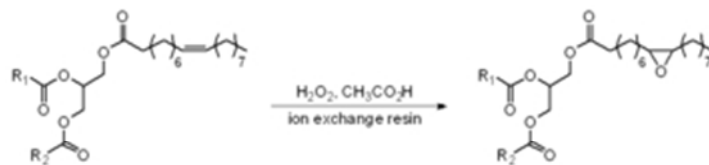
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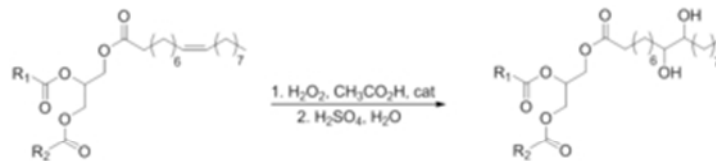
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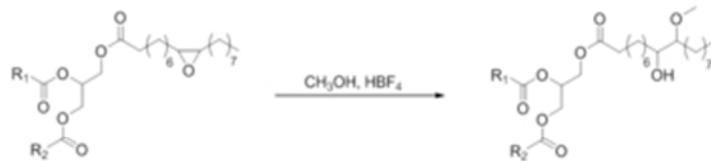
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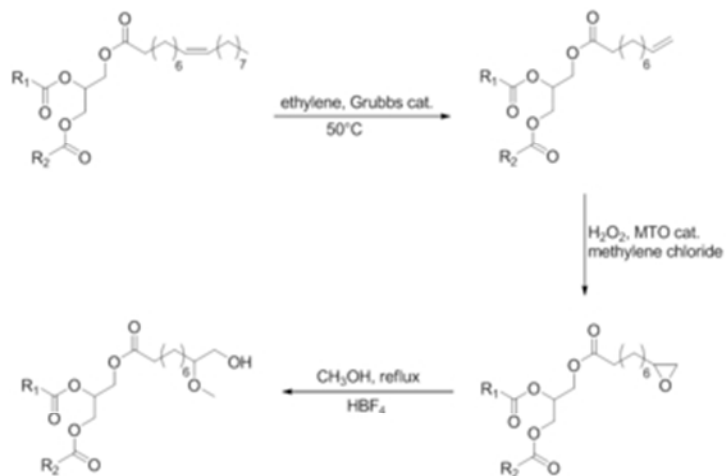


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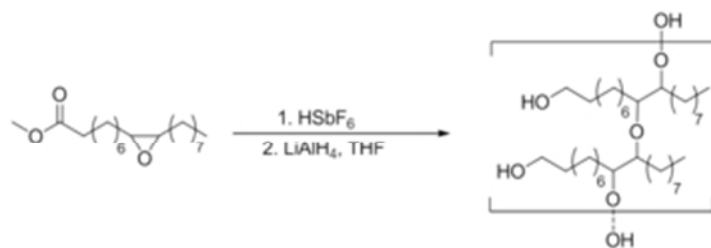


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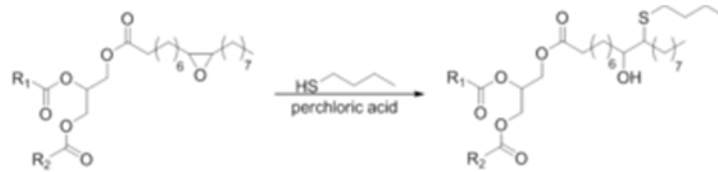
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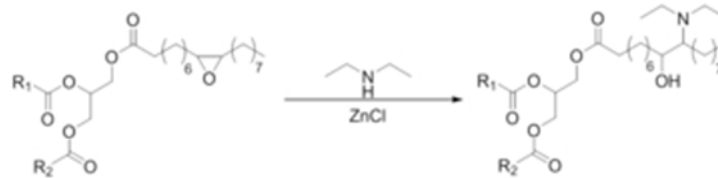
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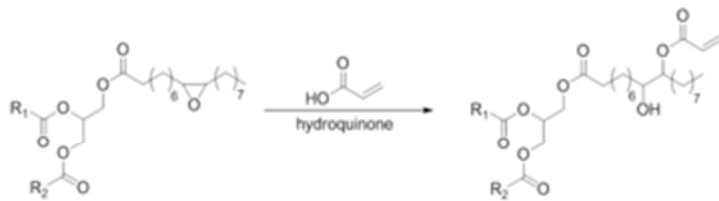


