

(19)



Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11)

EP 1 363 838 B1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the grant of the patent:

27.10.2004 Bulletin 2004/44

(21) Application number: **02702155.9**

(22) Date of filing: **08.02.2002**

(51) Int Cl.7: **B65D 47/08**

(86) International application number:
PCT/US2002/003519

(87) International publication number:
WO 2002/064434 (22.08.2002 Gazette 2002/34)

(54) **ELONGATED ORIFICE CLOSURE**

LANGGEZOGENER VERSCHLUSS

FERMETURE D'ORIFICE ALLONGEE

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE TR**

(30) Priority: **09.02.2001 US 780760**
06.02.2002 US 68714

(43) Date of publication of application:
26.11.2003 Bulletin 2003/48

(73) Proprietor: **CROWN Packaging Technology, Inc**
Alsip, IL 60803-2599 (US)

(72) Inventor: **HIERZER, Valentin**
Arlington Heights, IL 60004 (US)

(74) Representative: **Smith, Debra Jane Clare**
Carnaudmetalbox PLC,
Downsview Road
Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 9BP (GB)

(56) References cited:
WO-A-01/96198 **FR-A- 2 752 820**
US-A- 6 152 320

Note: Within nine months from the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to the European patent granted. Notice of opposition shall be filed in a written reasoned statement. It shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European Patent Convention).

EP 1 363 838 B1

Description

[0001] This invention relates to container closures, and more particularly to hinged container closures having an opening for dispensing material therethrough.

[0002] Several types of closures for sealing a container for holding and dispensing sauces and other contents are known. For example, a removable closure may be coupled to a container by threads disposed on an interior surface of the closure and mating threads disposed on an exterior surface of the container neck. Unscrewing the closure enables complete detachment of the closure from the container and easy dispensing from an opening in the container. The drawbacks of the fully-removable closure include potential loss or soiling of the closure while it is detached, the requirement of two hands to operate the closure, and a generally inconvenient opening process compared with some other closures. Further, in some circumstances, the container contents may adhere to the underside of the closure and eventually coat the threads, which is unattractive, unsanitary, and may inhibit the unscrewing process.

[0003] Another type of closure employs a cap that is hinged to a body such that the cap may be pivoted relative to the body. The body may be coupled to container by threads disposed on an interior surface of the closure body and mating threads disposed on an exterior surface of the container neck. Some versions of the hinged closure include a deck covering the container opening except for a circular (in transverse cross section) pour or dispensing opening formed therein. A circular plug formed on the underside of the cap is insertable into a spout that is formed proximate the pour opening upon closing of the cap relative to the body. Unfortunately, during normal operation the plug contacts the container contents that are disposed proximate the pour opening upon closing. Thus, residue of the material contents adhere to the plug and are visible on the plug upon pivoting the cap relative toward its open position, which is unattractive and difficult to clean.

[0004] Containers having a hinged cap often have a liner that is disposed over the container opening to form a seal therewith. Typically, the closure is tightened before the liner is sealed to the container rim by induction welding or like process. Unfortunately, the induction welding process tends to loosen the closure such that, in some circumstances, the torque required to unscrew the closure is below a desired value or near zero.. that is, the closure is loose. Further, the container liquid or semi-solid contents, or water used to wash the threads or container, often adheres to the threads of the container and closure during the filling process. The loose closure enables evaporated liquid from the thread area or from the ambient atmosphere to condense within the closure and collect on top of the liner. Thus, an end user may encounter the condensed liquid upon removing the closure and before piercing or removing the liner, which is undesirable.

[0005] Documents FR-A-2 619 086 discloses a closure according to the preamble to claim 1.

[0006] The invention provides a closure for resealably closing a container, the closure comprising a closure body including a top deck, a skirt downwardly depending from a periphery of the top deck, an orifice formed in the top deck, and a spout extending upwardly from the top deck substantially coextensive with the orifice, a cap including a lid member, a cap sidewall extending downwardly from a periphery of the lid member, a spout cover extending downwardly from the lid member including an interior surface that receives the spout therein, the spout cover interior surface and an exterior surface of the spout form a sealing contact therebetween while the cap is in a closed position thereby forming an outside seal relative to the spout, a hinge coupled between the body and the cap for enabling actuation of the cap relative to the body between an open position in which the spout cover is disengaged with the spout and the closed position in which the spout cover is engaged with the spout, wherein the closure further comprises an inner spud extending downwardly from the lid member substantially within the spout cover and spaced apart therefrom, an exterior surface of the inner spud contacting an interior surface of the spout while the closure is in the closed position, whereby the sealing contact between the spout cover interior surface and the spout exterior surface is enhanced.

[0007] The spout preferably includes a pair of opposing vertical sidewalls and a pair of opposing curved end walls. The sidewalls may be configured such that they outwardly bulge upon molding, yet are substantially mutually rectilinear and parallel upon cooling after molding. Such a configuration enables or promotes the ability to form a seal with the cap without a spout protruding into the inside of the spout.

