

- [54] **NON-IONIC SURFACTANTS CONTAINING ACETAL GROUPS**
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- [*] Notice: The portion of the term of this patent subsequent to Feb. 19, 1997 has been disclaimed.
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- [52] U.S. Cl. **568/601; 568/593; 568/603**
- [58] Field of Search **568/593, 601, 603**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

Acetal-coupled non-ionic surfactants are easily degraded into relatively environmentally innocuous fragments having little or no surface activity. The fragments are sufficiently low in molecular weight to be oxidized when exposed to water and atmospheric oxygen. The surface activity can also be destroyed by lowering the alkalinity of the medium in which the non-ionic surfactant is utilized to below pH 7. The non-ionic surfactants of the invention unexpectedly have very low viscosities as compared to surfactants containing a comparable molecular weight and oxyalkylene residue content.

7 Claims, No Drawings