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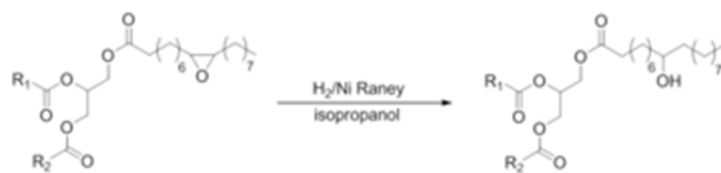


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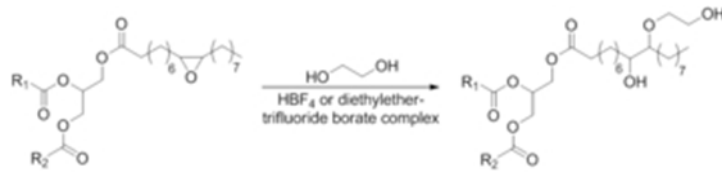


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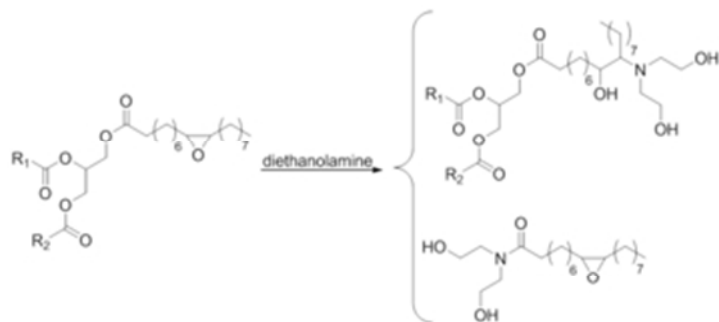