[0008] The orifice enables dispensing of container contents therethrough while the cap is in the open position and the spout cover prevents dispensing of the container contents while the cap is in the closed position. Further, the spout cover deflects outwardly relative to the spout while the cap is moved from the open position to the closed position, thereby forming an interference fit between the spout and the spout cover.

[0009] A closure, according to one embodiment of the present invention, is provided that includes a spout formed around an elongated orifice. A cap, which is affixed to a body of the closure via a hinge, includes a spout cover on its underside. The spout cover fits over the spout in sealing engagement therewith to form an outside seal.. that is, a seal disposed on an outside surface of the spout or otherwise not in contact with the flowpath of the material contents during dispensing. The outside seal prevents or diminishes the contact between the seal and the material contents stored in the container and dispensed through the orifice.

[0010] Further, the outside seal formed by a pair of opposing beads or protrusions may be configured to

provide a predetermined opening. A spud is disposed within, and spaced apart from, the spout cover such that the spout is received therebetween. The spud is configured to urge, if necessary, the spout into contact with the spout cover to enhance or facilitate sealing. An annular seal extends downwardly from an underside of the closure to form a seal between a liner and the closure. The head-space above the liner that is enclosed by the container is sealed from the ambient atmosphere by the annular seal and by the sealing contact between the spout and spout cover.

[0011] According to an embodiment of the present invention, the closure includes a continuous, annular seal extending downwardly from an underside of the deck. The annular seal forms a seal between the closure and a liner disposed between the closure and the container. Thus, the annular seal and the sealing contact, which is formed between the spout and the spout cover, seal the head-space above the liner from water vapor and other gaseous infiltration.

[0012] According to an embodiment of the present invention, the sealing contact is at least partly formed by at least one protrusion or bead on the spout or the spout cover. Preferably, each of the spout and the spout cover have a protrusion or bead formed thereon. The spout cover bead extends inwardly from a spout cover interior surface and the spout bead extends outwardly from the spout exterior surface. Thus, the beads are opposing. The cover bead engages the spout bead to form sealing contact therebetween while the cap is in the closed position. Each of the beads may include an upper surface, a lower surface, and a tip therebetween. Preferably the upper and lower surfaces are obliquely angled or rounded to facilitate sliding of the beads relative to one another.

[0013] Embodiments of the invention are described below with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 illustrates a cross sectional view of a closure disposed in an as-molded position;

Figure 2 is a top view of the closure shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a cross sectional view taken through a portion of the closure indicated by lines 3-3 in Figure 2, thereby providing a view of the inboard side of the spout;

Figure 4 is a cross sectional view taken through a portion of the closure indicated by lines 4-4 in Figure 2, thereby providing a view of the outboard side of the spout;

Figure 5 is a cross sectional view taken through a portion of the closure indicated by lines 5-5 in Figure 2;

Figure 6 is a view of the closure of Figure 1 disposed in a fully closed position;

Figure 7 is an enlarged view of a portion of the closure identified in the circle labelled by reference numeral 7 in Figure 1; and

Figure 8 is an enlarged view of a portion of the closure identified in the circle labelled by reference numeral 8 in Figure 1.

Figure 9 illustrates a closure coupled to a container in a closed position;

Figure 10 is an enlarged top view of the closure shown in Figure 9 in an open (as-molded) position; Figure 11 is a cross sectional view taken through a portion of the closure indicated by lines 11-11 in Figure 10;

Figure 12 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a portion of the closure identified as area 12 in Figure 11;

Figure 13 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a portion of the closure identified as area 13 in Figure 11; and

Figure 14 is a view of an interior portion of the closure in the fully closed position with most of the closure removed for clarity.

[0014] It is to be understood that the closure as shown and described in relation to Figs. 1-8 is not in accordance with the invention since it is not shown as being formed with an inner spud extending downwardly from the lid member for engagement with the interior surface of the spout.

[0015] As shown in the drawings, a container package 8 includes a closure 10 that is coupled to a container 11. An embodiment of closure 10 is shown in Figures 1 and 6, and container 11 is shown diagrammatically in Figure 6. Container package 8 may be employed for packaging any contents capable of flowing, including viscous materials such as jellies, sauces, pastes, granular materials, and like substances.

[0016] As shown in relief in Figure 6, container 11 includes a container sidewall 12 having a neck 14 that extends upwardly to a lip 18. Container threads 16 are formed on an exterior surface of neck 14. A liner 19 may be disposed on lip 18 over the opening in neck 14 to seal the contents of container 11. Preferably, liner 19 is of the type that may be induction welded to lip 18, such as a plastic liner with a foil layer. The present invention also encompasses the container package 8 employing any liner material. Further, the container package 8 may employ liners of other designs, and may forego a liner altogether. Container 11 may be formed of any conventional material, including plastic and glass, and the present invention is especially suitable for plastic containers having flexible sidewalls that enable squeezing to urge the contents (not shown) to flow through the closure 10.

[0017] As shown in Figure 1, closure 10 includes a body 20 that is coupled to container 11, a cap 24, and a hinge 28 coupled between body 20 and cap 24. Hinge 28 enables cap 24 to be repeatably pivoted relative to body 20. Body 20 includes a generally cylindrical skirt 30 and a substantially circular top deck 32, which pref-

erably is integrally formed with an upper portion of skirt 30. Skirt 30 preferably includes plural serrations 46 disposed on an exterior surface thereof to enhance gripping of closure 10 by a user, as well as closure threads 48 disposed on an interior surface of skirt 30 that mate to threads 16 of container 11. The terms "interior" and "exterior"; "inward" and "outward"; and "inboard" and "outboard", as used herein, refer to relatively inwardly facing and relatively outwardly facing (relative to a longitudinal centerline of container 11 or other point of reference) directions or orientations, unless the direction or orientation is specified otherwise.

[0018] Deck 32 includes a deck top surface 54 and a deck bottom surface 56. As shown in Figures 1, 3, 4, and 7, an annular recess 52 is formed at a periphery of deck 32 and includes a shoulder portion 53a and a substantially flat seating surface 53b. Preferably, shoulder portion 53a and seating surface 53b are configured such that recess 52 is a notch, in longitudinal cross section. Thus, in longitudinal cross section, seating surface 53b is substantially horizontal and shoulder portion 53a may be substantially vertical (to form an approximate cylinder) or may be angled slightly radially inwardly (to form an approximate frustum of a cone). The present invention encompasses other configurations of the portion of deck 32 that interfaces with cap 24 in the closed position, as will be apparent to persons familiar with closure configurations.

[0019] An orifice 50 is formed through deck 32 between top surface 54 and bottom surface 56 to enable dispensing of the contents from an interior of container 11. As shown in Figures 2 and 3 (which are aligned for convenience of illustration), orifice 50 has a length L1, which is measured along its longitudinal axis A1. Length L1 is greater than its width W1, which is measured transverse to longitudinal axis A1 at the widest point of orifice 50. Orifice 50 is shown in the figures as a slot having, in plan view as shown in Figure 2, a pair of sidewalls with semi-circular or rounded ends. The present invention is not limited to such a configuration, and encompasses an orifice in the shape of an ellipse, oval, and the like. For dispensing jelly, or a similarly viscous product, from a container that is capable of being deformed by squeezing, the L1 and W1 dimensions are preferably about 1.0 inches (25.4 mm) and 0.2 inches (5 mm), respectively. An orifice having such dimensions may dispense the contents through orifice 50 in a ribbon approximately one inch wide.

[0020] A spout 58 extends upwardly from top surface 54 about orifice 50. Preferably, spout 58 has a pair of opposing long sides 60a and a pair of opposing curved ends 60b that extend around the entire perimeter or periphery of orifice 50. Preferably, opposing long sides 60a are substantially parallel or slightly outwardly bowed (relative to orifice longitudinal axis A1), as explained more fully below. The present invention also encompasses long sidewalls that are angled inwardly at the top or bottom of orifice 50 (which configuration is not

shown) and therefore encompasses sidewalls that are not mutually parallel, and also encompasses sidewalls that are slightly inwardly bowed in plan view. Other wall configurations are also contemplated.

[0021] Deck top surface 54 smoothly merges into spout sidewall 60a to form a concave radius 57a. Deck bottom surface 56 smoothly extends upwardly to form a convex radius portion 57b, which smoothes the flow of product during dispensing. Preferably, the radii 57a and 57b may be approximately 0.09 and 0.13 inches, respectively, which have been found to provide adequate product flow characteristics. In this regard, because the radius of convex radius 57b on the underside is relatively large, concave radius 57a may have a similar profile to that of convex radius 57b in order to provide adequate wall thickness and efficient use of material.

[0022] As best shown in Figure 7, spout sidewall 60 includes an interior surface 62a, an opposing exterior surface 62b, and a distal rim 62c therebetween. A protrusion or bead 63 extends radially outwardly from exterior surface 62b, and preferably extends entirely around the perimeter of spout sidewall 60 and orifice 50. Spout bead 63 may be formed of any geometry, and preferably is defined, in longitudinal cross section as shown in Figure 7, by an upper surface 64a, an opposing lower surface 64b, and a distal tip 64c disposed between surfaces 64a and 64b.

[0023] Preferably, spout bead surfaces 64a, 64b, and 64c form smooth contours without sharp edges or transitions. In this regard, tip 64c may be (in longitudinal cross section) a rounded portion below a substantially flat, inclined (relative to the sidewalls of surfaces 62a or 62b) upper surface 64a such that rounded tip portion 64c smoothly yields to upper surface 64a. Further, lower surface 64b preferably is short compared to upper surface 64a such that tip 64c smoothly merges with the sidewall of exterior surface 62b. The present invention is not limited to the contours described herein, but rather encompasses any spout bead contours or any sealing means, even a spout that altogether lacks protrusions or beads like those described herein, as will be understood by persons familiar with closure and sealing technology. For example, surfaces 64a, 64b, and 64c may define a continuously curved or bulbous protrusion or bead. The present invention also encompasses a spout that lacks a protruding bead, as well as a discontinuous bead.

[0024] As shown in Figures 1 and 2, cap 24 includes a substantially cylindrical sidewall 36 and a substantially circular lid member 38 that is integrally formed with an upper end of sidewall 36. Lid member 38 has an underside 39 and an opposing top side 41. The terms "underside" and "top", as used herein with respect to cap 24, refer to the orientation with cap 24 in its closed position shown in Figure 6. Cap 24 is inverted from its position shown in Figures 1 and 2 to form its closed position. In this regard, a spout cover 40 extends upwardly from an underside of lid member 38. The present invention also

encompasses closures that are non-cylindrical, including those having elliptical, irregular, or other shapes.

[0025] As best shown in Figure 8, spout cover 40 is formed by a cover sidewall 70 having an interior surface 72a, and an opposing exterior surface 72b. Cover sidewall 70 also has an outwardly protruding lip 71 disposed between surfaces 72a and 72b. A cover protrusion or bead 73 extends radially inwardly, relative to spout cover 40, from interior surface 72a, and preferably extends entirely around the perimeter of spout cover sidewall 70. Spout cover 40 preferably is configured to fit over and outside of spout 58, as described more fully below. Thus, spout cover 40 may have an internal length dimension L2 along its longitudinal axis A2 that is approximately equal to orifice length L1 plus twice the width of spout sidewall 60, and an internal width dimension W2 that is approximately equal to orifice width W1 plus twice the thickness of spout sidewall 60.

[0026] Spout bead 73 may be formed of any geometry, and preferably is defined, in cross section, by an upper surface 74a, an opposing lower surface 74b, and a distal tip 74c disposed between surfaces 74a and 74b. In this regard, tip 74c may be, in longitudinal cross section as shown in Figure 8, a rounded portion below a substantially flat, inclined (relative to the sidewalls of surfaces 72a or 72b) upper surface 74a such that rounded tip portion 74c smoothly yields to upper surface 74a, and such that upper surface 74a forms a portion of distal lip 71. The present invention is not limited to the contours described herein, but rather encompasses any spout cover bead contours or any sealing means, a discontinuous bead, and even a spout cover that altogether lacks beads like those described herein, as will be understood by persons familiar with closure and sealing technology. For example, surfaces 74a, 74b, and 74c may define a continuously curved or bulbous protrusion or bead.

[0027] Hinge 28 includes a first end 76a that is integrally coupled with skirt 30 and an opposing second end 76b that is integrally coupled with cap 24. Preferably, hinge 28 is a flexible web that forms a snap hinge, as disclosed in United States Patent Number 6,152,320, which is assigned to the assignee of the present invention and incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. The present invention is not limited to snap hinges, but rather encompasses any hinge disposed between cap 24 and body 20.

[0028] Figure 6 illustrates the closure 10 in a closed position in which cap 24 is engaged with body 20. In the closed position, a portion of cap sidewall 36 is disposed in the recess 52 formed by shoulder portion 53a and seating surface 53b. Preferably, the internal radius of the cap sidewall 36 is several thousandths of an inch larger than the radius of shoulder portion 53a to enable cap 24 to slide into and out of recess 52. Preferably, a distal rim or tip of cap sidewall 36 contacts seating surface 53b in the fully closed position.

[0029] Further, spout cover 40 is disposed over and

around spout 58 to form a seal therewith while cap 24 is in its fully closed position. As explained more fully below, because long sidewalls are (in plan view or in transverse cross section) substantially parallel (even after shrinking upon cooling after molding) or slightly outwardly bowed, spout cover 40 forms a seal with spout 58. For example, a seal may be provided by sealing contact between sealing surfaces 62b and 72a, which is described more fully below. Preferably, each one of spout 58 and spout cover 40 are continuous and coextensive. That is, the overall shape (in transverse cross section) and size of spout sidewall exterior surface 62b are substantially the same as the shape and size of cover sidewall interior surface 72a. Thus, spout 58 fits within spout cover 40 and forms sealing contact therebetween.

[0030] As shown in Figure 6, while cap 24 is in the fully closed position, spout cover 40 is engaged with spout 58 to form the sealing contact therebetween such that cover bead 73, and particularly cover bead tip 74c, contacts spout sidewall exterior surface 62b and such that spout bead 63, and particularly spout bead tip 64c contacts cover sidewall interior surface 72a. In this regard, spout 58 and spout cover 40 are preferably molded such that there is contact between tip 74c and surface 62b and between tip 64c and surface 72a such that deflection of spout 58 and/or spout cover 40 occurs during closing and, preferably, also while closure 10 is in the fully closed position. Figure 6 indicates such deflection by illustrating body 20 and cap 24 in their fully open shape, which results in overlapping surfaces at the interface between spout 58 and spout cover 40.

[0031] Closure 10 may be configured to require a predetermined opening force, which preferably is in the range of 1 to 7 pounds (0.45 to 3.2 kg), depending on the design parameters and preferences of the designer. The opening force may be determined by the configuration, dimensions, and/or location of beads 63 and 73, sidewalls 60 and 70, orifice 50, and like features, as will be understood by persons familiar with closure technology. Thus, the sealing contact between spout 58 and spout cover 40 (among other features) provides the combination of an effective seal around orifice 50 and an opening force within the desired range.

[0032] Hinge 28, while the closure is in the fully closed position, may provide a small force urging cap 24 toward the open position to bias cover bead lower surface 74b toward and against spout bead lower surface 64b. The contacts between tip 74c and surface 62b and between tip 64c and surface 72a, and preferably also bead surfaces 64b and 74b, preferably are continuous around the entire periphery of spout 58. However, the present invention encompasses discontinuous sealing contact.

[0033] Thus, according to an aspect of the present invention, the sealing contact between spout 58 and spout cover 40 forms an outside seal (that is, disposed on the exterior surface of the spout sidewall 60) that is spaced apart from the rim 62c of spout 58. In this regard, during normal dispensing of the material contents from contain-

er 11 through orifice 50, the material contents do not come into contact with the sealing contact area that is defined between the spout exterior surface 62b and the spout cover sidewall 72b. Therefore, during normal dispensing of the contents from the container package, the sealing contact between the spout 58 and the spout cover 40 is spaced apart from the contents and does not become sullied thereby.

[0034] Further, lip 71 may also aid in the centering of cap 24 relative to spout 58 during the closing process. The outwardly extending configuration of lip 71 may also wipe product from the area proximate spout rim 62c without exposing spout cover outer sidewall 72b to the product.

[0035] According to another aspect of the present invention, as shown in Figures 3 and 5, an annular closure seal 80 is formed on an underside of deck 32 such that a body 82 of seal 80 protrudes downwardly from deck bottom surface 56. As best shown in Figure 5, closure seal 80 includes a flexible lip or crab claw, which preferably is continuous to form an unbroken circle in transverse cross section. Seal 80 may prevent liquid in the thread area from splashing onto the top surface of liner 19 or from running onto the top surface of liner 19 upon inversion of container package 8 or upon washing.

[0036] Further seal 80 may prevent or inhibit water vapor from entering the head-space, which is above the liner 19 and below deck 32, and condensing therein. Also, the sealing contact between spout 58 and spout cover 40 also inhibits water vapor from entering the head-space. Thus, seal 80 and the sealing contact between spout 58 and spout cover 40 substantially eliminate or diminish the problem of water condensation on the top of liner 19.

[0037] To open container package 8, a user may grasp container neck 14 with cap 24 in the closed position, as shown in Figure 6, in which tip 74c and surface 62b, and tip 64c and surface 72a are in contact. The user may urge upwardly on a thumbpiece (preferably disposed opposite hinge 28) of cap 24 to urge cover bead lower surface 74b against spout bead lower surface 64b. Each of the surfaces 64b and 74b are rounded or inclined to facilitate mutual sliding in response to upward urging of a thumb tab (not shown in the Figures) or like portion of cap 24 until cover bead tip 74c slips upward past spout bead tip 64c. Cap 24 continues to rotate relative to body 20 by continued urging of cap 24 and/or by the action of snap hinge 28 until it reaches its rest-open position, which is likely to be less than 180 degrees from its fully closed position, depending to the configuration of hinge 28. The position of cap 24 relative to body 20 shown in Figures 1 and 2 is the position in which closure 10 is molded, and may not represent the rest-open position of cap 24.

[0038] Upon cap 24 being disposed in its rest-open position, the user may invert container package 8 to dispense the material contents through orifice 50. For containers with flexible sidewalls, the user may squeeze the

container sidewalls to urge the material contents through orifice 50. The elongated shape of orifice 50 provides greater open area through which material contents may pass.

[0039] The user may urge cap 24 toward deck 32 to pivot closure 10 from its open position toward its closed position. Hinge 28 may also urge cap 24 toward its closed position upon reaching its snap action point. The orifice being spaced apart from a center of deck 32, as best shown in Figure 2, enables spout cover 40 to clear spout 58 during pivoting about hinge 28. Alternatively, a hinge may be provided that enables spout cover 40 to clear spout 58, and the respective heights and location of cover 40 and spout 58 may be chosen accordingly. To move cap 24 into its fully closed position, the user may urge cap 24 downwardly such that the distal rim of cap sidewall 36 moves past the rounded portion of shoulder portion 53a. Further, spout cover lip 71 (which is the leading surface of spout cover 40 because cap 24 is in an inverted from its molded state during closing)

may contact spout bead upper surface 64a to relatively align the parts and/or to wipe product contents (if any) from the top area of spout 58 inwardly toward orifice 50. **[0040]** A user applies force downwardly on cap 24 such that cover bead upper surface 74a slides relative to spout bead upper surface 64a. Spout cover sidewall 70 and/or spout sidewall 60 deform or deflect relative to one another until cover bead tip 74c is urged downwardly past spout bead tip 64c. As cover bead lower surface 64b comes into contact with spout bead lower surface 74b such that cap 24 reaches its fully closed position, a distal rim of cap sidewall 36 may contact seating surface 53b.

[0041] According to another aspect of the present invention, a mold 90 has a cavity with surfaces configured for forming closure 10. Mold 90 is indicated diagrammatically in Figure 1 by a dashed line. The precise gate location, split line, and other parameters relating to molding are conventional and will be understood by persons familiar with molding technology. The present invention encompasses molding of closure 10 in mold 90 by any conventional technique, such as injection molding, compression molding, and the like.

