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(54) Multi-pack of units held together by means of an adhesive sticker

(57) A multi-pack (10) of units (11) held together by means of at least one first adhesive sticker (12) comprising weakening lines (17) dividing the sticker into sections (13,14,15,16). Each section is adhered to one unit respectively, and each section comprises at least one rim area (19) facing the unit which is non-sticky and at least partly separated from rim areas of neighbouring sections. The non-sticky (19) areas advantageously have the form of tongues.

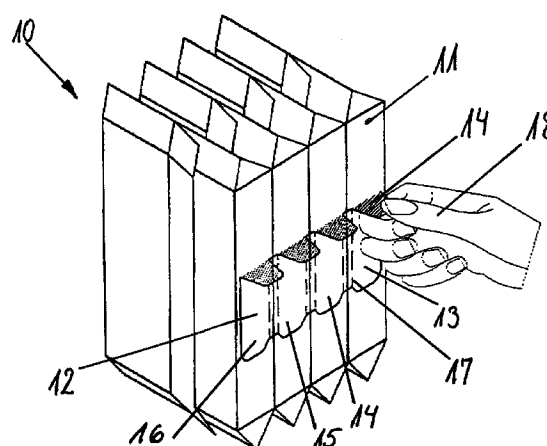


Fig. 1

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Description

The present invention relates to an easy dividable multi-pack of units or items held together by means of an adhesive sticker which by pulling or peeling a tongue can be divided into sections in order to release the units or items from the multi-pack, one or more at a time. The invention also relates to an adhesive sticker for such a purpose and to a method for making such a multi-pack.

Confectionery product such as cakes, chocolate bars etc. are often sold as multi-pack holding together individually packed confectionery items. The individually packed items may be sold in a bag or in a box. Such an additional package is undesirable for environmental and cost reasons.

Multi-packs are also known in the form of individually packed units held together by tape or adhesive bands. This is an easy and inexpensive way of combining individually packed units. Satisfactory separation of the packed items or units is, however, difficult as the tape tends to tear openings in the package when it is being taken off. This is undesirable as the point of individually enclosing the bars is to retain the freshness of the packed product. Furthermore, not only one single package but several are likely to be released from the multi-pack when the tape is being released. Alternatively, such a multi-pack can be separated by means of a knife.

It is desirable to be able to release one packed unit or item at a time from the multi-pack. An attempt to make such a package has been done by providing a tape having weakenings along the line where neighbouring packed units or items are abutting. This kind of multi-pack does, however, suffer from a serious drawback namely that in order to be able to separate one (or more) packed unit or item from the remaining packed items in the multi-pack one has to grip around the packed items themselves in order to tear the tape apart along the weakenings. This means that the product within the package will be squeezed and/or bent, and consequently the shape and presentation of the product in the package will be negatively affected. Products such as confectionery products, cakes etc. frequently have a very fragile structure and shape and presentation can therefore be ruined by very little pressure.

The present invention overcomes the above described difficulties and provides a multi-pack which

- avoids unnecessary use of additional cover package of once packed units or items, and hence saves material and costs;
- provides a multi-pack easy dividable for the consumers, wherein the individually packed units or items can be separated individually or in pairs etc.;
- allows the package to be opened without bending or deforming the content of the package.

- avoids unnecessary wrapping of units or items which do not need wrapping at all.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a multi-pack of units held together by means of at least one first adhesive sticker comprising weakening lines dividing the sticker into sections, wherein each section is adhered to one unit, respectively, and each section comprises at least one rim area facing the unit which is non-sticky and at least partly separated from rim areas of neighbouring sections.

With a multi-pack according to the invention the units can be held together by means of one or more stickers. The multi-pack design allows the consumer to separate one or more individual units at a time from the multi-pack. This is done by simply gripping the non-sticky areas of the sticker and pulling. The sticker will then divide along the weakening lines of the section which is being pulled. Hence, the consumer will, by pulling a non-sticky area, release the respective section of the sticker from the unit and from the part of sticker remaining on the multi-pack. Consequently, this releases the unit from the multi-pack. The above described release of the unit from the multi-pack can be done without any notable pressure, squeezing or bending of the units.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention the non-sticky areas have the form of tongues in order to ease the separation for the consumer. The non-sticky areas may also have rectangular, triangular shape etc. Each unit may comprise one or more items held together or just be one single item.

Furthermore, to allow an easy and uncomplicated detachment of the individual units from the multi-pack, the sticker may be provided with additional weakening lines positioned substantially parallel to the weakening line dividing the sticker into sections.