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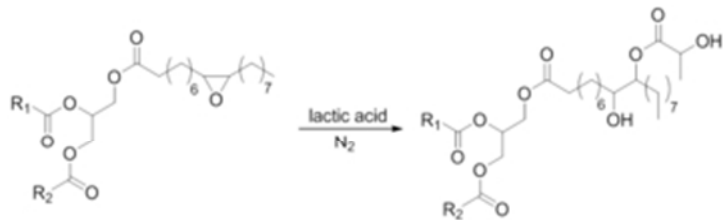
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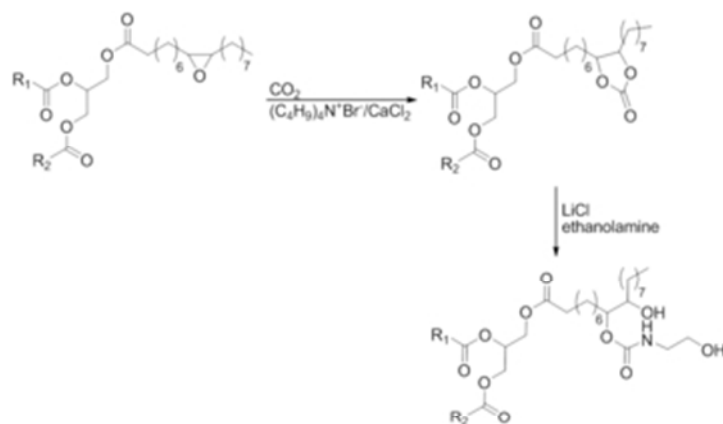
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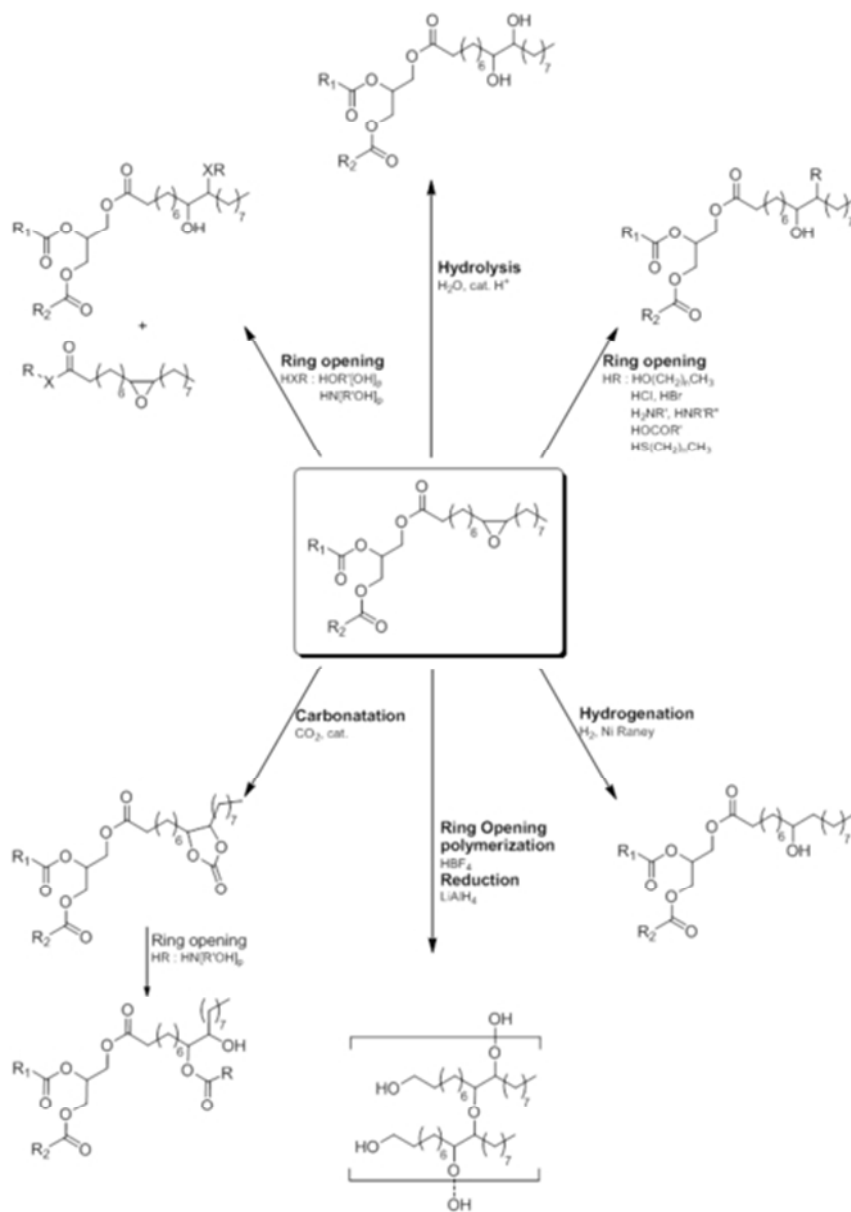
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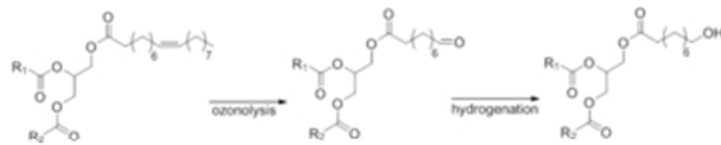


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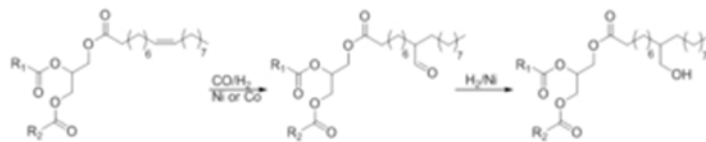


