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(54) A packaging for food products

(57) A packaging for food products (2), that can be arranged vertically or so that they can be read on a support surface, comprises a container tray (4) in which food products (2) are accommodated and which has an opening (7) of which the periphery is provided with a rim (8) projecting relative to the side walls (6), and a covering (9), that can be engaged in the opening (7), fitted in

a removable manner to the base of the container tray (4) that is provided with a respective rim (10) projecting from the side walls (6) of the container tray (4) in order to co-operate with the rim (8) of the opening (7) in supporting stably the packaging arranged vertically or so that they can be read on a support surface.

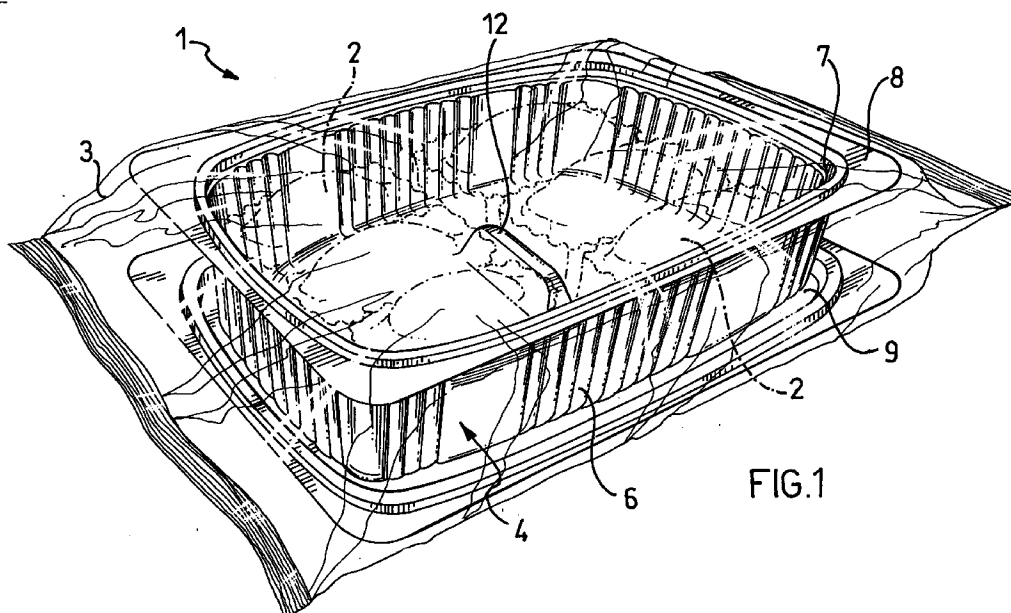


FIG.1

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Description

The present invention relates to packaging for food products in general and for oven products in particular, of the type comprising a container tray in which food products are accommodated and which has a base, side walls and an opening of which the periphery is provided with a rim projecting relative to the side walls, and comprising a sealed film wrapper in which the container tray and associated food products are wrapped.

It is well known that, in the field of packaging and presentation to the consumer of food products in general and oven products in particular, wide use is made of so-called container trays which, in order to preserve the organoleptic quality and freshness of the products contained therein, are completely closed and sealed in a generally transparent film wrapper.

It is also known that the upper portion of the packaging generally carries information for the consumer, that is to say, references to the type, quality and weight of the packaged products, as well as references to the manufacturing company such as the name, the company's colours, trade marks and so on, which enable the packaged product to be identified.

However, the recognised efficiency of contributing in the above-mentioned manner to the presentation of the products is substantially lacking when the packaging is arranged on shop shelves, such as, for example, in supermarkets.

The packages of the type in question inevitably have to be stacked on the shelves one on top of the other with the result that a large proportion of the information which it is most desired to communicate to the consumer at the moment of purchase is hidden.

On the other hand, the growth in the use of shop shelves or counters with inclined surfaces or other similar arrangements is obstructed by the economic burdens which their use entails, bearing in mind the space requirements of such structures and the current high cost of supermarket space.

There is an urgent requirement to provide packaging which, while ensuring adequate "protection" of the food products assigned to them, as well as satisfactory "information" for the consumer regarding the type and quality of the products, can be arranged vertically or so that they can be read on the shelves of conventional shelving arrangements.

Another urgent requirement in the above-mentioned packaging sector is that, once opened, it should be possible to re-close the sealed wrapper in order to preserve the freshness of the unconsumed product. At present, this requirement is satisfied by using clips or elastic bands or adhesive systems, but these require the use of wrappers that have dimensions greater than the dimensions of the container trays; this, in addition to increasing the space requirement of the packaging, makes them more difficult to balance in a stacked position on the shelves.