A supportive sticker may be provided e.g. on the units opposite the first adhesive sticker. Said sticker may be of the type described above or a second adhesive sticker comprising weakening lines dividing the sticker into sections. Said sections are adhered to the respective units. Alternatively, the second sticker may be adhered to a bottom side of the units.

The adhesive sticker may be adhesive on one or on both sides. The units are advantageously positioned parallelly abutting. The units may be unwrapped or wrapped. If the units are unwrapped they should have a surface onto which the sticker can be adhered and subsequently peeled off again.

For most confectionery products it is preferred that the units are wrapped individually.

The stickers may e.g. be made from sheet material such as paper sheets, plastic films such as Polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester, polystyrene, or multi-layer composed by the mentioned plastics. Alternatively, the sticker be made from foil e.g. aluminium or multi-layer paper/plastics or paper/foil or foil/plastics or paper/foil/plastics.

The adhesive is preferably an acrylic adhesive or a synthetic rubber adhesive. When used in connection with individually packed or wrapped units the adhesive allows the sticker to be peelable or tearable from the package or wrapping. Conveniently, the sticker film or foil has a thickness in the range of 50 to 150 microns, preferably about 100 microns and the adhesive layer thickness is in the range of 10 to 30 grams/square meter, preferably about 20 grams/square meter.

In another aspect, the invention relates to an adhesive sticker for holding together units in a multi-pack, said adhesive sticker comprises weakening lines dividing the sticker into sections comprising at least one rim area which is non-sticky and at least partly separated from rim areas of neighbouring sections. The adhesive sticker may have the characteristics described above.

The invention also relates to a method for multi-packing units by means of at least one adhesive sticker as described above. Said method comprises positioning the units in a row and applying the adhesive sticker to the units so that each section is adhered to one unit respectively, and that the weakening lines of the adhesive sticker are positioned substantially between the neighbouring units. For many purposes the units may advantageously be packed or wrapped individually or in groups.

It should be understood that the present invention may not only be advantageously applied in connection with food products such as confectionery, cakes etc. but also in connection with other unit type products. Therefore, the invention is not limited to the area of food products.

The multi-pack, adhesive sticker and method according to the invention will now be described below in greater detail with reference to the accompanying drawings by way of example wherein

Fig. 1 is a schematically perspective view of a multi-pack according to the invention comprising an adhesive sticker provided with non-sticky tongues in which the separation of the multi-pack is demonstrated,

Fig. 2 is a schematically top view of the adhesive sticker according to the invention, and

Fig. 3 is a schematically perspective view of an additional adhesive sticker for the support of the package.

Fig. 1 shows a multi-pack 10 according to the invention together with a hand 18 illustrating how to separate one unit 11 from the remaining part of the multi-pack 10. The multi-pack 10 in Fig. 1 comprises four individually packed units 10 held together by a first adhesive sticker 12. The adhesive sticker 12 comprises weakening lines 17 which divide the sticker into sections 13, 14, 15, and 16. Each section is adhered to one unit. For example, section 16 is attached to unit 11. The weakening lines 17 are running substantially along the abutting communication between the neighbouring units 11.

The adhesive sticker 12 further comprises rim areas 19 facing the units 11 which are non-sticky. In the illustration in Fig. 1 the rim areas 19 are in the shape of tongues. Larger or different shapes of non-sticky rim parts may be preferred in order to make the grip better for the consumer separating the multi-pack.

As illustrated in Fig. 3, a preferred embodiment of the multi-pack according to the invention comprises a second adhesive sticker 21. This sticker may or may not comprise tongues for dividing the pack. After pulling off the first tongue, the partly detached unit can easier be separated from the remaining part of the multi-pack. Alternatively, the multi-pack may be held together by two first adhesive stickers.

Releasing of a unit from the multi-pack can be done as follows: The consumer grips tongue 19 with the hand 18 and pulls. The tongue 19 will then release section 13 of the sticker 12 from unit 11. Furthermore, section 13 will be released from the connected section 14 along the weakening line 19. If the multi-pack comprises only one adhesive sticker unit 11 will then be released. If a second adhesive sticker 21, as shown in Fig. 3, is provided, e.g. on the opposite side of the multi-pack, this has to be divided too. This may be done in a similar way if the second sticker is provided with non-sticky rim areas or by simply drawing the partly separated unit away from the multi-pack. The second sticker will then divide along the weakening line in question or just be released from the unit.

A schematically top view of an adhesive sticker 12 according to the invention is shown in Fig. 2. The sticker 12 comprises weakening lines 17 dividing the sticker into sections 13, 14, 15, and 16. Each section comprises a non-sticky rim area 19. An at least partial detachment or gap between the neighbouring non-sticky rim areas 19 is referred to with reference numeral 22. As shown here the non-sticky areas 19 are detached, however, division of the non-sticky areas 19 may be along weakening lines.

Claims

1. A multi-pack of units held together by means of at least one first adhesive sticker comprising weakening lines dividing the sticker into sections, wherein each section is adhered to one unit respectively, and each section comprises at least one rim area facing the unit which is non-sticky and at least partly separated from rim areas of neighbouring sections.
2. A multi-pack according to claim 1, wherein at least one second adhesive sticker comprising weakening lines dividing the sticker into sections is provided, said sections being adhered to the respective units, on another side of the unit than that to which the first sticker is adhered.
3. A multi-pack according to claim 1, wherein the adhesive stickers are positioned on two opposite

sides of the units.

4. A multi-pack according to claims 1 to 3, wherein the units are individually packed. 5
5. A multi-pack according to claims 1 to 4, wherein the non-sticky areas have the form of tongues. 10
6. A multi-pack according to claims 1 to 5, wherein the sticker is provided with additional weakening lines which are positioned substantially parallel to the weakening lines dividing the sticker into sections. 15
7. An adhesive sticker for holding together units in a multi-pack, said adhesive sticker comprises weakening lines dividing the sticker into sections comprising at least one rim area which is non-sticky and at least partly separated from rim areas of neighbouring sections. 20
8. An adhesive band according to claim 7, wherein the adhesive sticker is for multi-packs of individually packed units. 25
9. A method for multi-packing units by means of at least one adhesive sticker according to claims 7 and 8, said method comprising 30

positioning the units in a row and applying the adhesive sticker to the units so that each section is adhered to one unit respectively, and that the weakening lines of the adhesive sticker are positioned substantially between the neighbouring units. 35
10. A method for multi-packing units according to claim 9, wherein the units are packed individually. 40

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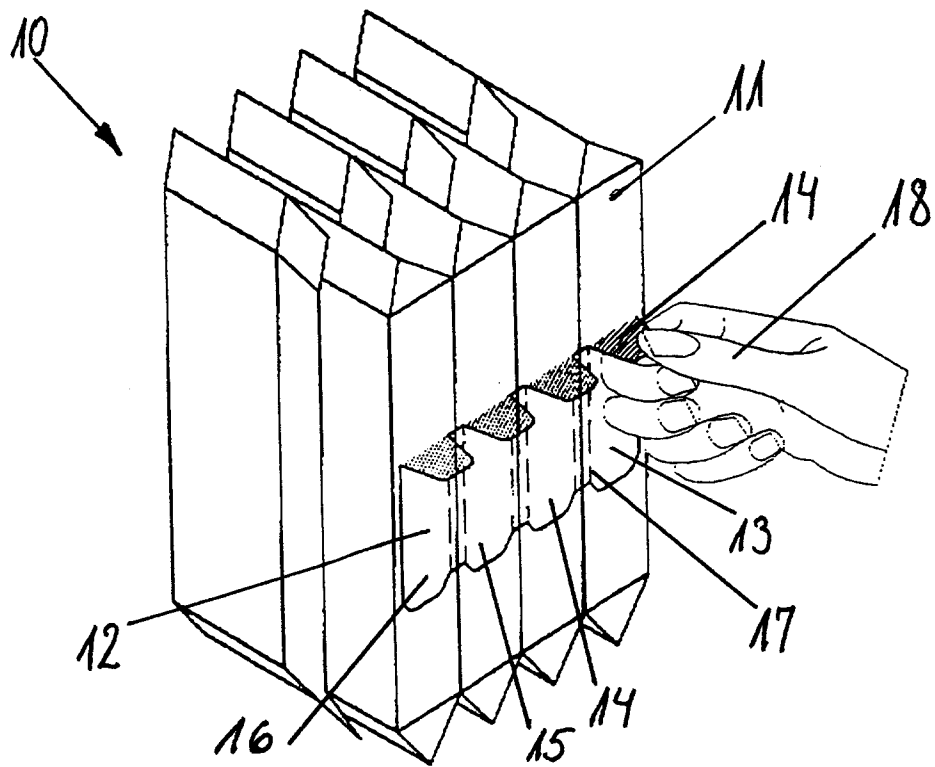