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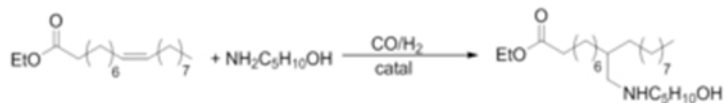
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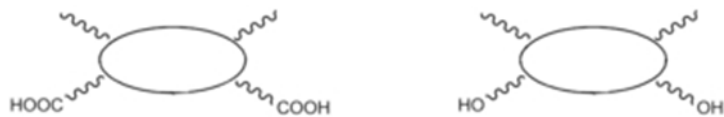
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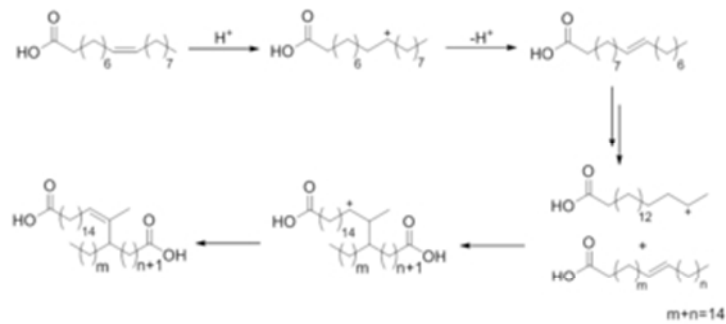
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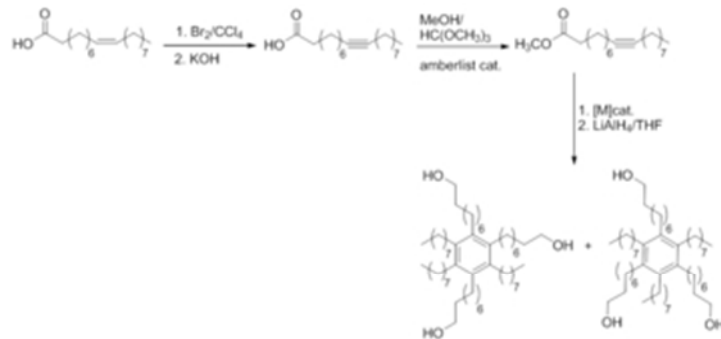
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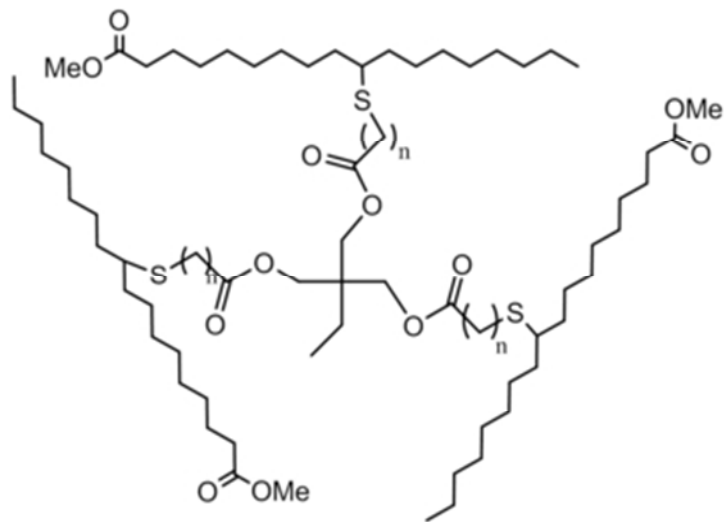
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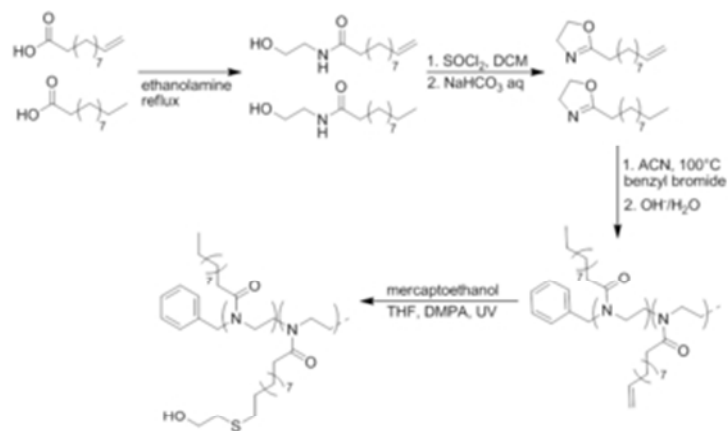
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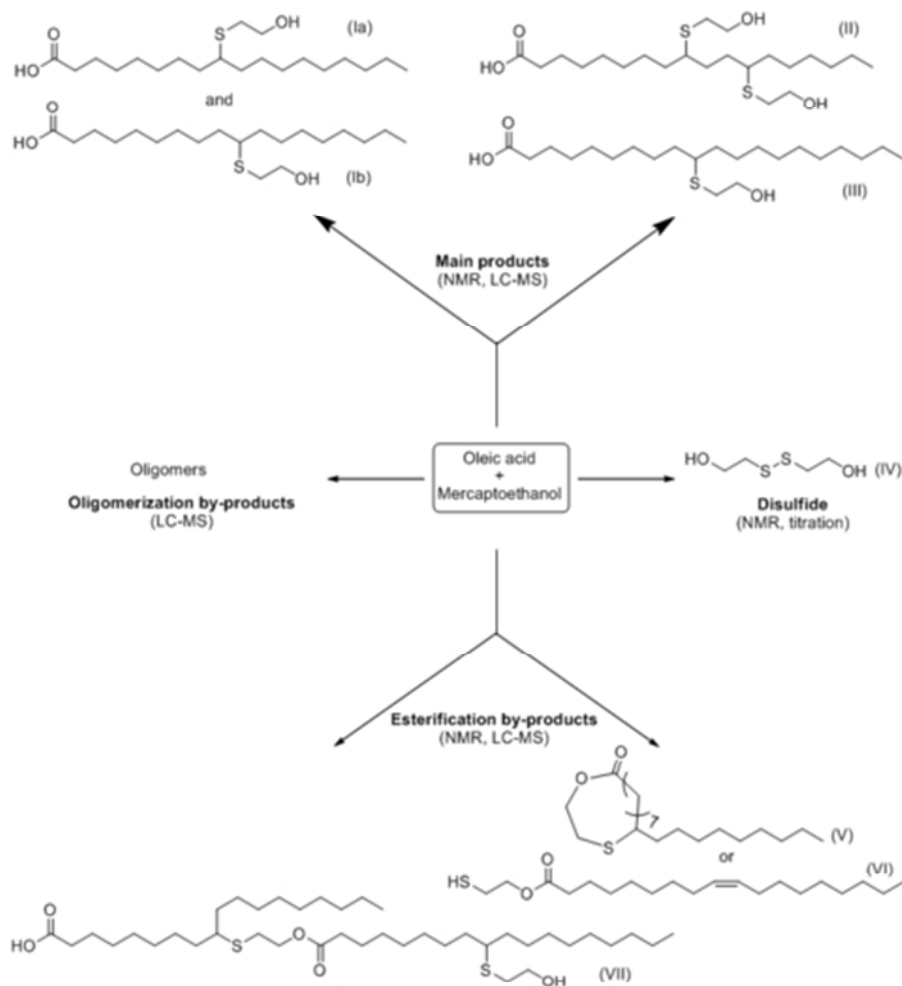


