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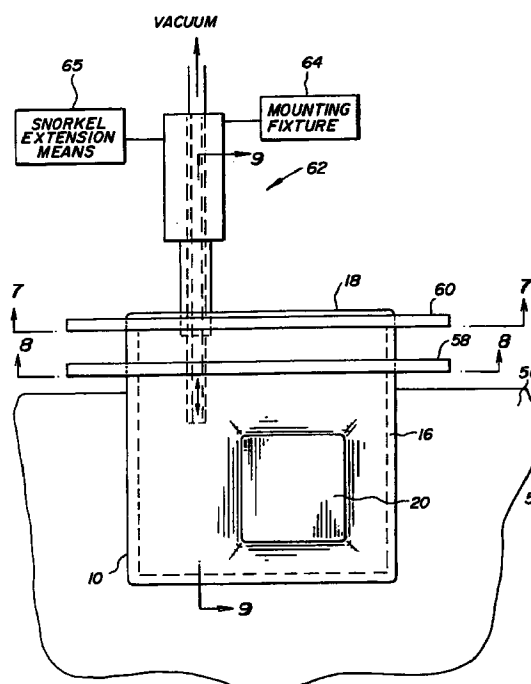
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(54) **Apparatus and method for vacuum sealing pouches**

(57) The invention relates to an apparatus and method for sealing object(s) in various size pouches (10). The apparatus comprises a frame (54) having a support surface (56), a seal assembly (58) including upper and lower sealing jaws (44), a clamp assembly (60) including upper and lower clamping jaws (50), and a snorkel assembly (62) having a snorkel guide member (68) telescopically surrounding a probe (70). The clamp assembly secures the pouch, and the probe is inserted into the pouch to evacuate the air from the pouch. Once the air is evacuated, the seal assembly seals the pouch, and the clamp assembly then releases the pouch.

FIG. 4



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 96 10 3240

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	EP-A-0 046 592 (SATO)	1,5	B65B31/06
Y	* the whole document *	2	

Y	GB-A-1 390 023 (KIPPING) * page 2, line 118 - page 3, line 6; figure 6 *	2	

A	DE-A-24 08 475 (STEGMANN) * the whole document *	6	

A	EP-A-0 288 147 (WEYANDT) * abstract *	6	

A	DE-A-16 04 553 (HESSER) * claims 1,2 *	6	

A	US-A-4 705 937 (MAREK) -----		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		21 October 1996	Claeys, H
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS 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 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			

EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)



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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ All claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claims.
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

X LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely

- 1: Apparatus and method for vacuum sealing of pouches (claims 1-5).
- 2: Method for applying heat to a sealing jaw by selecting a set of sealing parameters (claim 6).

- ☒ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respects of which search fees have been paid, namely claims.
- ☐ None of the further search fees has been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims.