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(54) **INHIBITEURS BIODEGRADABLES DE LA CORROSION PEU
TOXIQUES**

(54) **BIODEGRADABLE CORROSION INHIBITORS OF LOW
TOXICITY**

(57) A method for inhibiting corrosion in an aqueous medium is disclosed. The method comprises incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion. The corrosion inhibitor comprises an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to about thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from about six to about thirty carbons. If the medium is sweet, the inhibitor further comprises a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated, straight chain alcohol of from about two to about thirty carbons. Corrosion inhibitor compositions useful in such method are also disclosed.



Abstract of the Disclosure

A method for inhibiting corrosion in an aqueous medium is disclosed. The method comprises incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion. The corrosion inhibitor comprises an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to about thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from about six to about thirty carbons. If the medium is sweet, the inhibitor further comprises a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated, straight chain alcohol of from about two to about thirty carbons. Corrosion inhibitor compositions useful in such method are also disclosed.

BIODEGRADABLE CORROSION INHIBITORS OF LOW TOXICITYBackground of the Invention

1. Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to corrosion inhibition and more particularly to inhibition of corrosion in environmentally sensitive aqueous media.

2. Description of Prior Art

10 Corrosion of metal surfaces in aqueous media has long been an intractable problem. This problem is especially troublesome in deep sea operations such as off-shore oil production, where corrosion inhibitors must satisfy several criteria in order to be effective in the demanding conditions encountered in such operations. A
15 number of corrosion inhibitors have been developed in attempts to satisfy the demands imposed by such activities. However, because it is difficult to meet each of several independent corrosion inhibition criteria, these efforts have met with varying, but not
20 totally satisfactory, success.

 Nevertheless, increasing environmental concerns have introduced even further criteria for corrosion inhibitors to satisfy. In particular, the corrosion inhibitor should be compatible with the sensitive life forms
25 indigenous to the medium into which the inhibitor is incorporated.

 For example, in North Sea operations, survival not only of fish, but also, for instance, of algae and the microorganism *Skeletonema costatum* is of concern. Thus,

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environmental constraints have been imposed on the types of compositions used in the North Sea, thereby to protect such organisms. However, commonly available commercial inhibitors have been found to be too toxic to the
5 organism. More specifically, even a concentration of less than one part per million by weight (ppm) of conventional inhibitors has been found to retard growth of *Skeletonema costatum* test populations by 50% in 96 hours. This may be written as $EC_{50} < 1$ ppm. Thus, a
10 corrosion inhibitor having an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm is desired.

In addition, it is desired that the inhibitor meet several other environmental criteria as well. For example, the inhibitor should be sufficiently
15 biodegradable so that within 28 days after treatment, the inhibitor has degraded at least 70% in terms of the theoretical oxygen consumption required for complete degradation (i.e.; the biochemical oxygen demand $BOD-28 \geq 70\%$). Of course, it is more desirable that
20 complete degradation occur within 28 days. That is, the goal is $BOD-28 = 100\%$.

Further, the water-solubility of the inhibitor should be sufficient to avoid or to minimize bio-accumulation that otherwise can result with fat
25 soluble inhibitors in lower life forms. The fat soluble inhibitors may become more concentrated as they move up the food chain. This may be quantified by measuring the resulting concentration of inhibitor in the octanol phase

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and in the water phase of an n-octanol/water medium into which the inhibitor has been injected, and dividing the former by the latter. It is desired that the logarithm (base 10) of that quotient be less than three. Stated
5 another way, log K or "partitioning" should be less than three in terms of a log value.

Moreover, because evaporation of a toxic solvent (if any) would be undesirable, the solvent evaporation factor (YL) should not be greater than three. And, because of
10 the dangers of flammability, the flash point should be greater than 56°C.

Another problem that has been encountered is the tendency of some inhibitors to form a floc with calcium ions that may be present in the medium to be treated,
15 clouding the medium and short-circuiting the effectiveness of the inhibitor. Accordingly, the inhibitor should not tend to form a floc with calcium ions as well as meet the significant efficacy and environmental criteria.