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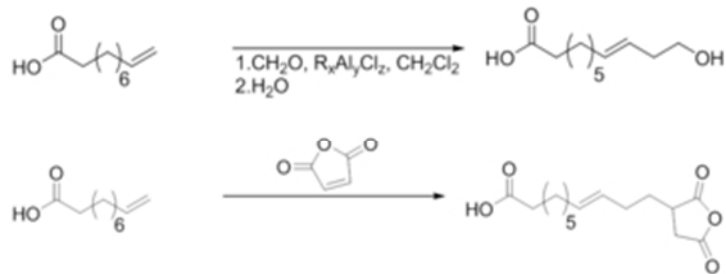


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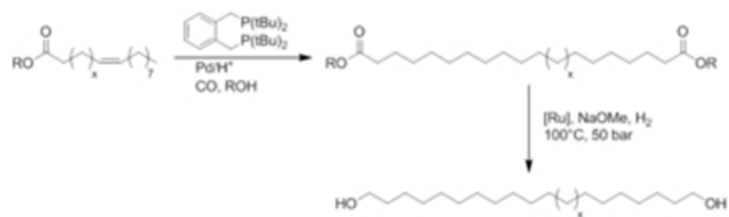
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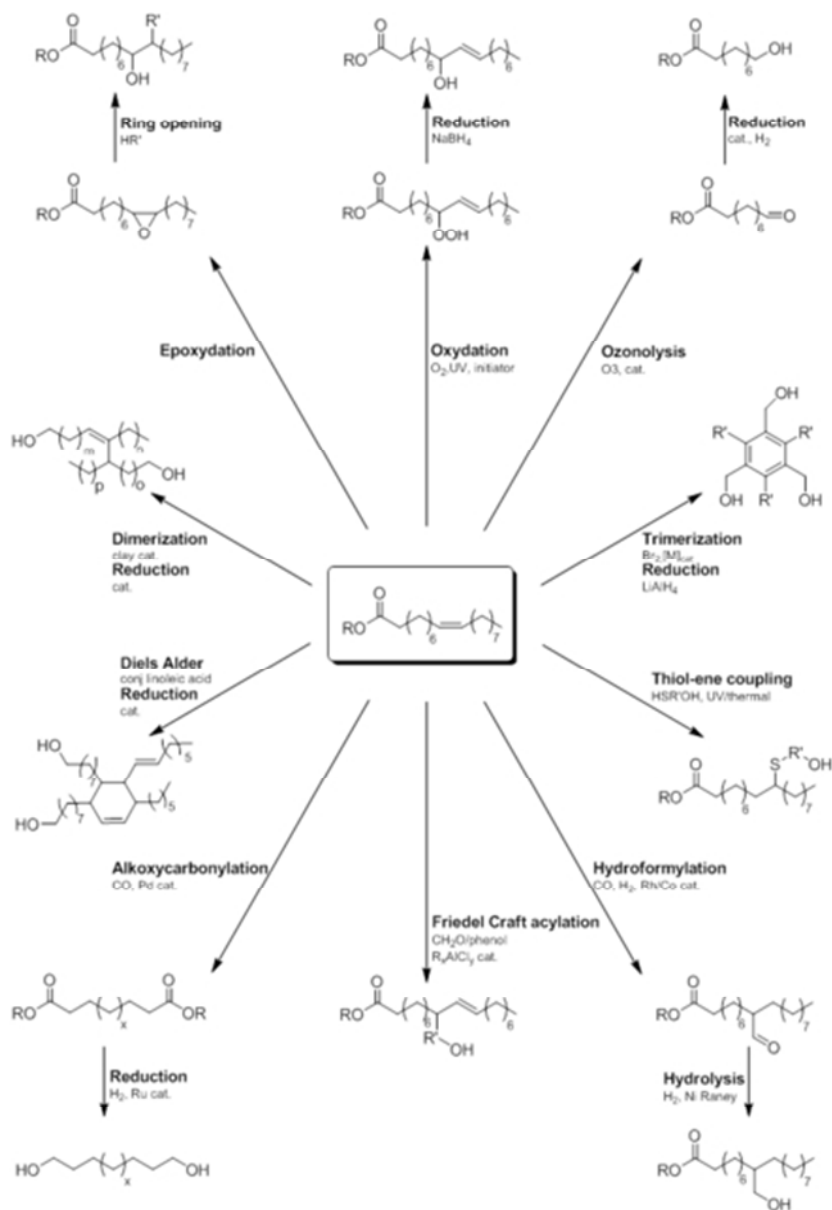
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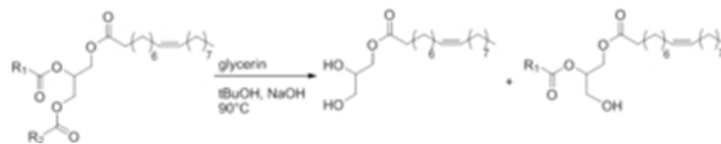


