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(72) Inventor: **Ciolti, Stefano**
20020 Arese (Milano) (IT)

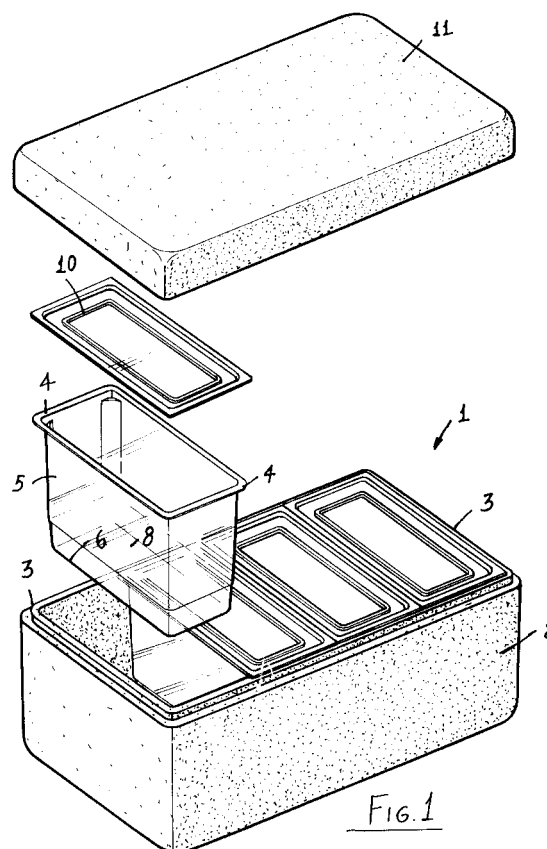
(74) Representative: **Cicogna, Franco**
Ufficio Internazionale Brevetti
Dott.Prof. Franco Cicogna
Via Visconti di Modrone, 14/A
20122 Milano (IT)

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(71) Applicant: **S.C. Servizi Commerciali S.A.S. di**
Stefano Ciolti & C.
20020 Arese (Milano) (IT)

(54) **Vessel for food products, in particular for ice cream and the like**

(57) A vessel (1) for food products, specifically designed for ice cream and the like, comprises a vessel body (2) made of a thermally insulating material and having at least a top opening and adapted to hold therein a plurality of cups (5) which can be abutted against the edge (3) of the opening so that the cups (5) do not contact the inner wall (9) of the vessel body (2), the cups (5) and vessel body (2) being provided with respective covers (10,11).



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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a vessel for food products, specifically designed for ice cream and the like.

[0002] As known, an ice cream product is conventionally sold in packages comprising vessels holding therein one or more types of ice cream, of different qualities of tastes.

[0003] The different ice cream products, in particular, are arranged in the vessel in which no specifically designed partition member is located, thereby essentially originating two types of problems.

[0004] The first is that as the consumer removes the different ice cream products from the vessel, the different ice cream products are mixed with one another, and this mainly as the ice cream starts to dissolve after few minutes upon removal from a freezer.

[0005] The second problem is that the ice cream packages have necessarily a preset number and type of combinations, and, accordingly, it is not possible to unexpensively package a great number of ice cream product combinations.

[0006] Moreover, a consumer cannot buy exclusively the ice cream products preferred thereby.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] Accordingly, the aim of the present invention is to provide a vessel for food products, specifically designed for ice cream and the like products, which easily overcomes the above mentioned drawbacks.

[0008] Within the scope of the above mentioned aim, a main object of the present invention is to provide such a vessel for food products, specifically designed for ice cream products and the like, which allows to easily change, during the ice cream making and marketing steps, the number and type of ice cream products or tastes held in said vessel.

[0009] Another object of the present invention is to provide such a vessel for food products, in particular for ice cream products, which provides a very good thermal insulation and, consequently, an optimum preserving of the food product held therein.

