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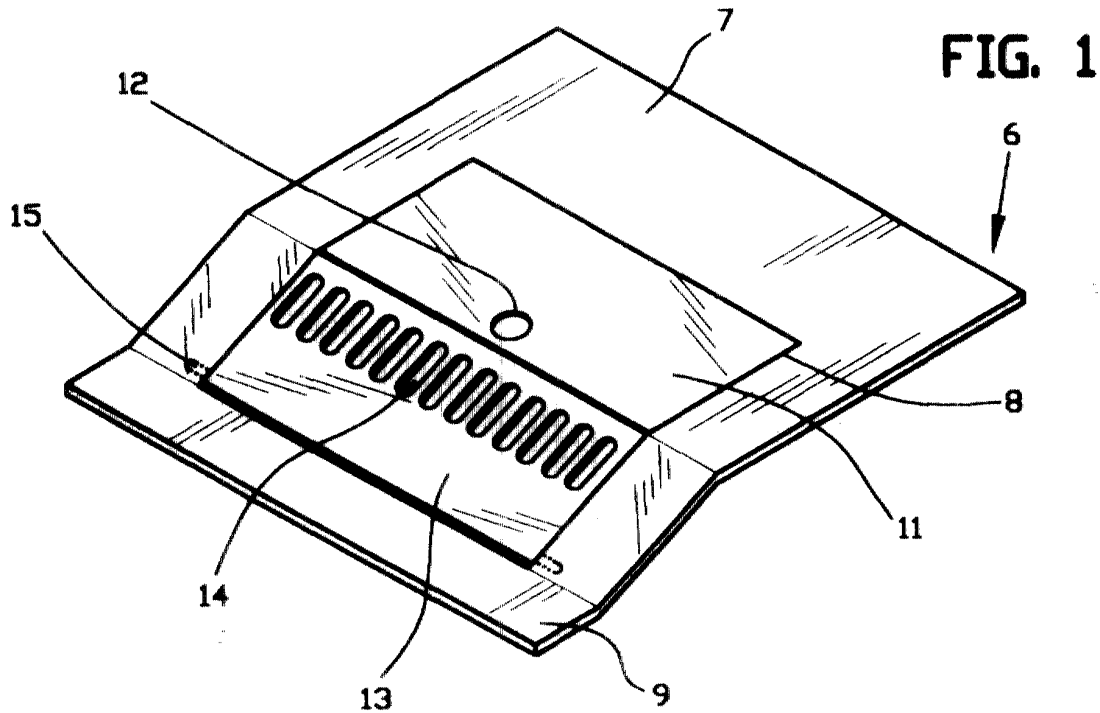
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(54) **Cover element for a refrigerator crisper**

(57) A removable cover for a refrigerator crisper, comprising: a fixed support frame (6) defining an aperture (8) for access to the crisper (3, 4), a front panel (13) rotatably supported by the frame (6) and able to close

part of said aperture (8), and a rear panel (11) slidingly supported by the frame and able to close part of said aperture (8), the two panels (11, 13) together being able to close the entire aperture (8) (Figure 3).



Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a removable cover element for a refrigerator crisper; such crispers are generally used for optimum preservation of fruit and vegetables.

[0002] Removable cover elements for the crisper are already known; they generally consist of simple glass sheets which upperly close a compartment containing a container shaped as a tub (i.e. with an open top) and constituting the actual crisper, which can be extracted partly or totally from the compartment to allow access to its contents. Removing the contents of the crisper is always an uncomfortable operation, especially in the case of undercounter refrigerators.

[0003] The main object of the present invention is to provide a crisper cover which allows easy access to its contents, this access being total or partial depending on requirements.

[0004] A further object of the present invention is to provide a crisper cover which can be used as a shelf.

[0005] The crisper cover of this invention is characterised essentially by comprising a fixed support frame, a front panel rotatably supported by the frame, and a rear panel slidingly mounted in the frame.

[0006] The invention will be more apparent from the ensuing detailed description provided by way of non-limiting example and given with reference to the accompanying drawing, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the cover of the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the cover shown partly open;

Figure 3 is a schematic vertical section through a refrigerator incorporating the cover of the invention.

[0007] In the figures the reference numeral 1 indicates a refrigerator of the undercounter type, shown schematically in vertical section, and comprising a refrigerated compartment, the base of which presents a well 3 removably housing a container 4 in which to store salads, vegetables and the like. For simplicity, the refrigerator 1 does not show the shelves, the door or possible accessories. The shape of the well 3 derives both from the presence of the compressor M to the rear of the refrigerator, and the need to provide a front panel F typical of built-in refrigerators.

