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Butamax granted core patent for making biobutanol and distillers grains; offers producers efficient, low-cost production of biobutanol

WILMINGTON, Del., May 15, 2012 -- Butamax™ Advanced Biofuels, LLC announced today that the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has granted Butamax Patent Number 8,178,328. The '328 patent covers a highly efficient engineered pathway for producing isobutanol from recombinant microorganisms at commercial scale. These novel microorganisms have been designed using advanced biotechnology to convert sugar to isobutanol.

The '328 patent also protects extraction and distillation of the isobutanol, as well as steps for recovering the solids (distillers grains) produced during isobutanol fermentation. Protection of biobutanol processes that produce these grains is key in that distillers grains provide a significant economic advantage for Butamax's customers and provide local agriculture with a high-protein animal feed. With these added protections having priority back to 2005, the '328 patent extends Butamax's foundational patent estate to span key value drivers for commercialization.

The USPTO granted the '328 patent in view of the art cited against Butamax's '188 and '899 patents in reexamination requests filed by Gevo. This means that the USPTO has determined that the '328 patent is novel and inventive over all of the publications referenced in reexamination of the '188 and '889 patents.

"Grant of this new patent supports the Butamax view that the USPTO will ultimately affirm the '188 and '889 patents at the conclusion of the re-examination process," said Paul Beckwith, CEO Butamax.

Butamax will add the '328 patent to its ongoing litigation against Gevo. A decision on Butamax's request for preliminary injunction against Gevo for infringing its '889 patent is expected in the near term and trial for that lawsuit (which also includes the '188 patent) is scheduled for April 2013; subsequent trials are expected for July 2014.

About Butamax

Butamax™ Advanced Biofuels, LLC, a joint venture between BP and DuPont, was formed to develop and commercialize biobutanol as a next generation renewable biofuel for the transport market. The company benefits from the synergy of DuPont's proven industrial biotechnology experience and BP's global fuels market knowledge. Butamax's proprietary technology offers a cost-advantaged manufacturing process for isobutanol with value from field to pump. For more information, visit www.butamax.com.

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