

## **Dow Chemical, DuPont Said in Advanced Merger Talks, WSJ Says**

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Dow Chemical Co. and DuPont Co. are in advanced talks to merge, the Wall Street Journal reported on its website, citing people familiar with the plan who it didn't identify.

A merger may be announced in the coming days and it would be followed by a three-way breakup of the combined company, the newspaper reported. A deal hasn't yet been finalized and the talks could fall apart, the people said.

Dow Chemical's Chief Executive Officer Andrew Liveris is expected to be executive chairman of the new company and DuPont's Edward Breen will remain CEO, according to the newspaper. Rebecca Bentley, a Dow spokeswoman, declined to comment. No one at DuPont could immediately be reached for comment.

Such a deal would combine two of the most storied names in U.S. industry and mark the culmination of a tumultuous year for DuPont, whose former CEO won a proxy battle waged by an activist investor, only to step down in October. Liveris led Dow's recovery from near-insolvency during the financial crisis and the company has also faced pressure from an activist shareholder -- Dan Loeb's Third Point.

DuPont and Dow have in recent months confirmed they were weighing options for their agricultural-chemicals businesses, both of which supply genetically modified seeds. There's been widespread speculation about potential deals in that industry after Monsanto Co.'s bid for Syngenta AG, which was withdrawn in August. Monsanto CEO Hugh Grant said last month that "everybody has been talking to everybody" in the industry.

Wilmington, Delaware-based DuPont has a market capitalization of about \$58.4 billion based on Tuesday's closing share price while Dow Chemical has a market value of \$59 billion. On that basis, a merger would probably rank among the five largest deals announced this year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The volume of mergers and acquisitions in 2015 is already headed for a record, the data show