[0042] As referred to above, sidewalls 60a of spout 40 will have a tendency to pull inwardly when its material cools and shrinks after molding. Thus, mold 90 includes cavity surfaces that are slightly outwardly bowed. Thus, because spout 58 (that is the mold surface corresponding to spout 58, as well as the spout 58 of closure 10 immediately upon molding) has a width W1 proximate its midpoint that is greater than a width proximate its ends, cooling or shrinkage may result in substantially parallel spout sidewalls 60a. Depending on the particular configuration, size, wall thickness (and like parameters), spout 58 preferably may be a few thousandths of an inch wider at its center (that is, W1) than at its ends. Similarly, the mold cavity surfaces may be configured such that sidewalls 60a have a slight bow after cooling

and shrinkage in order to enhance the contact between spout 58 and spout cover 40.

[0043] According to another aspect of the present invention, a container package 8' includes a closure 10' that is coupled to a container 11', as best shown in Figure 9. Container package 8' may be employed for packaging any contents capable of flowing, especially viscous materials such as jellies, sauces, pastes, granular materials, and like substances. The reference numerals relating to closure 10' include a prime (') designation to indicate general correspondence with structure of closure 10.

[0044] As shown in relief in Figures 11 and 12, container 11' includes a container sidewall 12 having a neck 14 that extends upwardly to a lip 18. Container threads 16 are formed on an exterior surface of neck 14. As shown in relief in Figure 12, a liner 19 is disposed on lip 18 over the opening in neck 14 to seal the contents of container 11'. Preferably, liner 19 is of the type that may be induction welded to lip 18, such as a plastic liner with a foil layer. The present invention also encompasses the container package 8' employing any liner material. Further, the container package 8' may employ liners of other designs, and may forego a liner altogether. Container 11' may be formed of any conventional material, including plastic and glass, and the present invention is especially suitable for plastic containers having flexible sidewalls that enable squeezing to urge the contents (not shown) to flow through the closure 10'.

[0045] As shown in Figures 9, 10, and 11, and according to another aspect of the present invention, closure 10' includes a body 20' that is coupled to container 11', a cap 24', and a hinge 28' coupled between body 20' and cap 24'. Hinge 28' enables cap 24' to be repeatably pivoted relative to body 20'. Body 20' includes a generally cylindrical skirt 30' and a substantially circular top deck 32' that preferably is integrally formed with an upper portion of skirt 30'. Skirt 30' preferably includes plural serrations 46' disposed on an exterior surface thereof to enhance gripping of closure 10' by a user, and closure threads 48' disposed on an interior surface of skirt 30' that mate to threads 16 of container 11', as shown in Figures 11 and 12. The terms "interior" and "exterior", and "inward" and "outward", as used herein refer to relatively inwardly facing and relatively outwardly facing (relative to a longitudinal centerline of container 11') directions or orientations, unless the direction or orientation is specifically specified otherwise.

[0046] Deck 32' includes a deck top surface 54' and a deck bottom surface 56'. As best shown in Figure 12, an annular recess 52' is formed at a periphery of deck 32' and includes a shoulder portion 53a' and a substantially flat seating surface 53b'. Preferably, shoulder portion 53a' and seating surface 53b' are configured such that recess 52' is a notch, in longitudinal cross section. Thus, in longitudinal cross section, seating surface 53b' is substantially horizontal and shoulder portion 53a' may be substantially vertical to form an approximate cylinder,

or may be angled slightly radially inwardly to form an approximate frustum of a cone. The present invention encompasses other configurations of the portion of deck 32' that interfaces with cap 24' in the closed position, as will be apparent to persons familiar with closure configurations.

[0047] An orifice 50' is formed through deck 52' between top surface 54' and bottom surface 56' to enable dispensing of the contents from an interior of container 11'. As shown in 10, orifice 50' has a length L1, which is measured along its longitudinal axis A1, that is greater than its width W1, which is measured transverse to longitudinal axis A1. Orifice 50' is shown in the figures as a slot having, in plan view as shown in Figure 10, a pair of substantially parallel sidewalls with semi-circular or rounded ends. The present invention is not limited to such a configuration, and encompasses an orifice in the shape of an ellipse, oval, and the like. For dispensing jelly, or a similarly viscous product, from a container that is capable of being deformed by squeezing, the L1 and W1 dimensions are preferably about 1.0 inches (25.4 mm) and 0.16 inches (4.0 mm), respectively. An orifice having such dimensions may dispense the contents through orifice 50' in a ribbon approximately one inch wide.

[0048] As partially shown in Figure 12, deck bottom surface 56' is formed to provide a smooth radius portion 57' around the lower perimeter of orifice 50' to enhance the flow of the material contents. A spout 58' extends upwardly from top surface 54' about orifice 50'. Preferably, spout 58' has a spout sidewall 60' that preferably has a uniform height H above top surface 54' of between 3 and 4 mm (1.2 and 1.6 inches). Preferably, sidewalls 60' are substantially vertical and opposing portions of sidewalls 60' and 70' are mutually parallel, as shown in Figures 11 and 12. The present invention also encompasses sidewalls that are angled inwardly at the top or bottom of orifice 50' (which configuration is not shown) and therefore encompasses sidewalls that are not mutually parallel, as well as bowed sidewalls as described above.

