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(54) **Egg handling system**

(57) An egg handling system comprising an inclined shaker tray 20 supplied with eggs and a row of delivery stations 28 at the bottom edge of the tray, each for receiving an egg from the tray and having release means 32,33 for releasing the egg. Delivery station control means (a timer, or an alignment sensor) ensure that the egg in the delivery station is aligned before the egg is

released. The eggs roll down a slight incline to the bottom edge of the tray, which by the manner of its oscillation aligns the eggs. The exit of the eggs from the delivery station may be controlled to rotate the egg in a direction dependent on its orientation so as to orient the egg into a predetermined orientation, or the eggs can be directed to two different cassettes in dependence on their orientation.

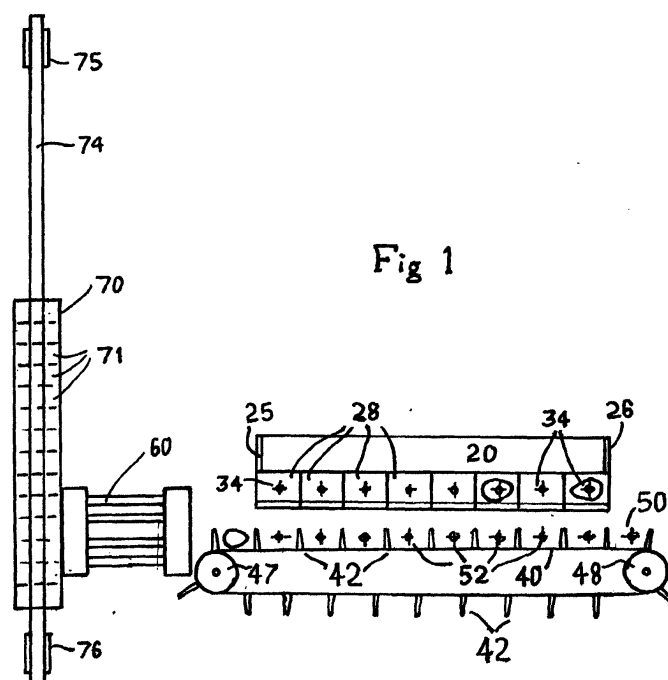


Fig 1

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 98 30 6686

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	GB 967 454 A (D. VAN KATWIJK) 19 August 1964 * page 2, line 15-54; figures 1-6 * ---	1,4,7,9,12	B65B23/06
X	US 3 260 348 A (NIEDERER ET AL.) 12 July 1966 * column 1, line 56 - column 3, line 5; figures 1,2 * ---	1,4,9,10	
A	GB 959 161 A (PAGE-DETROIT) 27 May 1964 * page 2, line 36 - page 3, line 12; figures 1,2,4,9-12 * -----	4,7,9,10	
<p>---The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</p>			<p>TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)</p> <p>B65B A01K</p>
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		20 April 1999	Grentzius, W
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>& : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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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):

11, 12

- ☐ 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:

- ☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.

- ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.

- ☐ 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:

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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20-04-1999

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
GB 967454 A		NONE	
US 3260348 A	12-07-1966	NONE	
GB 959161 A		NONE	

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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82