20 Commercial inhibitors generally have not been found to meet such demanding criteria, especially while still affording highly effective corrosion inhibition. Thus, inhibitors that not only provide satisfactory corrosion inhibition, but satisfy such environmental concerns as
25 well, are still being sought. In fact, because of increasing environmental emphasis, the search is intensifying.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention, therefore, is directed to a novel method for inhibiting corrosion in an aqueous medium. The method comprises incorporating into the
5 medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion. The corrosion inhibitor comprises an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline. The N-ethoxy substituent has from one to about thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent is an unsaturated or
10 polyunsaturated fatty chain of from about six to about thirty carbons. If the medium is sweet, the inhibitor further comprises a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated derivative of a straight chain alcohol of from about two to about thirty carbons.

15 The present invention is also directed to a corrosion inhibitor containing such imidazoline and phosphate ester in an environmentally acceptable solvent such as water or a glycol or a mixture thereof.

Among the several advantages of this invention, may
20 be noted the provision of a method for inhibiting corrosion in environmentally sensitive aqueous media; the provision of such method that is environmentally compatible with such media; the provision of such method that does not tend to form a floc with calcium ions that
25 may be in the media; and the provision of a corrosion inhibitor that may be used in such method.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

In accordance with the present invention, it has been discovered that incorporating into a medium a corrosion inhibitor that comprises an

5 N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to about thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or

10 polyunsaturated fatty chain of from about six to about thirty carbons and, if the medium is sweet, that further comprises a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated derivative of a straight chain alcohol of from about two to about thirty carbons, affords

surprisingly superior corrosion inhibition with little or no deleterious environmental effects on the medium.

15 Moreover, no tendency to form a floc with calcium has been observed.

Compositions having little or no deleterious environmental effects on a medium of concern are described herein as "environmentally compatible". This

20 requirement should include such considerations as toxicity, water-solubility, biodegradability, and so forth. Non-toxicity is referred to herein. However, it is recognized that nearly any substance may be toxic at some concentration. As used herein, therefore,

25 non-toxicity refers to very low toxicity in the concentrations to be employed. For example, for off-shore drilling and production, it refers to compositions having an EC₅₀ greater than 1 ppm by weight

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for *Skeletonema costatum*. With respect to biodegradability, a BOD-28 of greater than 70% is desired.

The N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline may be prepared by reacting an N-substituted ethylene diamine with a fatty acid to form an imidazoline and ethoxylating the imidazoline if necessary. The N-substituted ethylene diamine is of the form $H_2NCH_2CH_2NHRMH$, wherein R is an organic moiety and -MH represents a terminal group that includes a hetero atom such as oxygen, nitrogen or sulfur and at least one hydrogen, thereby to provide a site for attachment of ethylene oxide. The organic moiety may be any of a wide range of possibilities, but a moiety that is environmentally compatible should be selected.

Although the organic moiety may include nitrogen atoms that would render the N-substituted ethylene diamine a polyamine of three or more amino groups, for the sake of simplicity and in view of the fact that the two nitrogen atoms identified explicitly in the formula above are those relevant to the functionality of concern, the reactant will be referred to herein simply as an N-substituted ethylene diamine. Nevertheless, it should be understood that higher polyamines are contemplated if the presence of further amino groups beyond the noted two is a result of inclusion in the R group. Preferably, R is an alkylene, an arylene, or an aralkylene. More preferably, R is ethylene, isopropylene or $-(CH_2CH_2O)_n(CH_2CH_2)-$ wherein n is an integer from 1 to

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about 30. Even more preferably, R is ethylene or the group $-(\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O})_n(\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2)-$ wherein n is an integer from about one to about seventeen. Most preferably, R is ethylene.