[0049] Spout sidewall 60' includes an interior surface 62a', an opposing exterior surface 62b', and a distal rim 62c' therebetween. A protrusion or bead 63' extends radially outwardly from exterior surface 62b', and preferably extends entirely around the perimeter of spout wall sidewall 60' and orifice 50'. Spout bead 63' may be formed of any geometry, and preferably is defined, in longitudinal cross section as shown in Figure 12, by an upper surface 64a', an opposing lower surface 64b', and a distal tip 64c' disposed between surfaces 64a' and 64b'.

[0050] Preferably surfaces 64a', 64b', and 64c' form smooth contours without sharp edges or transitions. In this regard, tip 64c' may be, in longitudinal cross section, a rounded portion below a substantially flat, inclined (relative to the sidewalls of surfaces 62a' or 62b') upper surface 64a' such that rounded tip portion 64c' smoothly

yields to upper surface 64a'. Further, lower surface 64b' preferably is short compared to upper surface 64a' such that tip 64c' smoothly merges with the sidewall of exterior surface 62b'. The present invention is not limited to the contours described herein, but rather encompasses any spout bead contours or any sealing means, even a spout that altogether lacks protrusions or beads like those described herein, as will be understood by persons familiar with closure and sealing technology. For example, surfaces 64a', 64b', and 64c' may define a continuously curved or bulbous protrusion or bead.

[0051] As shown in Figures 10 and 11, cap 24' includes a substantially cylindrical sidewall 36' and a substantially circular lid member 38' that is integrally formed with an upper end of sidewall 36'. Lid member 38' has an underside 39' and an opposing top side 41'. The terms "upper" and "lower", as used herein with respect to cap 24', refer to the orientation with cap 24' in its assembled position shown in Figures 10 and 11. Cap 24' is inverted from its position shown in Figure 11 to form its closed position, which is shown in Figures 9 and 14. A thumb tab 42' extends outwardly from a periphery of sidewall 36'. In this regard, as shown in the right portion of Figure 11, a spout cover 40' extends upwardly from an underside of lid member 38' and has a shape that generally matches that of spout 58'. As best shown in Figure 13, spout cover 40' is formed by a cover sidewall 70' having an interior surface 72a', an opposing exterior surface 72b', and a rim 72c' formed therebetween.

[0052] A cover protrusion or bead 73' extends radially inwardly, relative to spout cover 40', from interior surface 72a', and preferably extends entirely around the perimeter of spout cover sidewall 70'. Spout cover 40' preferably is configured to fit over and outside of spout 58', as described more fully below. Therefore, as shown in Figure 10, spout cover 40' will have an internal length dimension L2 along its longitudinal axis A2 that is approximately equal to orifice length L1 plus twice the width of spout sidewall 60', and an internal width dimension W2 that is approximately equal to orifice width W1 plus the twice the thickness of spout sidewall 60'.

[0053] Spout bead 73' may be formed of any geometry, and preferably is defined, in cross section, by an upper surface 74a', an opposing lower surface 74b', and a distal tip 74c' disposed between surfaces 74a' and 74b'. In this regard, tip 74c' may be, in longitudinal cross section as shown in Figure 12, a rounded portion below a substantially flat, inclined (relative to the sidewalls of surfaces 72a' or 72b') upper surface 74a' such that rounded tip portion 74c' smoothly yields to upper surface 74a'. Further, lower surface 74b' preferably is short compared to upper surface 74a' such that tip 74c' smoothly merges with the sidewall of interior surface 72a'. The present invention is not limited to the contours described herein, but rather encompasses any spout cover bead contours or any sealing means, and even a spout cover that altogether lacks beads like those described herein, as will be understood by persons familiar

with closure and sealing technology. For example, surfaces 74a', 74b' and 74c' may define a continuously curved or bulbous protrusion or bead.

[0054] Closure 10' includes a spud 75' that extends upwardly from an underside of lid 38' and is encompassed within spout cover 40'. Spud 75' preferably is formed in a shape that is substantially the same as spout cover 40', such as a continuous oval or slot-shape as is shown in the Figures, and is uniformly spaced apart from spout cover 40'. Spud 75' preferably includes an inner surface 77a', an opposing outer surface 77b', and a rounded or bevelled tip 77c' therebetween. Thus, spud 75' and spout cover 40' define a space 79' therebetween capable of receiving the spout 58', as described below. Further, spud 75' preferably has a height that is less than that of spout cover 40'. Further, the invention encompasses providing a spud 75', as shown in phantom in Figure 14, that extends upwardly from top deck 32' and that contacts spout cover outer surface 74a'.

[0055] As best shown in Figure 10, hinge 28' includes a first end 76a that is integrally coupled with skirt 30' and an opposing second end 76b that is integrally coupled with cap 24'. Preferably, hinge 28' is a flexible web that forms a snap hinge, as disclosed in United States Patent Number 6,152,320, which is assigned to the assignee of the present invention and incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. The present invention is not limited to snap hinges, but rather encompasses any hinge that couples cap 24' with body 20'.