Fig. 1

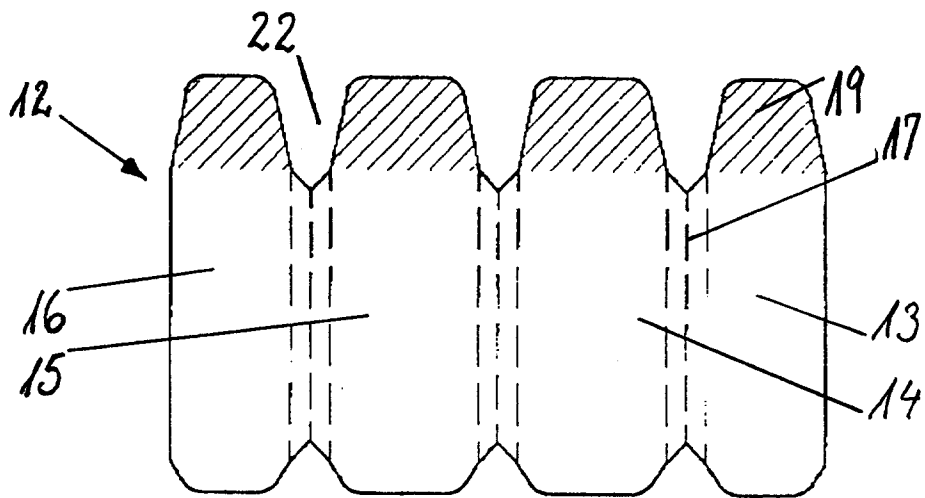


Fig. 2

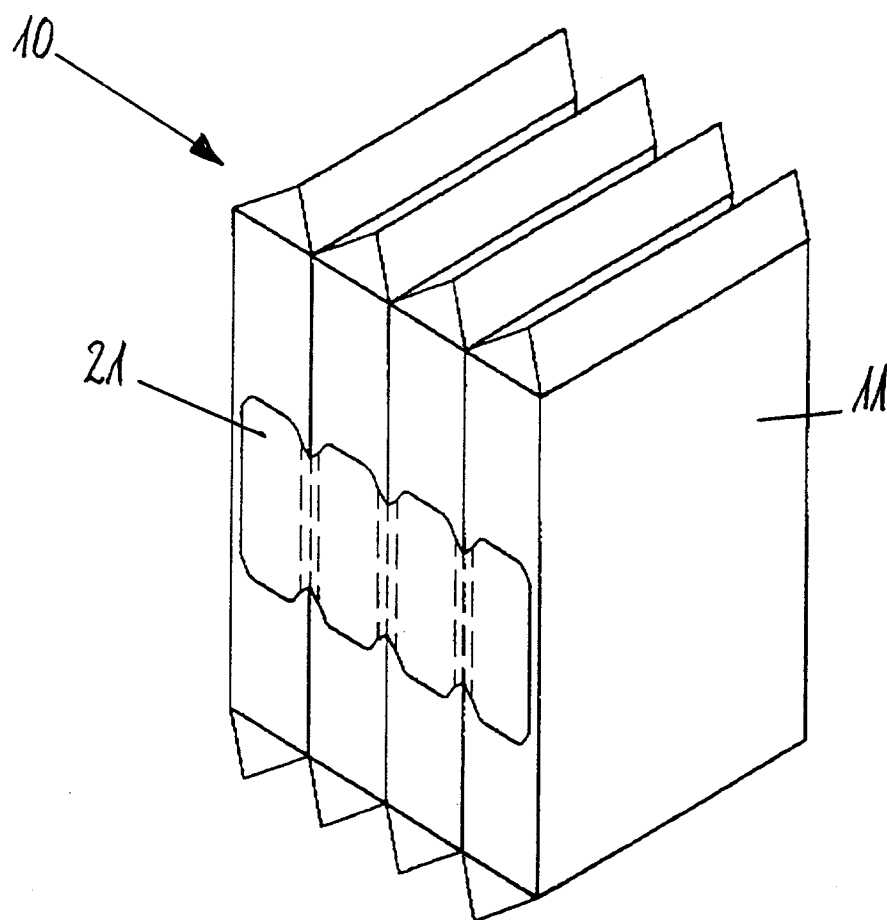


Fig. 3



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 95 20 2151

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)
A	DE-U-92 06 560 (SUCHARD) * the whole document * ---	1-4,7-10	B65D71/00
A	DE-A-29 31 118 (THE LION FAT AND OIL CO) * page 10, line 31 - page 11, line 30; figures 5-9 * ---	1,7,9	
A	FR-A-2 267 753 (MODERN MEDICAL CONCEPTS) ---		
A	US-A-3 221 876 (CURRIE) -----		
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			B65D B65B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 4 January 1996	Examiner Martens, L
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