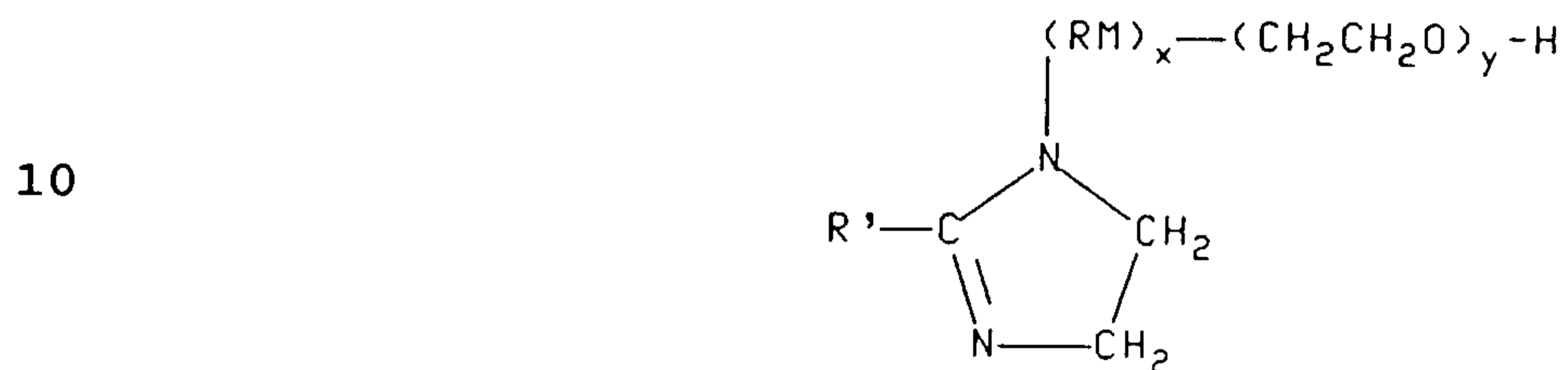
5 The group -MH, as noted, should provide a site for attachment of ethylene oxide for ether or polyether formation. Preferably, -MH represents -OH, -NH₂ or -SH, most preferably -OH. Thus, preferred N-substituted ethylene diamines include, for example,

10 NH₂CH₂CH₂NH-CH₂CH₂OH, NH₂CH₂CH₂NH-CH₂CH(CH₃)OH and NH₂CH₂CH₂NH-CH₂CH₂NH₂, most preferably, NH₂CH₂CH₂NH-CH₂CH₂OH.

 The fatty acid also should be selected for environmental compatibility. Thus, a preferred fatty acid is a mono- or poly-unsaturated fatty acid of from 15 six to about thirty, preferably about twelve to about twenty carbons. The term polyunsaturated refers to two or more points of unsaturation. Thus, the fatty acid is of the form R'COOH, wherein R' is an unsaturated or 20 polyunsaturated chain of from about five to about thirty carbons, preferably about eleven to about twenty carbons. Particular suitable fatty acids have been found to be oleic, linoleic and eladeic acid.

 The diamine and fatty acid are reacted in about a 25 1:1 molar ratio under a vacuum with the addition of heat, such as up to about 240°C, until all water is removed. The resulting imidazoline is then ethoxylated if necessary to build the N-substituent of the imidazoline

to include a total of from one to about thirty ethoxy units as necessary to render the product water-soluble. As used herein, the term water-soluble means miscible with water at the concentration to be employed for corrosion inhibition. Thus, the resulting product is of the form



15 wherein R and R' (the residue of the fatty acid) are as defined above, M is the residue from the -MH group after removal of the H, preferably -O-, -NH- or -S-, most preferably -O-, x is 0 or 1 and y is an integer from one to about thirty selected such that the total number of ethoxy units in the N-substituent is from one to about 20 thirty (preferably two to about eighteen), depending on the number necessary to render the imidazoline water-soluble.

25 The phosphate ester is such as those described in, for example, U.S. Patent No. 4,339,349 to Martin (a present co-inventor) et al. or U.S. Patent No. 3,846,071 to Redmore. In particular, the phosphate ester may be prepared by reacting an ethoxylated alcohol with polyphosphoric acid or with phosphoric anhydride. Thus, 30 the first step may involve ethoxylating an alcohol. Generally, the alcohol is environmentally compatible and so is one that is non-toxic to aquatic life in the medium

to be treated and biodegradable and can be made
water-soluble upon ethoxylation. Typically, therefore, a
C₂ to C₃₀, preferably a C₄ to C₂₀, and even more
preferably, a C₅ to C₁₅, alcohol is practical. The
5 alcohol should be generally straight chain, meaning
little or, preferably, no branching, in order to afford
favorable biodegradability. Optimally, each carbon atom
of the alcohol should have at least one hydrogen to
provide superior biodegradability. Alfol^{*} 8-10 (a mixture
10 of C₈ to C₁₀ alcohols) has been found to be especially
suitable.