[0008] The container 4 and well 3 together define the crisper. The crisper 3, 4 is located below a cover 5.

[0009] The cover 5 comprises a fixed frame 6 of moulded plastic material which rests along its perimeter on conventional support surfaces present in the refrigerator in the crisper region. The frame presents a rear resting region 7, and bounds an aperture 8 giving access to the crisper 3, 4. The frame also presents a front part 9 and lateral slide guides 10 for guiding a sliding panel 11 from an open position below the rear region 7

of the frame to a position in which said aperture 8 is partly closed, in which position, because of the shape of the guides 10, it lies flush with the region 7 and rests with its rear edge on lugs 7A projecting from the region 7. When in this configuration the front edge of the sliding panel 11 rests in corresponding seats 10a provided at the front ends of the guides 10. The sliding panel is provided with an aperture 12 for its movement by the user.

[0010] When the sliding panel 11 is to be retracted below the region 7 to further open the aperture 8, the user acts on the panel such as to separate it from the support lugs 7A and then pushes it along the guides 10 below the region 7.

[0011] The crisper access aperture 8 can be partly closed by a rotatable front panel 13 provided with apertures 14 and hinged at one end, at 15, to the frame 7.

[0012] By rotating the rotatable panel outwards (Figure 2) and leaving the sliding panel 11 in its closure position, partial access to the crisper contents is obtained. Under these conditions access to the crisper is achieved without the need to remove any products present on the sliding panel 11. Likewise partial is the access obtained by leaving just the sliding panel 11 in its open position.

[0013] Maximum access opening is achieved by rotating the rotatable panel 13 outwards and moving the sliding panel 11 below the region 7 of the frame. When in this condition of maximum opening the container 4 can be removed from the refrigerator.

[0014] It should be noted that the region 7 together with the sliding panel 11 when in its closure position form for all purposes a useful shelf.

[0015] It should also be noted that stop means are provided to halt the rotatable panel 13 in the closure position of Figure 1. Rotation in the opposite direction is limited by the resting of the rotatable panel against the front wall 9 of the cover.

Claims

1. A removable cover for a refrigerator crisper, **characterised by** comprising: a fixed support frame (6) defining an aperture (8) for access to the crisper (3, 4), a front panel (13) rotatably supported by the frame (6) and able to close part of said aperture (8), and a rear panel (11) slidingly supported by the frame and able to close part of said aperture (8), the two panels (11, 13) together being able to close the entire aperture (8).
2. A cover as claimed in claim 1, wherein the frame (6) presents guide means (10) for the sliding rear panel (11).
3. A cover as claimed in claim 2, wherein the guide means (10) bring the sliding panel flush with a rear region (7) of the frame (6), where said frame (6) comprises means (7A) for supporting said panel.

- 4. A refrigerator including a cover for the relative crisp-er in accordance with one or more of the preceding claims.