The aim of the present invention is to devise and provide packaging for food products which has structural characteristics which can at the same time satisfy the above-mentioned requirements, overcoming all the disadvantages mentioned above with reference to the prior art.

This aim and others which will become clear from the following description are achieved in accordance with the invention by a packaging of the type specified which is characterised in that it comprises a covering for the container tray which is fitted in a removable manner to the base thereof and is provided at its periphery with a respective projecting rim in order to co-operate with the rim of the opening in supporting the packaging in a position in which it can be read.

The characteristics and advantages of the invention will become clear from the following detailed description of a preferred embodiment which is given purely by way of non-limiting example with reference to the appended drawings, in which:

- Figure 1 is a perspective view of a packaging according to the present invention;
- Figure 2 is a perspective view of a plurality of packagings of the type of Figure 1;
- Figure 3 is a sectional view of a packaging of the type of Figure 1;
- Figure 4 is a perspective view of two components of a packaging of the type of Figure 1 in a different arrangement; and
- Figure 5 is a view in longitudinal section of Figure 4.

With reference to the appended drawings, a packaging for food products 2, in particular for oven products, is generally indicated 1.

The packaging 1 comprises a wrapper 3 and a container tray 4 produced from a suitable plastics material normally used for packaging food products.

The wrapper 3 is preferably produced from a polypropylene film which completely surrounds the container tray 4 in which the food products 2 are accommodated. The film is heat-sealed at the ends so that the food products 2 contained in the packaging 1 are suitably sealed.

The container tray 4 comprises a base 5 and side walls 6 delimiting an opening 7 at the top. The opening 7 is provided at its periphery with a rim 8 which projects therefrom relative to the above-mentioned side walls 6. The rim 8 has a transverse profile in the shape of a step.

A covering 9 is fitted removably to the base 5 of the container tray 4. The covering 9 is provided with a respective rim 10 projecting from the side walls 6 of the container tray 4. According to a preferred embodiment, the rim 10 of the covering 9 is homologous to the rim 8 of the container tray 4.

The covering 9 is provided with a central handle 11 produced in one piece therewith. The handle 11 is engaged in a mating slot 12 which is produced in one

piece with the base 5 and projects towards the inside of the container tray 4.

Preferably, the covering 9 has a transverse profile homologous to that of the opening 7 with which the covering 9 is to be removably engaged.

It should be emphasised that the engagement between the handle 11 and the slot 12 of the base 5 enables the covering 9 to be joined to the container tray 4 inside the packaging 1. As a result, the rim 10 of the covering 9 and the rim 8 of the opening 7 of the container tray 4 constitute two strong support lines which can be used over their entire extent and which enable the packaging 1 to be supported in a vertical position, or in a position in which it can be read, on a support surface 13 (Figures 2 and 3). Since the distance between the above-mentioned support lines is the same as the thickness of the packaging 1, the latter is balanced in a stable manner.

The covering 9 is readily separated from the base 5 of the container tray 4 when the wrapper 3 has been opened.

With reference to Figures 4 and 5, the covering 9 is advantageously engaged in the opening 7 in order to close the container tray 4 in sealed manner. This enables the food products that are not immediately consumed when the packaging 1 has been opened to be preserved inside the container tray 4.

The packaging according to the invention has the advantage that it can be arranged on a shelf so that it can be read and the purchasing public can see the face bearing all the information necessary to identify the product and the manufacturing company.

In addition, the packaging according to the invention solves the problem of preserving food products that are not immediately consumed when the packaging has been opened. The covering enables the container tray to be closed in sealed manner and to be opened in a simple and rapid manner without using clips, elastic bands or other equivalent closing means.

Another advantage of the present invention resides in the simplicity of implementation of the proposed solution which is excellently suited to the packaging machines currently used.