The alcohol may be ethoxylated by standard
techniques. Thus, the alcohol may be heated with a base
or amine catalyst to about 100 to about 150°C, depending
15 on the catalyst, and ethylene oxide added thereto. The
resulting ethoxylated alcohol is of the form
R''O-(CH₂CH₂O)_zH, wherein R'' is a substituted or
unsubstituted alkyl, aryl or aralkyl group of from about
two to about thirty, preferably from about four to about
20 twenty, more preferably from about five to about fifteen,
carbons. Desirably, R'' is an alkyl group, especially an
unsubstituted alkyl group of from about two to about
thirty, preferably from about four to about twenty, more
preferably from about five to about fifteen, carbons. As
25 noted, it is optimal that each carbon of R'' should have
at least one hydrogen bonded thereto. The relative
proportion of ethylene oxide to alcohol depends on the
degree of ethoxylation desired to provide sufficient

*Trade-mark

water-solubility and biodegradability. Generally, the heavier the alcohol, the greater the degree of ethoxylation required. Although any degree of ethoxylation is feasible, economic practicalities suggest that it is not desirable that more than about ten moles of ethylene oxide per mole of alcohol be used. Therefore, z is preferably an integer from one to about ten, more preferably from about two to about five, especially about two to about three.

A phosphate ester then is prepared from the ethoxylated alcohol. Techniques for preparation of phosphate esters are well known. See, for example, U.S. Patent No. 4,722,805 to Martin (a present co-inventor) and U.S. Patent No. 3,846,071 to Redmore. The ester may be prepared by reacting the ethoxylated alcohol with polyphosphoric acid at a temperature of from about 75 to about 100°C to form a mono-ester. Alternatively, the phosphate ester may be prepared by a reaction of the ethoxylated alcohol with phosphoric anhydride to form a di-ester/mono-ester mixture.

As with the compositions and method taught in U.S. Patent No. 3,846,071, the imidazoline may be used without the phosphate ester for corrosion inhibition in sour systems, but it has been found that a blend of the imidazoline and phosphate ester yields improved corrosion inhibition in such systems. Sweet systems should be treated with the blend. The weight ratio of imidazoline

to phosphate ester is preferably about 1:1 to about 4:1, most preferably about 2:1.

The blend (as well as imidazoline employed without phosphate ester) may also incorporate a solvent, particularly an environmentally compatible solvent such as water, ethylene glycol or propylene glycol. The blends have been found generally to be water-soluble, but some compositions, especially those of a low degree of ethoxylation, have been found to be merely water-dispersible. In such cases, inclusion of solvents such as isopropyl alcohol may result in a clear solution, but environmental considerations render use of isopropyl alcohol undesirable. Typically, the solvent may make up from about a third to about two thirds, preferably about a half, by weight of the additive. Thus, if no other components are present, the weight ratio of actives (i.e., combination of imidazoline and phosphate ester if a blend is used; imidazoline if no phosphate ester is present) to solvent is from about 2:1 to about 1:2, preferably about 1:1.

Each component of the additive composition should be selected with consideration for environmental compatibility. Thus, as noted previously, in the specification, the imidazoline and the diamine and fatty acid from which it is formed, the phosphate ester and the alcohol from which it is formed, and the solvent, should be nontoxic to aquatic life in the environment in which it is to be employed. As discussed, this consideration

has dictated preferred aspects of these various components and reactants, with particular concern for not only non-toxicity, but also water-solubility, biodegradability, and so forth. Of course, it is
5 undesirable to include any further component that would be counter to these concerns. Accordingly, it is preferable that the additive composition be free of toxic components (components toxic to the aquatic life in the medium in which it is to be employed) and components that
10 are insoluble in water or are environmentally harmful substances that are not biodegradable.