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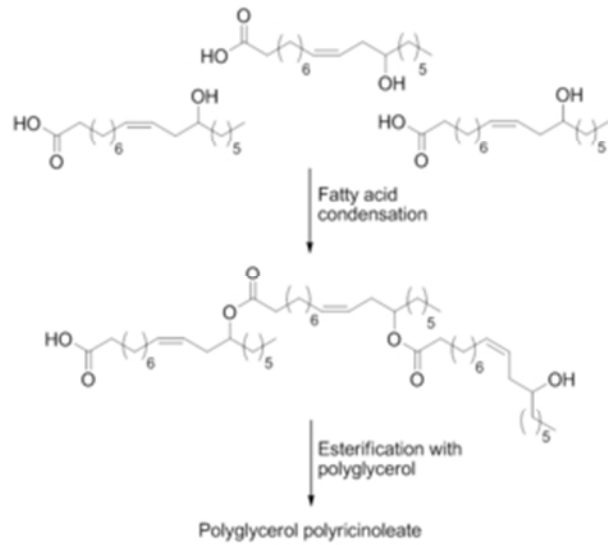
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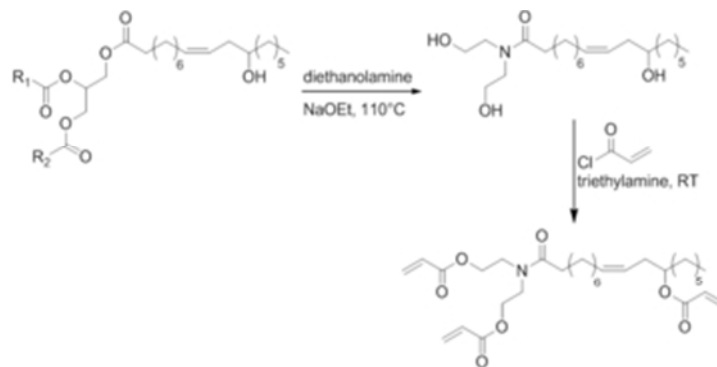
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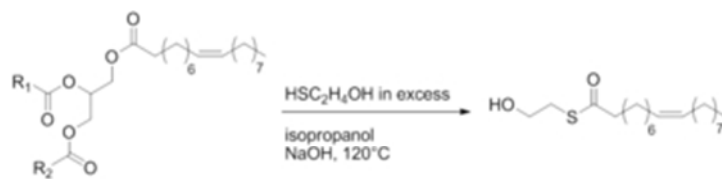
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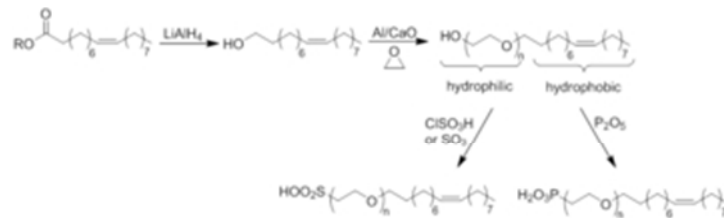
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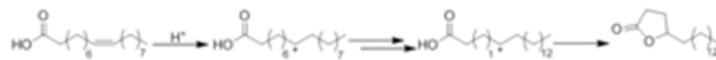
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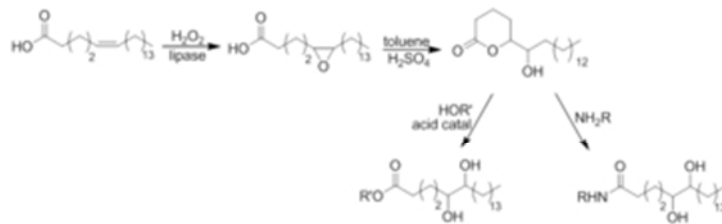
Review Only



30x22mm (300 x 300 DPI)