[0010] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide such a vessel for food products, in particular for ice cream and the like products, which is very advantageous from a mere economic standpoint.

[0011] According to one aspect of the present invention, the above mentioned aim and objects, as well as yet other objects, are achieved by a vessel for food products, specifically designed for ice cream and the like products, characterized in that said vessel comprises a vessel body made of a thermally insulating material, including at least a top opening and adapted to hold therein a plurality of cups which can be caused to abut against

an edge of said opening, thereby preventing said cup from contacting the inner wall of said vessel body, said cups and vessel body being provided with respective covers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Further characteristics and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent hereinafter from the following detailed disclosure of a preferred, though not exclusive, embodiment of the invention, which is illustrated, by way of indicative, but not limitative, example in the accompanying drawings, where:

Figure 1 is an exploded perspective view of the vessel according to the present invention;

Figure 2 is a further perspective view of the vessel according to the invention;

Figure 3 is an elevation cross-sectional view taken substantially along the section line III-III of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is an exploded view of the vessel according to the invention, said vessel having a circular shape; Figure 5 is a top plan view of the circular vessel, partitioned into three cups;

and

Figure 6 is a top plan view of the circular vessel, partitioned into six cups.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0013] With reference to the number references of the above mentioned figures, the vessel for food products, specifically designed for ice cream and the like products, according to the present invention, generally indicated by the reference number 1, comprises a vessel body 2, advantageously made of a thermally insulating material, such as foamed polystyrene.

[0014] Figures 1 to 3 show a vessel body having a prismatic shape, and being provided with a top opening having a top edge or rim, thereagainst the edge portion 4 of corresponding cups 5 can be caused to abut.

[0015] Each cup 5 is provided with a rectangular top side having such a size as to mate with the top opening of the vessel body, thereby a plurality of cups can be easily arranged in said vessel body.

[0016] Figures 1 to 3 show a vessel provided with four cups.

[0017] In this connection it should be apparent that the number of said cups can be easily changed.

[0018] Each cup has a vertical extension and the bottom 6 of each cup 5 is arranged at a set spacing from the bottom 7 of the vessel body 2.

[0019] Moreover, each cup is downwardly tapered for holding the side walls 8 of the cup spaced from the side walls 9 of the vessel body, and, moreover, for facilitating the stacking of said cups within one another, in a non use condition.

[0020] Thus, between the inner cups 5 and inner walls 7 and 9 of the vessel body a gap is formed, said vessel body contacting said cups exclusively at the respective edges or rims 3 and 4, thereby reducing to a minimum possible thermal bridges and providing a very good thermal insulation.

[0021] As shown, each said cup 5 is provided with a corresponding cover 10.

[0022] The vessel body is provided, in turn, with a vessel body cover 11 having an undercut 12 for mating with the edges 4 of the cups 5 and edges of the covers 10 of said cups.

[0023] Figures 4, 5 and 6 show several vessels including cylindric vessel bodies 13, instead of prismatic vessel bodies as in the previous embodiment, designed for housing therein a plurality of cups 14, 114 of circular sector cross section and having a size which can vary depending on the number of cups to be arranged in each vessel.

[0024] From the above disclosure it should be apparent that the invention fully achieves the intended aim and objects, since the invention provides a vessel for food products, in particular for ice cream and the like products, in which the number and type of product combinations can be easily changed both in the making and in the marketing steps.

[0025] Actually, it would be easily possible to provide a lot of differently sized cups and combine said cups in each vessel according to a nearly infinite number of combinations.

[0026] Its would be also possible, by using only a type of standardized size cup, to provide more than a cup for each ice cream taste, thereby allowing to easily modify the ice cream taste rates.

[0027] The vessel according to the invention, as above disclosed, is susceptible to several modifications and variations, all of which will come within the scope of the invention.

[0028] Moreover, all of the constructional details can be replaced by other technically equivalent elements.

[0029] In practicing the invention, the used materials, as well as the contingent size and shapes, can be any, according to requirements.