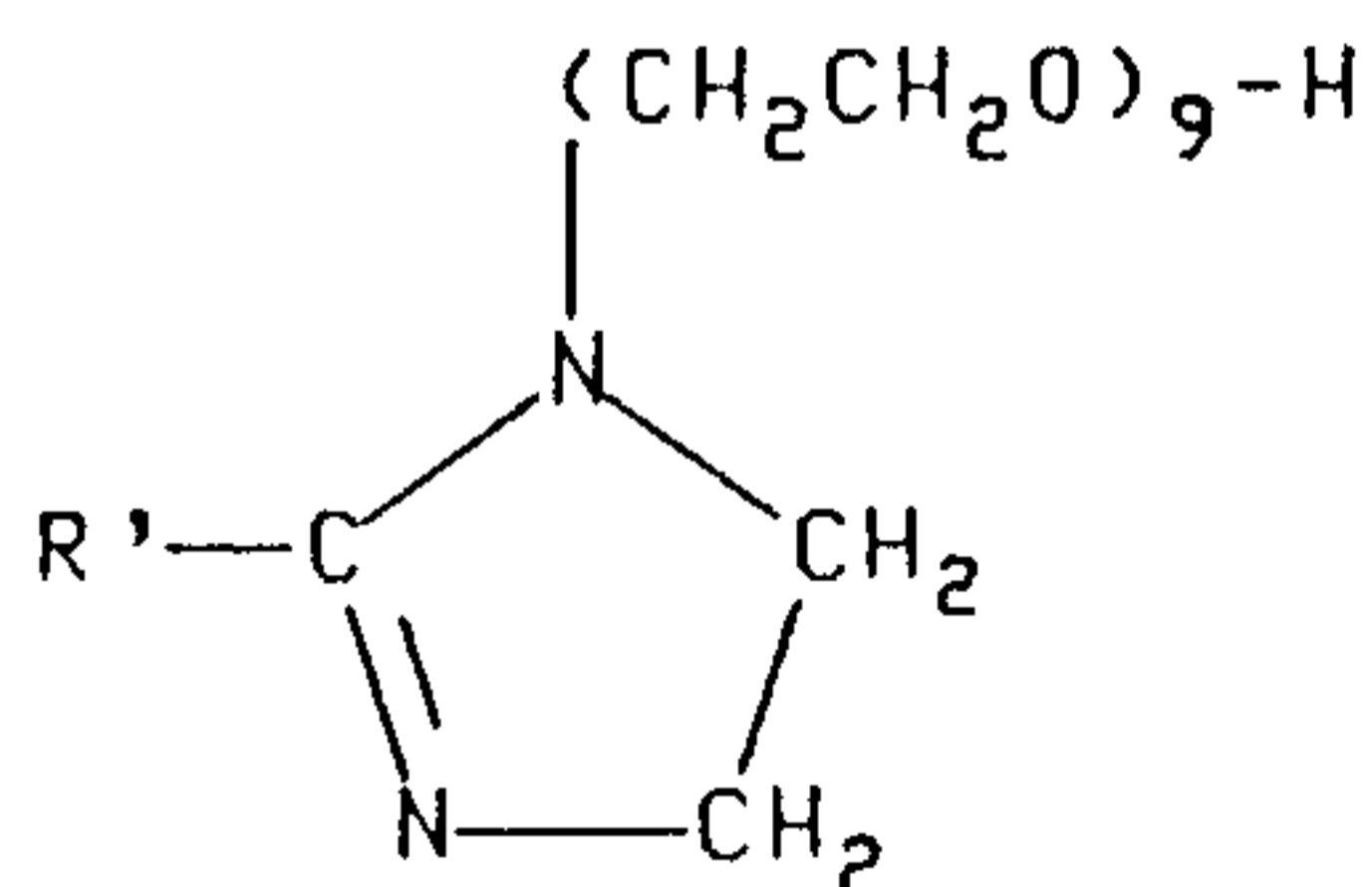
The additive composition may be employed by simple addition to the medium to be treated. Such media are aqueous and include sea water as, for example, in
15 off-shore oil production. Preferably, the effective concentration of inhibitor actives (that is, the concentration at which corrosion inhibition is provided) is in the range of from about 10 to about 1,000 ppm by weight. Of course, greater concentrations may be
20 employed, but may be wasteful over-dosage or, at very high dosages, might raise the environmental impact to significant levels. Regardless, rapid dilution takes place quickly in applications in such media as overboard brine from off-shore oil production (as in the North
25 Sea), leading to even less environmentally significant dosages.

The following examples describe preferred embodiments of the invention. Other embodiments within

the scope of the claims herein will be apparent to one skilled in the art from consideration of the specification or practice of the invention as disclosed herein. It is intended that the specification, together with the examples, be considered exemplary only, with the scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the claims which follow the examples. In the examples, all percentages are given on a weight basis unless otherwise indicated.

