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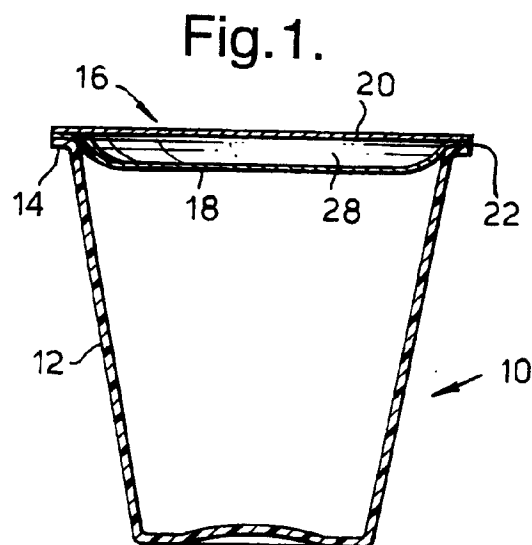
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(54) **Container.**

(57) A container for a ready-to-eat food product has a body (12), of plastics or paper, and a cover (16) consisting of an inner dish-shaped cover member (18) heat-sealed to the inner cover member (18). The cover members (18, 20) provide between them a space (28) to house a spoon (30) or other object (for example a sachet containing another food ingredient). The adhesion between the outer cover member (20) and the inner cover member (18) is less than that between the inner cover member (18) and the body (12), so that the inner cover member (18) remains in place as the outer cover member (20) is peeled off, by means of a tab (26). The inner cover member (18) can then be peeled off using a tab (24). The tab (24) on the inner cover member (18) can be folded inwards so that it is concealed between the inner and outer cover members (18, 20) until the outer cover member (20) is removed. The inner and outer cover members (18, 20) may be of metal foil.



This invention relates to containers.

More particularly, the invention relates to containers for ready-to-eat food products and the like, of the kind comprising a body formed of plastics or paper and a removable cover closing the mouth of the container.

It is known to provide such containers with a lid having means for retaining a disposable spoon or other implement for use in eating the contents of the container.

It is an object of this invention to provide an improved container of the kind referred to, in which an object such as a disposable spoon can be conveniently retained.

This invention consists of a container comprising a body formed of plastics or paper and a cover assembly closing the mouth of the container body, the cover assembly comprising an inner cover member heat-sealed to the mouth of the container body and an outer cover member heat-sealed to the inner member, the inner and/or outer cover members being shaped to provide a space between them to accommodate an object.

In one form of the invention, the inner cover member is a metal foil heat-sealed at its periphery to a rim formed at the mouth of the container body. The outer cover member may also be a metal foil, heat-sealed around its periphery to the periphery of the inner cover member.

Alternatively, the inner and outer cover members may be made of other materials, such as paper or film. For example, the outer cover member may be of transparent film, so that an object accommodated between the cover members is visible to the user.

In one form of the invention, the outer cover member has a tab by means of which it can be peeled from the container body, the adhesion between the outer cover member and the inner cover member being less than that between the inner cover member and the container body, so that the inner cover member remains in place as the outer cover member is removed.

Preferably, the inner cover member is provided with a tab by means of which it can be peeled from the container body. The tab may be folded inwards so that it is positioned in the space between the outer and inner cover members when both cover members are secured to the container body. Alternatively, the tab may be folded outwards to lie against the outer surface of the container body.

The invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a vertical cross-section through a container in accordance with the invention, and

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate stages in removal of a cover assembly from the container body.

Referring to the drawings, a container 10 for ready-to-eat foodstuffs comprises a plastics or paper

body 12 and a cover assembly 16. The body 12, which may be of any suitable shape, has a rim 14 extending around the mouth of the container.

The cover assembly 16 consists of an inner cover member 18 and an outer cover member 20, both formed of metal foil. The inner member is a shallow recessed diaphragm, and has an outer peripheral portion 22 which fits against, and is heat-sealed to the outer surface of the rim 14 of the container body. A tab 24 extends from the outer edge of the inner member 18. As shown in Figure 2, the tab 24 is folded inwards so as to be positioned between the inner cover member 18 and the outer cover member 20. Alternatively, the tab 24 may be folded outwards to lie against the outer surface of the body 12. The outer cover member 20 is flat and is heat-sealed to the outer surface of the peripheral portion 22 of the cover member 18. A tab 26 extends outwards from the outer edge of the outer cover member 20.