2. A vessel according to Claim 1, characterized in that each cup has a vertical size so designed that the bottom of said cup is spaced at a set spacing from the bottom of said vessel body.

3. A vessel according to Claim 1, characterized in that each cup is tapered downwardly in order to hold the side wall of said cup spaced from the side wall of the vessel body.

4. A vessel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that each said cup is provided with a cup cover.

5. A vessel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said vessel body is provided with a vessel body cover having a cutout for mating the edges of said cups and edges of said cup covers.

6. A vessel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said vessel comprises a cylindric vessel body, designed for housing therein variable size circular sector cross section cups, in any set number.

7. A vessel according to one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that said vessel includes one or more of the features as disclosed and/or illustrated in the preceding disclosure and in the figures of the drawings enclosed in the subject Application.

Claims

1. A vessel for food products, specifically designed for ice cream and the like products, characterized in that said vessel comprises a vessel body made of a thermally insulating material, including at least a top opening and adapted to hold therein a plurality of cups which can be caused to abut against an edge of said opening, thereby preventing said cup from contacting the inner wall of said vessel body, said cups and vessel body being provided with respective covers.

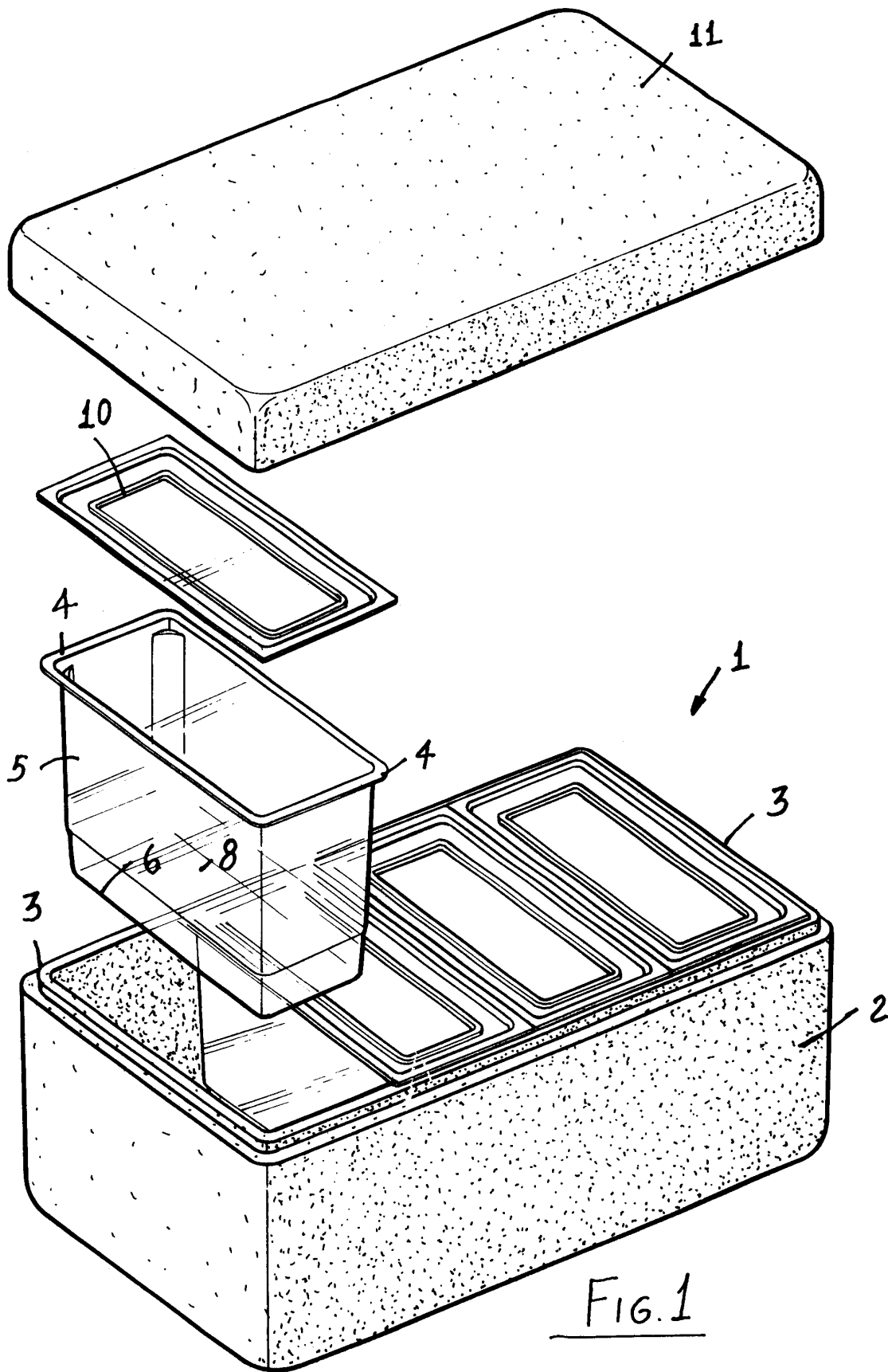
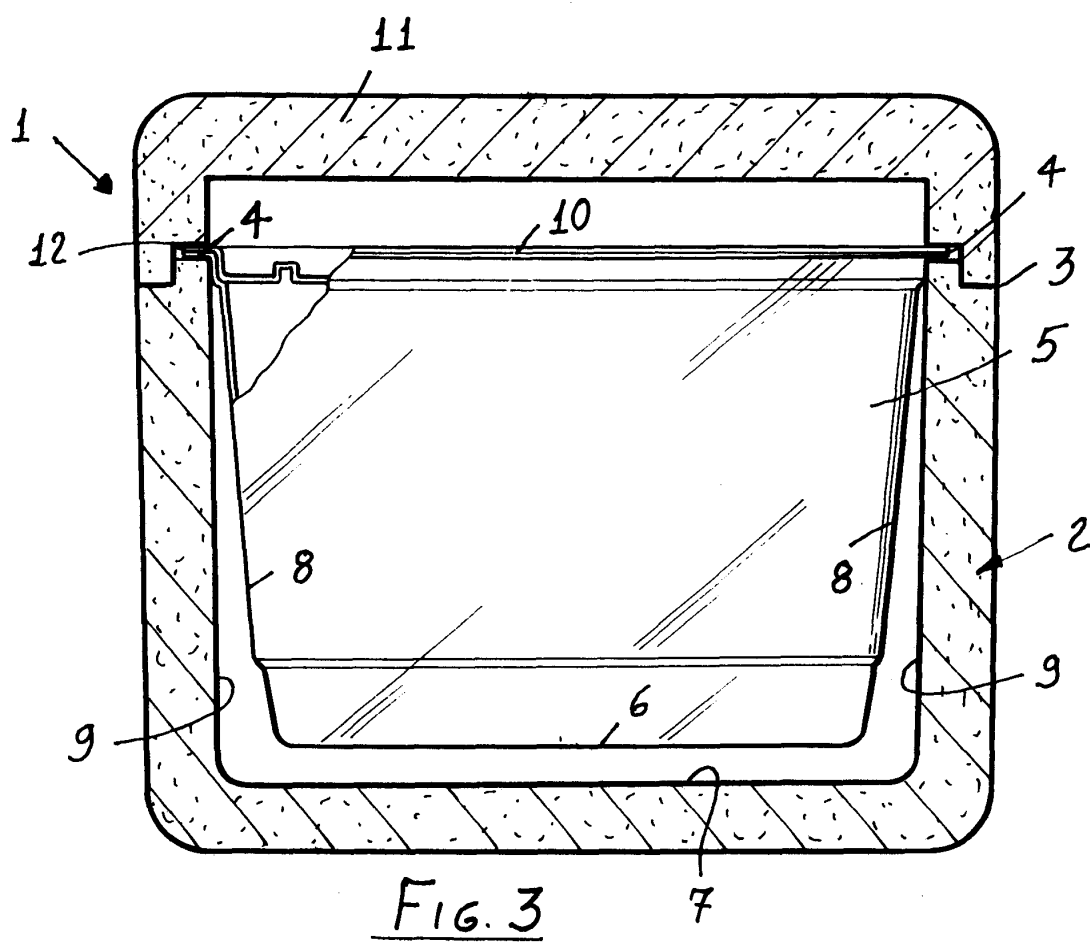
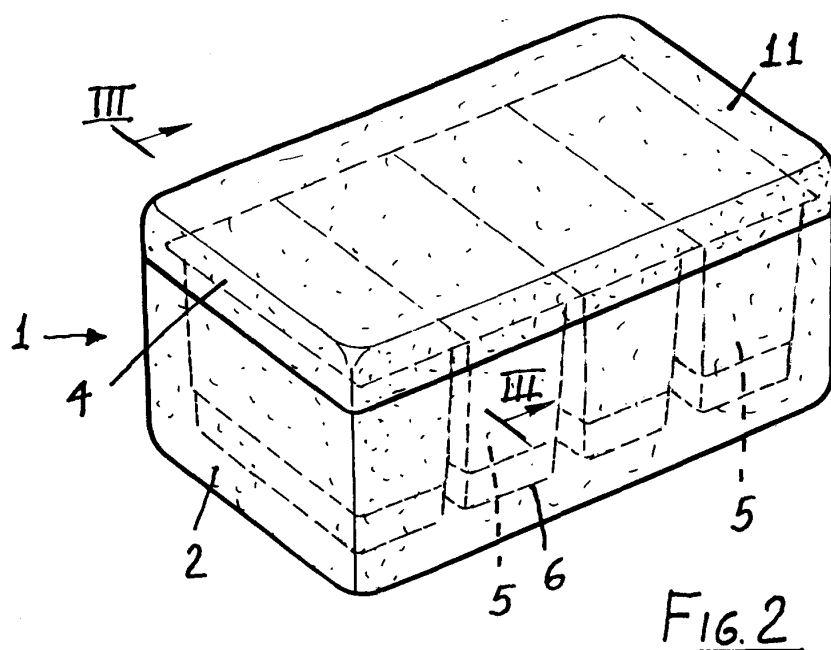
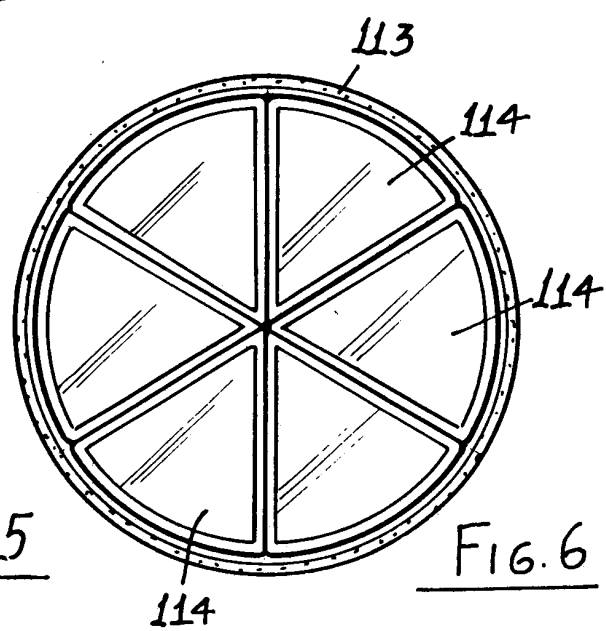
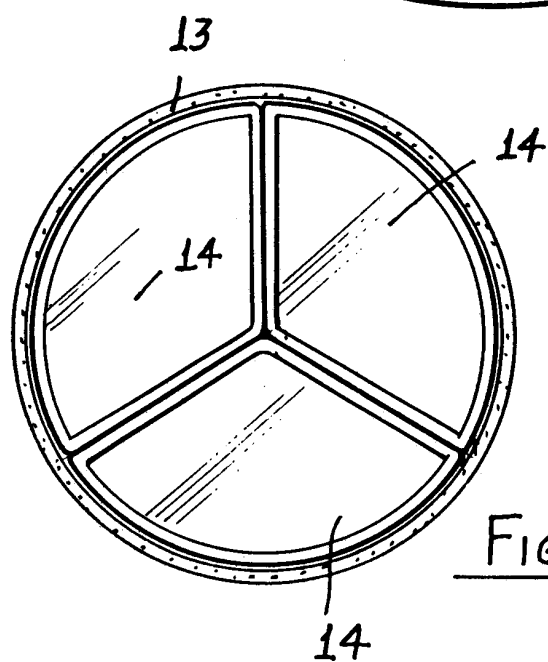
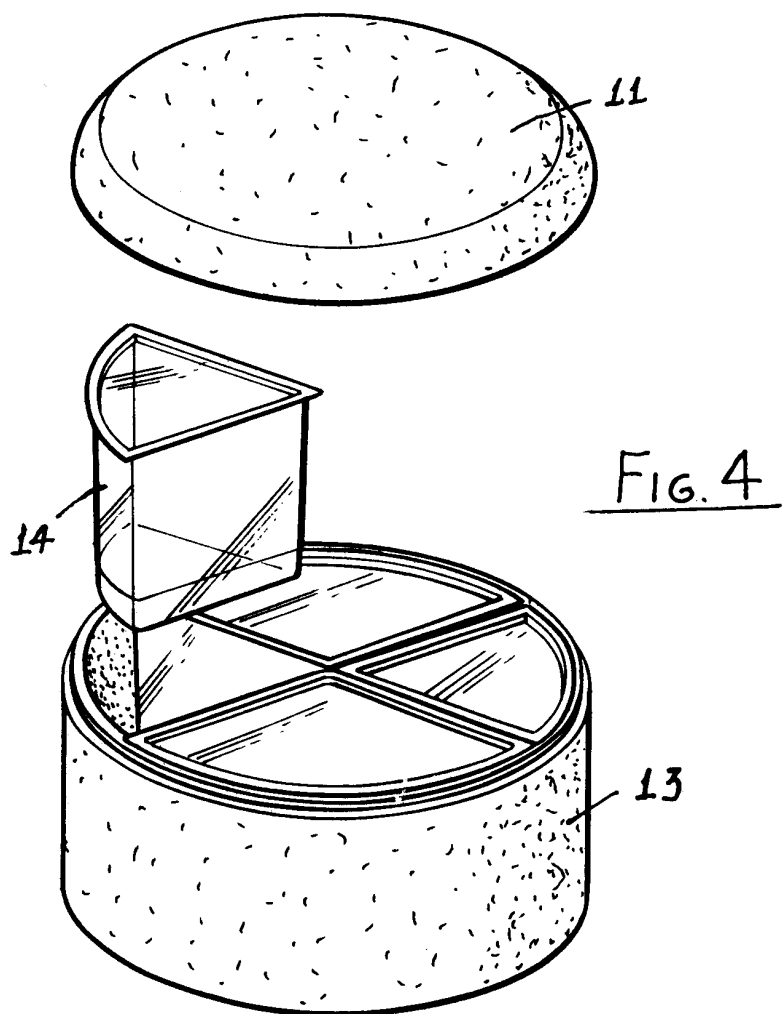


FIG. 1







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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 00 12 0443

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			B65D
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		5 March 2001	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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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 00 12 0443

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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05-03-2001

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