EXAMPLE 1

Corrosion rate tests were conducted on inhibitors of this invention (designated herein as Inhibitor A) versus a blend of a quaternary ammonium compound and an acetate salt of an imidazoline, which is a commercial corrosion inhibitor sold by Petrolite and is identified herein as Inhibitor X. The blend of this invention tested was a 1:2:6 by weight blend of (1) a phosphate ester derived from reaction of polyphosphoric acid and Alfol^{*} 8-10 ethoxylated with 3 moles of ethylene oxide per mole Alfol^{*} 8-10, (2) an imidazoline that corresponds to the formula



wherein R' is the residue from oleic or linoleic acid (the imidazoline was derived from a mix of oleic and linoleic acid), and (3) propylene glycol plus water.

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The toxicity (EC_{50}) of Inhibitor X was measured as 0.18 ppm versus 1 to 10 for Inhibitor A. The biodegradability (BOD-28) of Inhibitor X was found to be 28% versus 100% for Inhibitor A. In fact, for Inhibitor A 100% degradation was found by thirteen days. Partitioning of Inhibitor X was determined to be about 2 versus about 0 for Inhibitor A. The solvent evaporation factor (YL) of Inhibitor X was measured at 2 versus 0 for Inhibitor A. The flash point of Inhibitor X was found to be 27°C and over 93°C for Inhibitor A.

Kettle tests and loop tests were conducted. For the kettle tests, various amounts of inhibitors were added to aqueous solutions of 3% sodium chloride, which were then stirred mildly for 24 hours at room temperature. "Sweet" test solutions were sparged continuously with carbon dioxide. "Sour" test solutions were sparged with carbon dioxide and then enough $Na_2S \cdot H_2O$ was added to give a hydrogen sulfide concentration of 50 ppm and a pH of 5.5. The sour solutions were then sealed. AISI-type 1020 steel corrosion coupons (9 cm^2) were weighed, added to the solutions before the stirring, removed from the solutions at the completion of the stirring, cleaned and reweighed. Corrosion rates were calculated based on the weight loss. The results were as follows, with the inhibitor concentration (dose) being given in ppm, the corrosion rates being given in mils per year (mpy) and many of the results shown being averages of duplicate runs.

Inhibitor	Dose	Sweet	Sour
None	—	40	45
Inhibitor X	250	6.3	2.4
Inhibitor X	50	12	8.2
Inhibitor A	250	6.1	1.8
Inhibitor A	50	9	2.9
Inhibitor A	25	14	4.8

10 For the loop tests, carbon dioxide saturated mixed
 brine was pumped through cylindrical coupons for 24 hours
 in a pump-around loop. Pressure was maintained at 45
 psig and the temperature was maintained at 140°F. Flow
 was maintained at a sufficient rate to give a high shear
 15 rate; namely, 47, 79 or 175 Pa (pascals), depending on
 the trial. The following results were obtained, with the
 inhibitor concentration (dose) being given in ppm and the
 corrosion rates being given in mils per year (mpy).

Inhibitor	Dose	47 Pa	79 Pa	175 Pa
None	—	1,000	1,100	2,100
Inhibitor X	250	16	21	14
Inhibitor X	25	49	58	69
Inhibitor A	50	18	22	27
Inhibitor A	25	19	31	24

EXAMPLE 2

Further corrosion inhibitors were prepared in
 accordance with this invention. The inhibitors
 correspond to the combinations identified in the
 30 following table, "# of EtO" refers to the number of
 ethoxy units in the n-polyethoxy chain on the imidazoline
 (all imidazolines were derived from a mix of oleic and
 linoleic acids), "Phos." refers to whether the phosphate

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ester was derived from polyphosphoric acid ("Poly") or phosphoric anhydride (" P_2O_5 "), "Prop." refers to the weight ratio of imidazoline to phosphate ester to solvent, "IPA" refers to isopropyl alcohol, "NBA" refers to n-butyl alcohol, "EG" refers to ethylene glycol and "PG" refers to propylene glycol:

	Inhibitor Prop.	Imidazoline # of EtO	Phosphate Ester		Solvent
			Alcohol	Phos.	
10	B 1:0:0	3	No phosphate ester		None
	C 1:0:0	6	No phosphate ester		None
15	D 1:0:0	9	No phosphate ester		None
	E 1:0:0	12	No phosphate ester		None
	F 1:1:2	9	Alfol* 8-10	Poly	Water
20	G 1:1:2:1.5	9	Tri-decyl	P_2O_5	Water+IPA
	H 2:1:3	9	Alfol* 8-10	Poly	Water
25	I 4:1:5	6	Alfol* 8-10	Poly	Water
	J 2:1:3:1	6	Tri-decyl	P_2O_5	Water+IPA
	K 2:4:6:5	6	Tri-decyl	P_2O_5	Water+IPA
30	L 2:1:3	3	Tri-decyl	P_2O_5	NBA
	M 8:4:15:9	9	Alfol* 8-10	Poly	Water+EG
35	N 8:4:15:9	9	Alfol* 8-10	Poly	Water+PG

These inhibitors were then compared with a variety of other additives in corrosion tests in sweet and sour systems. The following results were obtained, with the

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inhibitor concentration (dose) being given in ppm and the corrosion rates being given in mils per year (mpy).

	Inhibitor	Dose	Corrosion Rate	
			Sweet	Sour
5	None	—	40	45
	Oleyl sarcosine*	250	23	25
	Sodium lauryl sarcosine (30% solution)	700	17	14
	Sodium lauryl sarcosine + Betaine	250	13	5.7
10	Coco-benzo-quat. + pyridine + phosphate ester	250	18	2.3
	Coco-benzo-quat. + pyridine + phosphate ester	60	11	3.2
	OEX-6673-4 from Westvaco	250	8.4	4.6
15	Unethoxylated imidazoline*	250	14	12
	Inhibitor B*	250	9	3.1
	Inhibitor C	250	11	5
	Inhibitor D	250	11	5
	Inhibitor E	250	9.6	5
20	Inhibitor E	100	7	3.1
	Inhibitor F	250	7.4	2.4
	Inhibitor G*	350	5.5	3.7
	Inhibitor G*	70	9.4	4.8
	Inhibitor G	35	9	11
25	Inhibitor H	250	6.1	1.8
	Inhibitor I	250	7	5.5
	Inhibitor I	50	8.3	6.6
	Inhibitor J	300	5.9	7
	Inhibitor J	1,000	6.3	NA
30	Inhibitor K*	400	6.6	4.4
	Inhibitor L*	250	5.8	2.6
	Inhibitor M	250	7.4	2.6
	Inhibitor N	250	6.1	1.8

35 *Inhibitor was dispersible as opposed to soluble at the noted dose.

EXAMPLE 3

Shake tests were conducted on Inhibitors L and M of Example 3 as well as an acetate salt of imidazoline in various media. Medium 1 was formed by mixing kerosene
40 (20 ml) into an aqueous solution (100 ml) of 5% NaCl.

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Medium 2 was an aqueous solution of 6% NaCl and 2% CaCl₂•H₂O. Medium 3 was an aqueous solution of 6% NaCl and 4% CaCl₂•H₂O. The following results were obtained, wherein Dose is the concentration of the inhibitor added and the Appearance is the appearance of the top of the medium (Top), the kerosene phase (Kerosene), the interface between the kerosene phase and the water phase (Interface) and the water phase (Water) after five minutes.

Medium	Inhibitor	Appearance				
		Dose	Top	Kerosene	Interface	Water
1	None	—	Clear	Clear	Sharp	Slight Haze
1	Inhibitor X	1%	Foam	Haze	None	Haze
1	Inhibitor M	1%	Clear	Half Clear	Sharp	Haze
1	Inhibitor L	1%	Clear	Almost Clear	Sharp	Haze
2	Inhibitor M	500 ppm	Fair			Clear
2	Inhibitor M	1%	Fair			Clear
3	Inhibitor M	1%	Fair			Slight Haze

In view of the above, it will be seen that the several advantages of the invention are achieved and other advantageous results attained.

As various changes could be made in the above methods and compositions without departing from the scope of the invention, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A method for inhibiting corrosion of a metal surface in a sour aqueous medium, said method comprising incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion, the corrosion inhibitor comprising an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from six to thirty carbon atoms, wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor has an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm by weight for *Skeletonema costatum*.

2. A method for inhibiting corrosion of a metal surface in a sweet aqueous medium, said method comprising incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion, the corrosion inhibitor comprising

(a) an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from six to thirty carbon atoms; and

(b) a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated, straight chain alcohol of from two to thirty carbon atoms, wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor has an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm by weight for *Skeletonema costatum*.