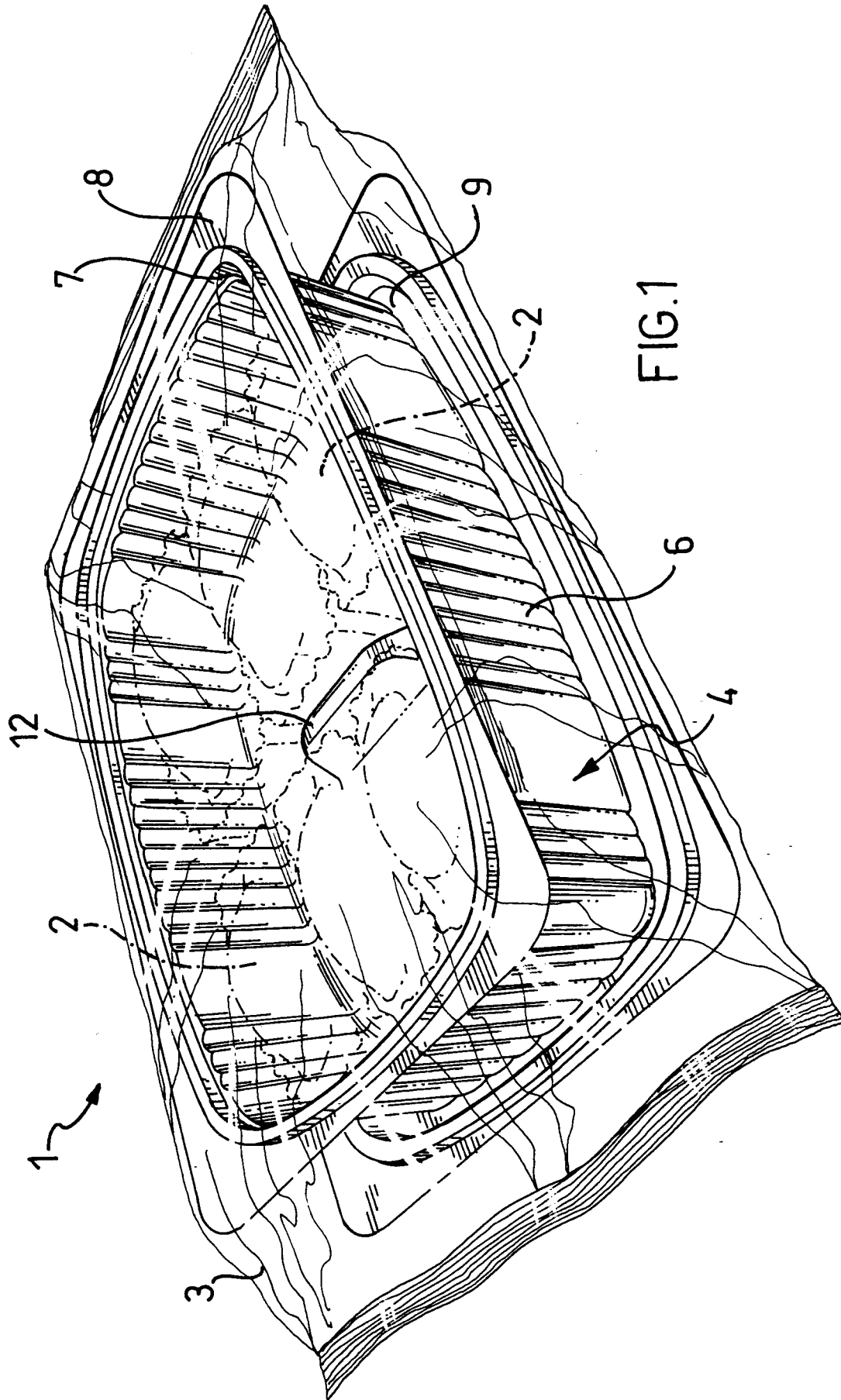
It will be appreciated that, in order to satisfy contingent and specific requirements, a person skilled in the art could modify and adapt the food product packaging described above or could replace elements thereof by other, functionally equivalent elements, without exceeding the scope of protection of the invention as defined by the following claims.

