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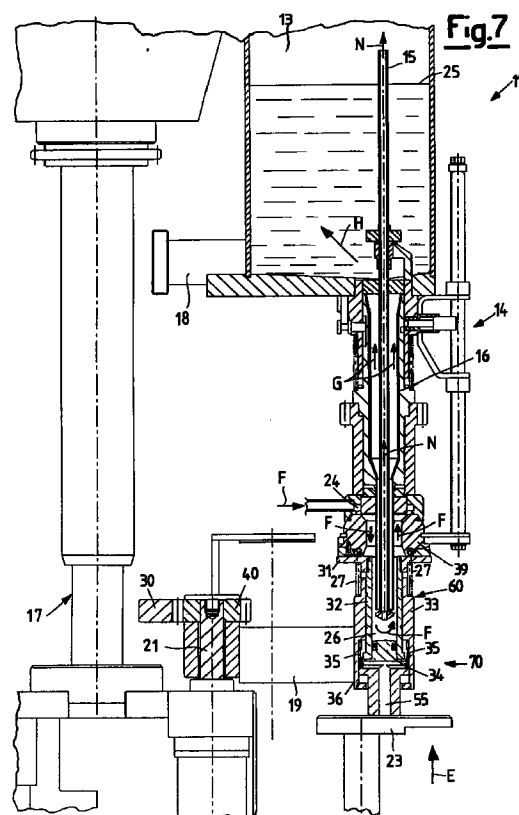
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(54) **Method and apparatus for sanitizing filling machines and systems, particularly for food products**

(57) A method for sanitizing filling machines (111) and systems (11) in the food industry, for the purpose of reducing the microbic load, and the apparatus used for implementing this method.

The main characteristic of the method of the present invention is that it uses a collection and drainage device (70) for the sanitizer liquid comprising a hollow cylinder (32) into which the liquid flows, a retention disc (31) arranged to hermetically seal the device (70) when it comes into contact with the cock (39) of the filling section (14), and a movable piston (34) arranged to close the cylinder (32) (and at the same time to open the inlet valve (24) for the sanitizer liquid) during liquid circulation, and to open the cylinder (32) during the draining of the liquid from a cup (26).



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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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 39 27 402 A (HOLSTEIN UND KAPPERT) * column 2, line 24-52; figures 1-4 * ---	1,2	B65B55/02 B67C3/00
A	EP 0 659 682 A (ORTMANN+HERBST) * column 3, line 1 - column 4, line 9; figures 1,2 * ---	1,2	
A	US 4 024 896 A (SHIBUYA KOGYO COMPANY) * column 7, line 8-64; figures 6-9 * -----	1,2	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			B65B B67C
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 10 October 1997	Examiner Lenoir, C
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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