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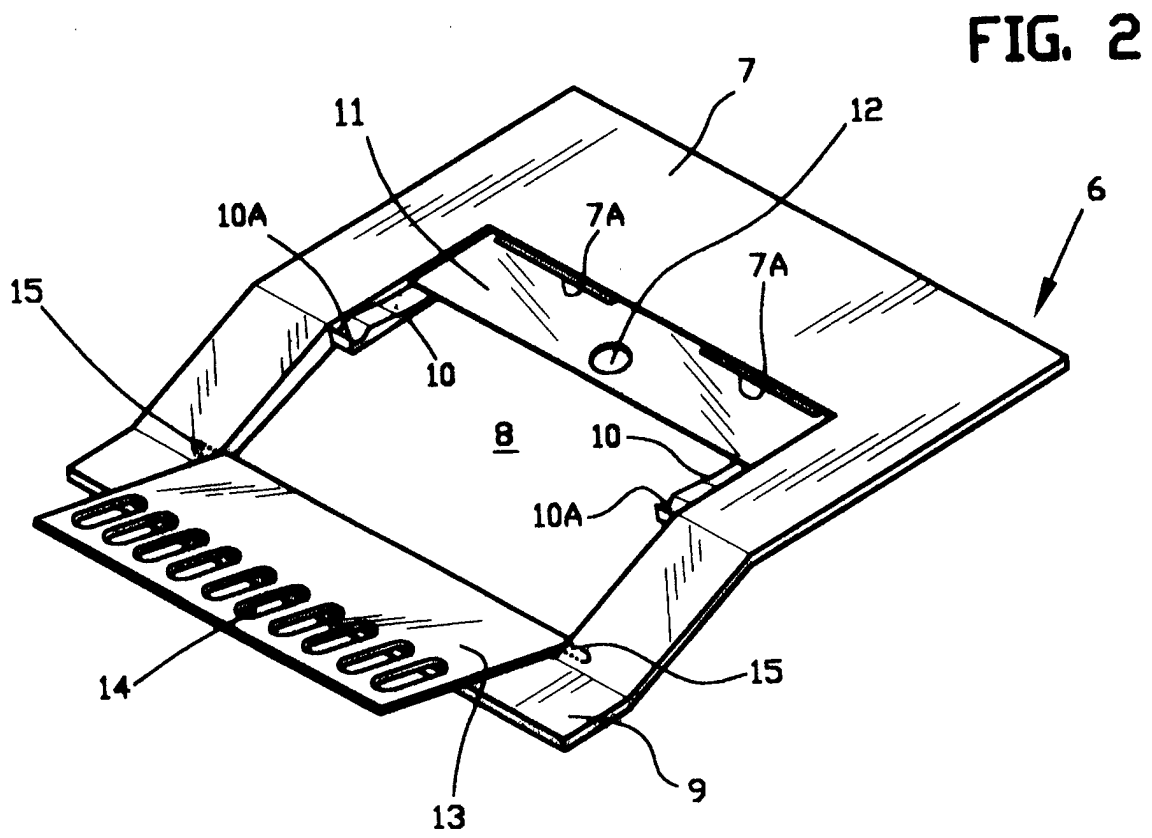
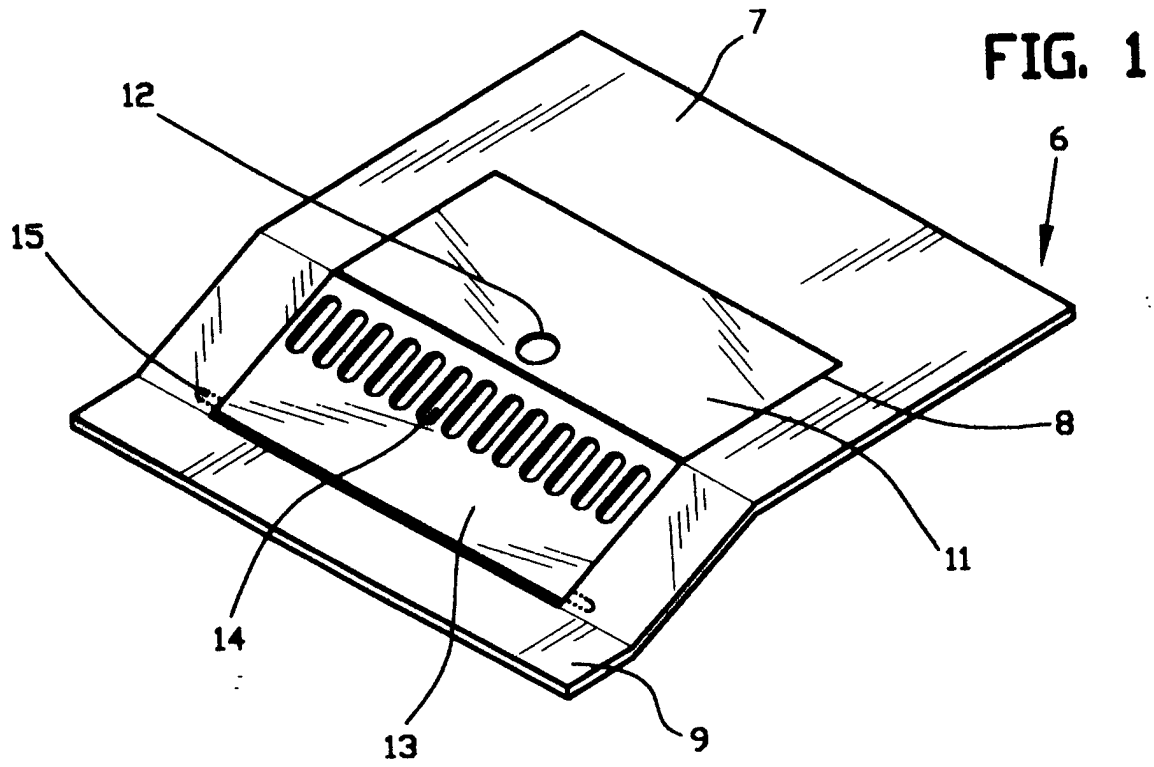
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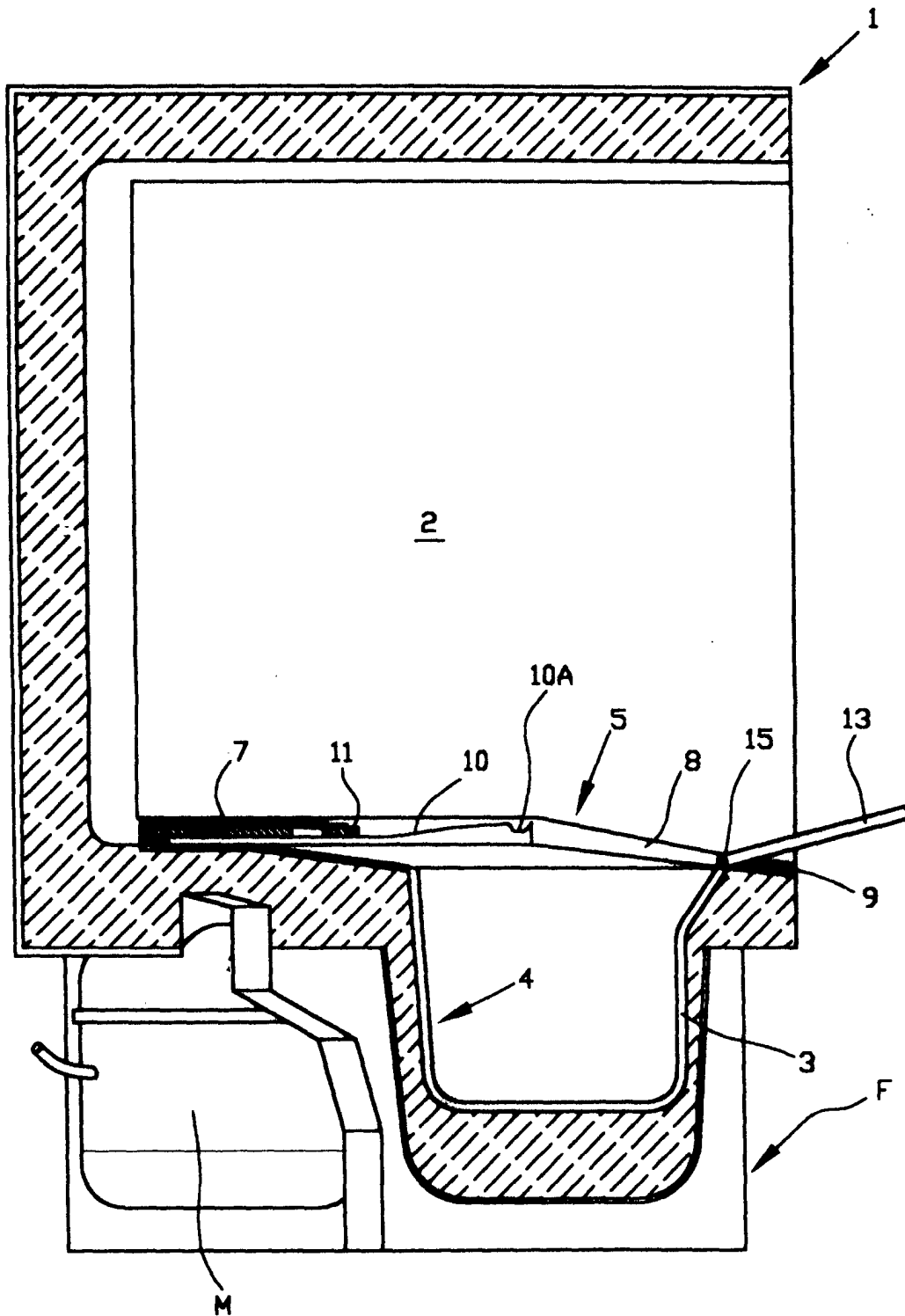


FIG. 3



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 10 9300

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Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 9 July 2001	Examiner Jessen, F
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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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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