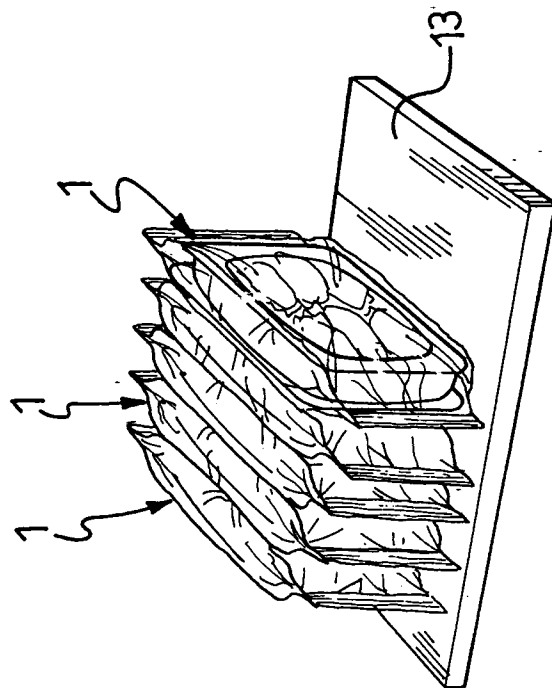
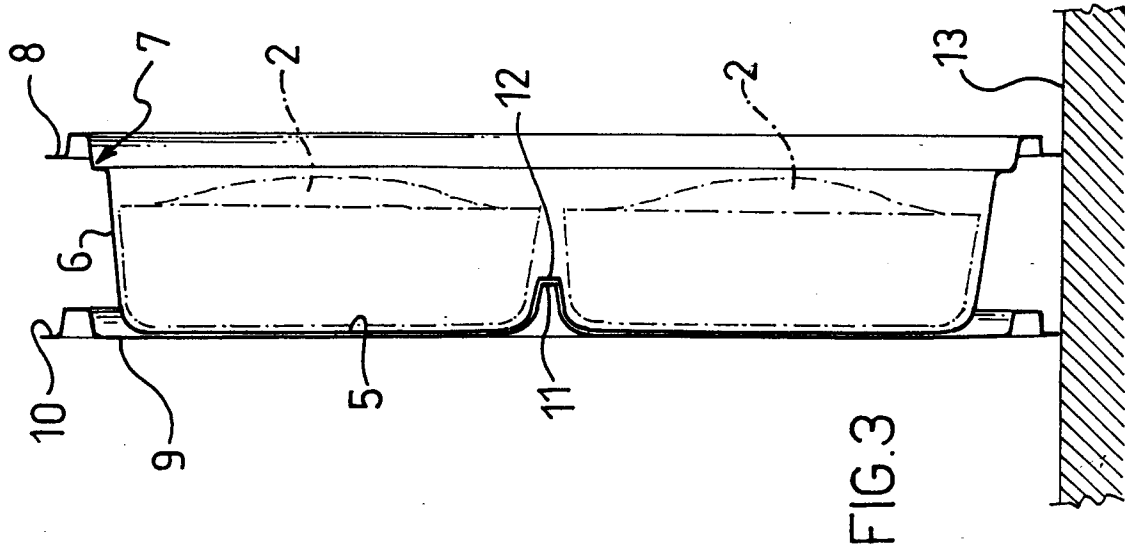
Claims