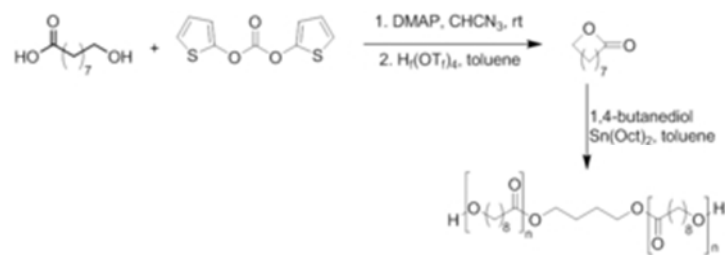
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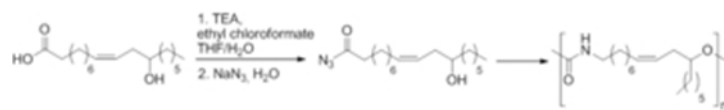
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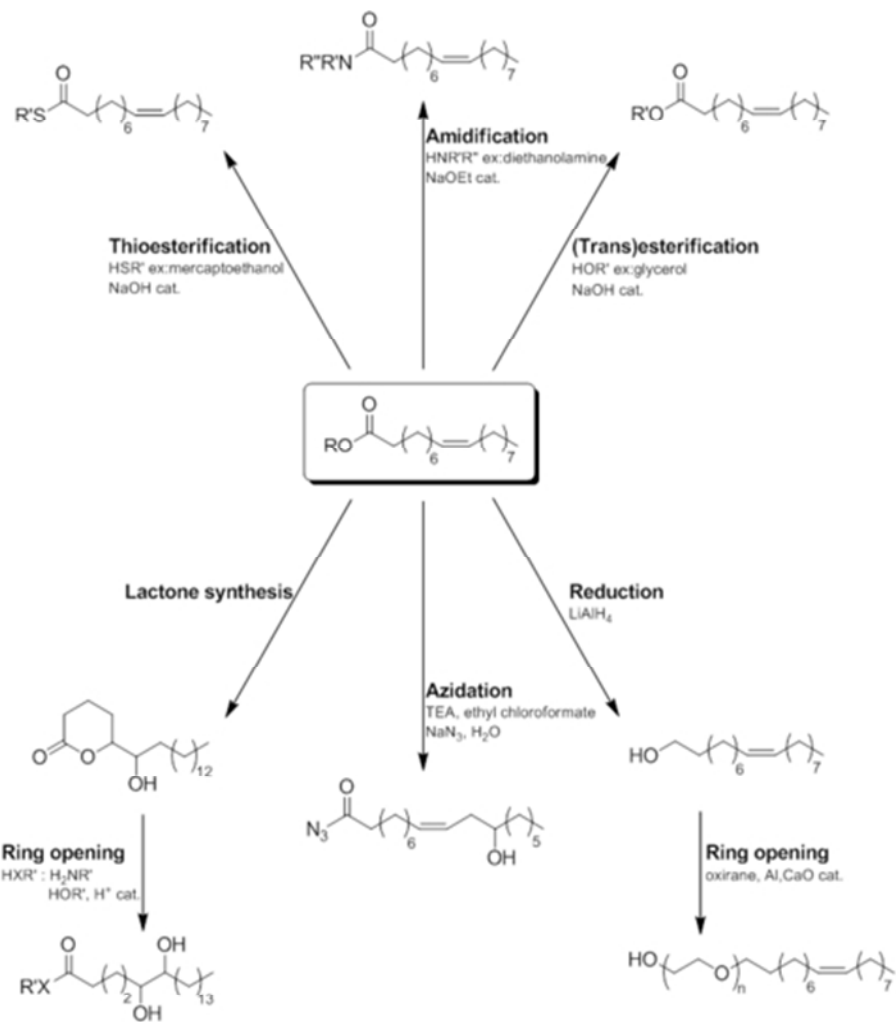
30x22mm (300 x 300 DPI)

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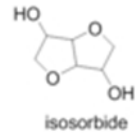
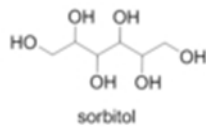
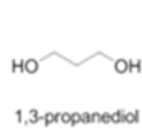
30x22mm (300 x 300 DPI)

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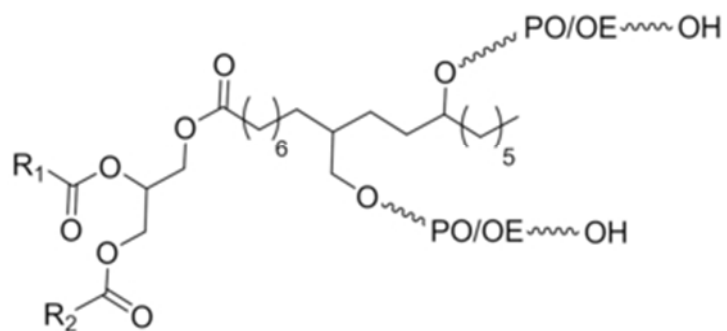
40x54mm (300 x 300 DPI)

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30x22mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Review Only



30x22mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Review Only