The dish shape of the inner cover member 18 forms a closed space 28 between the inner cover member 18 and the outer cover member 20, to accommodate a spoon 30 or other object, for example another implement or a sachet containing a food ingredient to be mixed with the foodstuff in the body of the container.

In filling the container, the foodstuff is supplied to the interior of the container body 12, and the inner cover member 18 is heat-sealed to the rim 14 of the body. The spoon 30 or other object is deposited in the dish formed by the cover member 18 and the outer cover member 20 is heat-sealed to the inner cover member 18. The coatings applied to the foils forming the inner and outer cover members are selected so that the adhesion between the outer cover member 20 and the inner cover member 18 is less than that between the inner cover member 18 and the container body 12.

Thus, in use of the container, when the user pulls the tab 26 to peel the outer cover member 20 from the container, as illustrated in Figure 2, the inner cover member 18 remains in place, so that the spoon 30 or other object can be taken out. The user can then unfold the tab 24 to peel the inner cover member 18 from the container body, as illustrated in Figure 3.

It will be appreciated that the plastics or paper body 12 of the container can be formed in any suitable manner, and that the heat sealing of the inner and outer cover members to the container body can be carried out using conventional techniques. The inner and outer cover members could be made of other materials, such as paper or film.

Claims

1. A container comprising a body formed of plastics or paper and a cover assembly closing the mouth

of the container body, the cover assembly comprising an inner cover member heat-sealed to the mouth of the container body and an outer cover member heat-sealed to the inner member, the inner and/or outer cover members being shaped to provide a space between them to accommodate an object.

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2. A container as claimed in Claim 1, in which the inner cover member is of metal foil, paper or film, and is heat-sealed at its periphery to a rim formed at the mouth of the container body.

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3. A container as claimed in Claim 2, in which the outer cover member is of metal foil, paper or film, heat-sealed around its periphery to the periphery of the inner cover member.

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4. A container as claimed in Claim 3, in which the outer cover member has a tab by means of which it can be peeled from the container body, the adhesion between the outer cover member and the inner cover member being less than that between the inner cover member and the container body, so that the inner cover member remains in place as the outer cover member is removed.

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5. A container as claimed in Claim 4, in which the inner cover member is provided with a tab by means of which it can be peeled from the container body.

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6. A container as claimed in Claim 5, in which the tab is folded so that it is positioned in the space between the outer and inner cover members when both cover members are secured to the container body.

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7. A container as claimed in Claim 5, in which the tab is folded so that it lies against the outer surface of the body of the container.

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Fig.1.

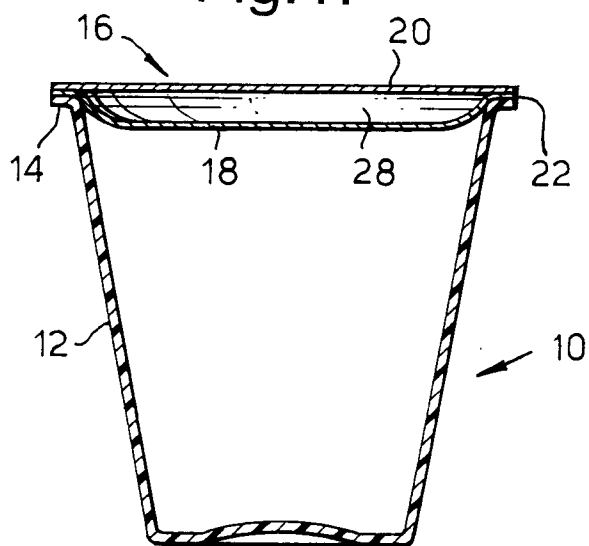


Fig.2.

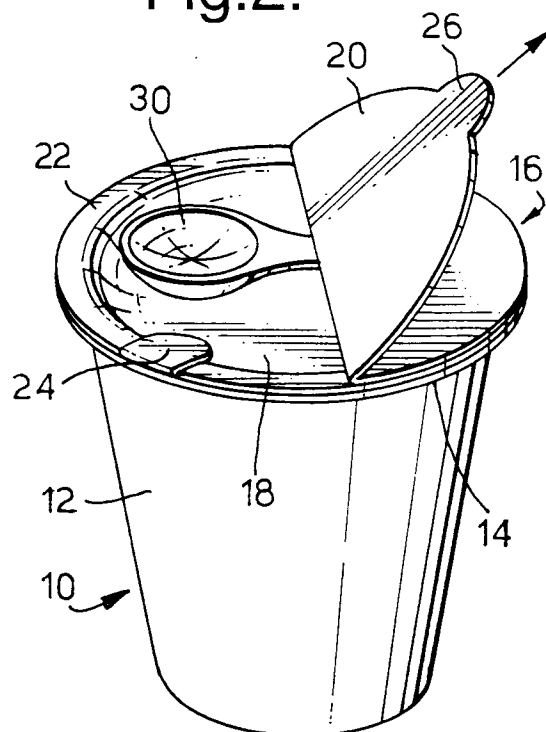
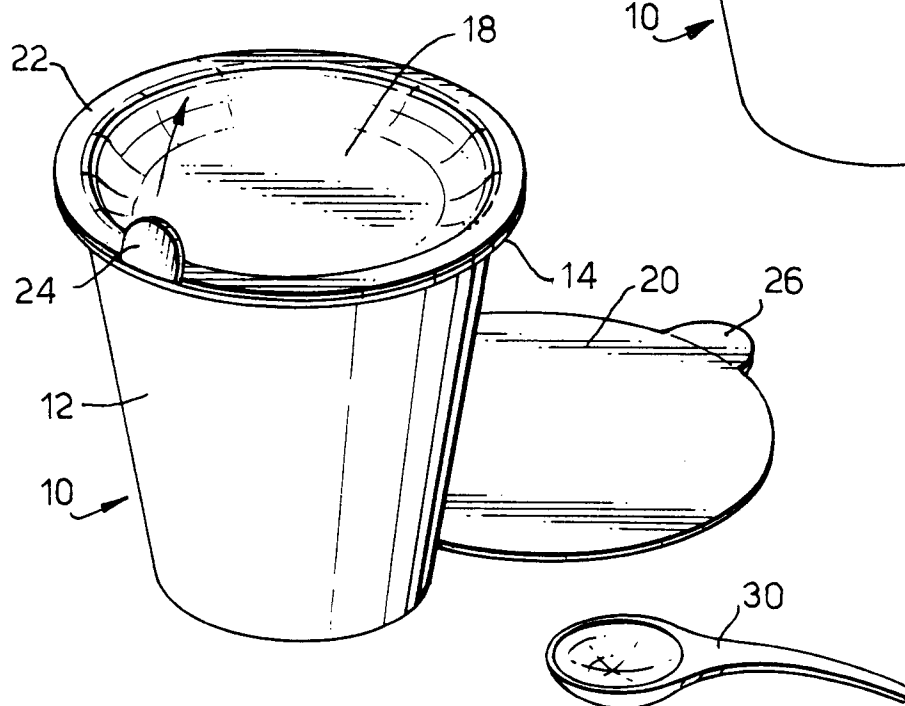


Fig.3.





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 95 30 2685

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	GB-A-1 180 059 (WADDINGTON LTD.) * page 1, line 69 - line 80; figure * ---	1-3	B65D51/24
X	US-A-3 465 873 (MUNZ) * column 2, line 54 - line 61; figure 9 * ---	1-3	
X	DE-A-19 55 818 (KIRSCHNER) * page 6, paragraph 2; figure 1 * ---	1-3	
X	FR-A-2 184 501 (FIRST DYNAMICS INC.) * claim 1; figures 1,2 * ---	1-3	
A	GB-A-2 238 767 (FEMCARE LTD.) * the whole document * ---	1-5	
X	FR-A-2 268 689 (ERCA) * the whole document * ---	1-3	
A	EP-A-0 087 687 (MUNK) * figures 3-5 * -----	1,2,5,6	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			B65D
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		21 August 1995	Gino, C
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
<p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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