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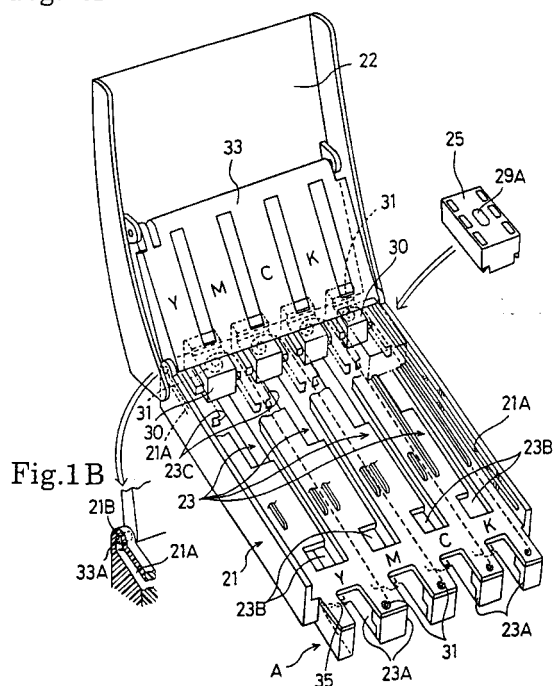
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(54) **Ink supplying apparatus**

(57) An ink supplying apparatus for an ink jet recording apparatus (1) is provided that includes an ink case (21) which can store ink pellets (20) such that the ink pellets are movable toward a discharging section. The ink case includes a plurality of accommodating channel sections (23) arranged parallel to each other so as to correspond to a plurality of colors of the ink pellets; a pellet pressing member and an urging member arranged respectively in each of the accommodating channel sections for urging the ink pellets in each of the accommodating channel sections toward the discharging section; and a discharging mechanism (36) for supplying the ink pellet at a supplying section of each of the discharging sections to a tank section (16) of the ink jet recording apparatus.

Fig.1A





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## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 97 30 5524

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	US 4 739 339 A (DEYOUNG ET AL.) 19 April 1988	1,7	B41J2/175
A	* column 5, line 34 - line 55; figures 9-12 *	2-6,8,9	
X	--- PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 9, no. 297 (M-432) '2020!, 25 November 1985 & JP 60 135260 A (NIPPON DENSHIN DENWA KOSHA), 18 July 1985	1	
Y	* abstract *	2-4,6	
Y	EP 0 519 700 A (TEKTRONIX, INC.) 23 December 1992	2-4,6, 10,20	
A	* column 6, line 1 - column 14, line 9; figures 1-12A *	1,5,7-9, 11-19	
A	--- EP 0 506 403 A (TEKTRONIX, INC.) 30 September 1992 * column 2, line 20 - column 4, line 49; figures 1-4A *	1-9	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
A	--- GB 2 237 773 A (DATAPRODUCTS CORPORATION) 15 May 1991 * page 5, line 2 - page 14, line 33; figures 1-3 *	1,10,20	B41J
Y	--- EP 0 338 590 A (SEIKO EPSON CORPORATION) 25 October 1989	10,20	
A	* column 6, line 28 - column 8, line 49; figures 1A-5 *	11-19	
A	--- US 4 961 081 A (SHIGA) 2 October 1990 * column 3, line 46 - column 4, line 11; figures 1-7 *	10,20	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search <b>THE HAGUE</b>		Date of completion of the search <b>12 November 1998</b>	Examiner <b>Rivero, C</b>
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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#### CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

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

- ☐ Only part of the claims 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 claim(s):
- ☐ 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.

#### LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

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

see sheet B

- ☒ 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 respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☐ None 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 invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:



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# EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 97 30 5524

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	US 4 870 430 A (DAGGETT ET AL.) 26 September 1989 * column 4, line 40 - column 8, line 46; figures 1-3 *	10,20	
A	US 4 609 924 A (DE YOUNG) 2 September 1986 * column 2, line 54 - column 4, line 56; figures 1-5 *	10,20	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12 November 1998	Examiner Rivero, 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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**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION  
SHEET B**

Application Number  
EP 97 30 5524

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

1. Claims: 1-9

Ink supply apparatus for supplying an ink pellet having an urging mechanism and at least one supplying mechanism.

2. Claims: 10-19

Ink supplying apparatus for supplying ink pellets having an ink case, an urging mechanism and an urging releasing mechanism

3. Claim : 20

Ink supply apparatus for supplying ink pellets having an ink case, an urging mechanism, an urging releasing mechanism, a supplying mechanism and a cover.