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3. A method for inhibiting corrosion of a metal surface in a sour aqueous medium, said method comprising incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion, the corrosion inhibitor comprising

(a) an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from six to thirty carbon atoms; and

(b) a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated, straight chain alcohol of from two to thirty carbon atoms,

wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor has an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm by weight for *Skeletonema costatum*.

4. A method as set forth in claim 2 or 3 wherein the imidazoline and the phosphate ester are present in the corrosion inhibitor in a weight ratio of from 1:1 to 4:1.

5. A method as set forth in claim 1, 2, 3, or 4 wherein the corrosion inhibitor further comprises a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, ethylene glycol and propylene glycol.

6. A method as set forth in claim 1, 2, 3, or 4 wherein the fatty chain is straight and has from twelve to twenty carbon atoms.

7. A method as set forth in claim 1, 2, 3, or 4 wherein the fatty chain has from twelve to twenty carbon atoms.

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8. A method as set forth in claim 6 or 7 wherein the fatty chain is a residue from a fatty acid selected from the group consisting of oleic acid, linoleic acid and eladeic acid.

9. A method as set forth in claim 6 or 7 wherein the N-ethoxy substituent has from two to eighteen ethoxy units.

10. A water-soluble, biodegradable corrosion inhibitor composition, which is suitable for use in a sweet or a sour aqueous medium, comprising (1) an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from six to thirty carbon atoms, (2) a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated, straight chain alcohol of from two to thirty carbon atoms, and (3) a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, ethylene glycol and propylene glycol, wherein said corrosion inhibitor has an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm by weight for *Skeletonema costatum*.

11. A method for inhibiting corrosion of a metal surface in a sour aqueous medium, said method comprising incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion, the corrosion inhibitor comprising an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from six to thirty carbon atoms, wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor has an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm by weight for *Skeletonema costatum*; and

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wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor is brought into contact with an aqueous environment which contains one or more life forms selected from fish, algae and *Skeletonema costatum*.

12. A method for inhibiting corrosion of a metal surface in a sweet aqueous medium, said method comprising incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion, the corrosion inhibitor comprising

(a) an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to thirty ethoxy units and the 2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from six to thirty carbon atoms; and

(b) a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated, straight chain alcohol of from two to thirty carbon atoms,

wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor has an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm by weight for *Skeletonema costatum*; and wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor is brought into contact with an aqueous environment which contains one or more life forms selected from fish, algae and *Skeletonema costatum*.

13. A method for inhibiting corrosion of a metal surface in a sour aqueous medium, said method comprising incorporating into the medium an amount of a water-soluble corrosion inhibitor sufficient to inhibit corrosion, the corrosion inhibitor comprising

(a) an N-ethoxy,2-substituted imidazoline, the N-ethoxy substituent having from one to thirty ethoxy units and the

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2-substituent being an unsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty chain of from six to thirty carbon atoms; and

(b) a phosphate ester derived from a water-soluble oxyethylated, straight chain alcohol of from two to thirty carbon atoms,

wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor has an EC_{50} greater than 1 ppm by weight for *Skeletonema costatum*; and wherein said water-soluble corrosion inhibitor is brought into contact with an aqueous environment which contains one or more life forms selected from fish, algae and *Skeletonema costatum*.

14. A method as set forth in claim 12 or 13 wherein the imidazoline and the phosphate ester are present in the corrosion inhibitor in a weight ratio of from 1:1 to 4:1.

15. A method as set forth in claim 11, 12, 13, or 14 wherein the corrosion inhibitor further comprises a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, ethylene glycol and propylene glycol.

16. A method as set forth in claim 11, 12, 13, or 14 wherein the fatty chain is straight and has from twelve to twenty carbon atoms.

17. A method as set forth in claim 11, 12, 13, or 14 wherein the fatty chain has from twelve to twenty carbon atoms.

18. A method as set forth in claim 16 or 17 wherein the fatty chain is a residue from a fatty acid selected from the group consisting of oleic acid, linoleic acid and eladecic acid.

19. A method as set forth in claim 16 or 17 wherein the N-ethoxy substituent has from two to eighteen ethoxy units.

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