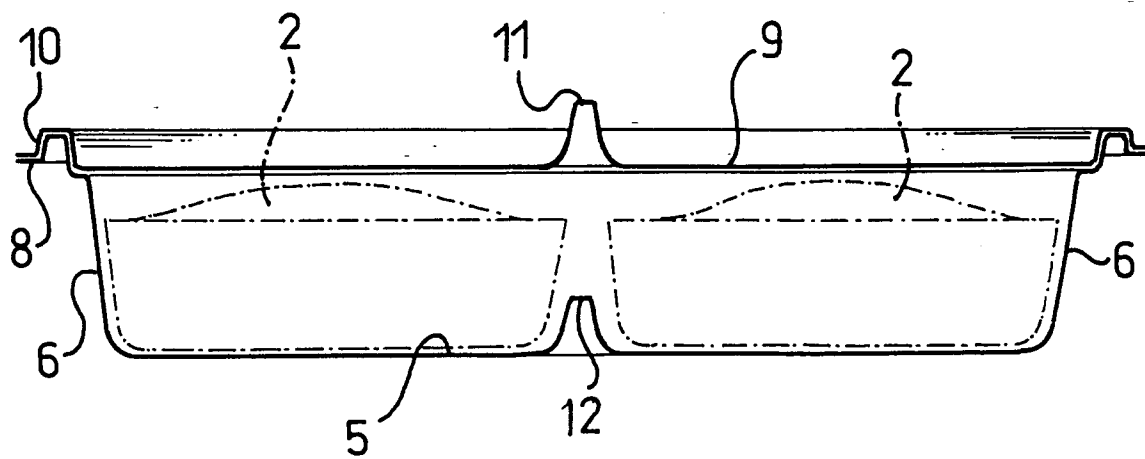
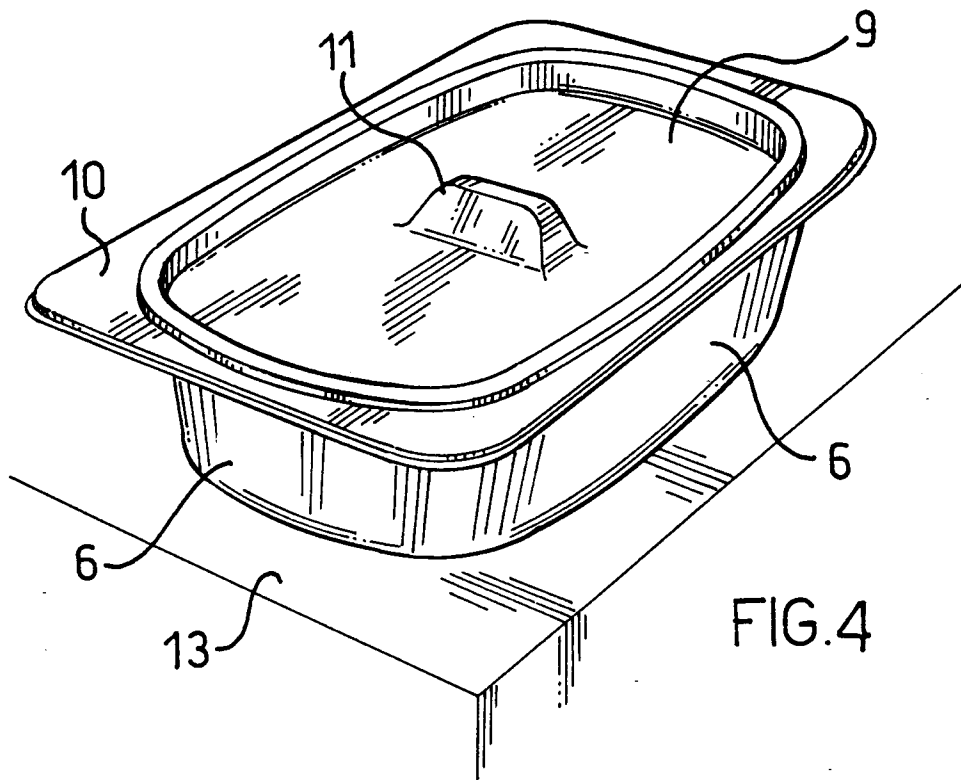
1. A packaging for food products in general and for oven products in particular, of the type comprising a container tray (4) in which food products (2) are accommodated and which has a base (5), side walls (6) and an opening (7) of which the periphery is provided with a rim (8) projecting relative to the

side walls (6), and comprising a sealed film wrapper (3) in which the container tray (4) and associated food products (2) are wrapped, characterised in that it comprises a covering (9) for the container tray (4) which is fitted in a removable manner to the base (5) thereof and is provided at its periphery with a respective projecting rim (10) in order to cooperate with the rim (8) of the opening (7) in supporting the packaging in a position in which it can be read.

2. A packaging according to Claim 1, characterised in that the transverse profile of the rim (8) of the opening (7) of the container tray (4) is in the shape of a step.
3. A packaging according to either of the preceding Claims, characterised in that the rim (10) of the covering (9) is homologous to the rim (8) of the opening (7) of the container tray (4).
4. A packaging according to Claim 1 or 3, characterised in that the covering (9) has a transverse profile homologous to that of the opening (7) of the container tray (4) for the engagement of the covering (9) in the opening (7).
5. A packaging according to Claim 1 or 3, characterised in that the base (5) comprises a slot (12) which projects towards the inside of the container tray (4) and in which a handle (11) of the covering (9) is inserted and mated with the slot (12).
6. A packaging according to Claim 5, characterised in that the handle (11) and the slot (12) are produced in one piece with the covering (9) and the base 5, respectively.









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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 95 20 2144

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-0 391 712 (SLAGTERISELSKABET WENBO) 10 October 1990	1,3,4	B65D77/00 B65D43/06
Y	* column 1, line 58 - column 2, line 16; figure 1 *	2,5,6	

Y	DE-U-92 05 311 (SILVER-PLASTICS GMBH) 30 July 1992 * page 3, line 37 - page 4, line 33; figures 1-9 *	2,5,6	

A	GB-A-1 501 301 (BORDEN LTD) 15 February 1978 * page 2, line 58-86; figures 1-4 *	5,6	

			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			B65D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 16 July 1996	Examiner Vollering, J
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			

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