[0056] Figures 9 and 14 illustrate the closure 10' in a closed position in which cap 24' is engaged with body 20'. In the closed position, a portion of cap sidewall 36' is disposed in the notch 52' formed by shoulder portion 53a' and seating surface 53b'. Preferably, the internal radius of the cap sidewall 36' is several thousandths of an inch larger than the radius of shoulder portion 53a' to enable cap 24' to slide into and out of notch 52'. Preferably, a distal rim or tip of cap sidewall 36' contacts seating surface 53b' in the fully closed position.

[0057] Further, spout cover 40' is disposed over and around spout 58' to form a seal therewith while cap 24' is in its fully closed position. Spout 58' is disposed in gap 79' such that exterior surface 77b' of spud 75' may contact spout interior surface 62a'. Thus, spud 75' may urge spout 58' outwardly against spout cover 40' to enhance the sealing contact between sealing surfaces 62b' and 72a' and protrusions 63' and 73', which is described more fully below. Gap 79' may be sized to receive spout 58' and include a clearance to aid insertion of spout 58' therein. Alternatively, gap 79' may be sized to tightly receive spout 58' without clearance or with a slight interference fit.

[0058] Employing spud 75', as described herein, enhances the sealing contact between spout 58' and spout cover 40' and provides the desired lift force for opening the closure. Further, spud 75' may conform spout 58' to the desired slot-like shape (or other desired shape) in circumstances in which spout 58' would tend to be mis-

shapen upon manufacture. For example, the opposing sidewalls 60' of spout 58', because of their configuration, may tend to deform inwardly after molding from their as-molded, parallel orientation to a slight hourglass shape (in transverse cross section). The short height relative to spout 58' and spout cover 40' reduces such deformation of spud 75' upon molding. Spud 75' urges sidewalls 60' to their parallel relationship (or other desired, as-molded shape). Spud 75' is especially effective in this regard when closure 10' is placed to its closed position shortly after molding and prior to most of the shrinkage, which occurs after molding.

[0059] Preferably, each one of spout 58', spout cover 40', and spud 75' are continuous and coextensive. That is, the overall shape (in transverse cross section) and size of spout sidewall exterior surface 62b' are substantially the same as the shape and size of cover sidewall interior surface 72a'; and the shape (in transverse cross section) and size of spout sidewall interior surface 62a' are substantially the same as the shape and size of spud exterior surface 77b'. Thus, spout 58' fits within spout cover 40' and forms sealing contact therebetween, and spud 75' fits within spout 50' to enhance the sealing contact.

[0060] As shown in Figure 14, while cap 24' is in the fully closed position, spout cover 40' is engaged with spout 58' to form the sealing contact therebetween such that cover bead 73', and particularly cover bead tip 74c', contacts spout sidewall exterior surface 62b' and such that spout bead 63, and particularly spout bead tip 64c' contacts cover sidewall interior surface 72a'. In this regard, spout 58' and spout cover 40' are preferably molded such that there is light contact between tip 74c' and surface 62b' and between tip 64c' and surface 72a'. Further, because spud 75' preferably has a height that is less than that of spout cover 40', spout 58' is able to disengage spud 75' prior to disengaging spout cover 40' during the opening of cap 24', as described below.

[0061] The dimension between longitudinal centerline A1 and the spout sidewall exterior surface 62b' is approximately equal to the dimension between centerline A2 and the inward surface of spout cover tip 74c', and/or the dimension between longitudinal centerline A1 and the outward surface of spout bead 73' is approximately equal to the dimension between centerline A2 and spout cover interior surface 72a'. Alternatively, spout 58' and spout cover 40' may be molded such there is an interference fit therebetween -- that is, the dimension between longitudinal centerline A1 and spout sidewall exterior surface 62b' is greater than the dimension between centerline A2 and inward surface of spout cover tip 74c', and/or the dimension between longitudinal centerline A1 and the outward surface of spout bead 73' is greater than the dimension between centerline A2 and spout cover interior surface 72a'. Sidewalls 60' and 70' may be configured to flex or deform slightly inwardly or outwardly so as to enable bead 73' to move past bead 63' during opening and closing of cap 24'. In this context,

the orientations inward and outward are relative to longitudinal centerlines of spout 58' and spout cover 40'.

[0062] Closure 10' may be configured to require a pre-determined opening force, which preferably is in the range of 1 to 7 pounds (0.45 to 3.2 kg), depending on the design parameters and preferences of the designer. The opening force may be determined by the configuration and location of beads 63' and 73', sidewalls 60' and 70', spud sidewall 77b', orifice 50', and like features, as will be understood by persons familiar with closure technology. Thus, the sealing contact between spout 58' and spout cover 40' (among other features) provides the combination of an effective seal around orifice 50' and an opening force within the desired range.

[0063] Figure 14 shows that spout bead lower surface 64b' is slightly spaced apart from cover bead lower surface 74b'. The present invention encompasses lower surfaces 64b' and 74b' being in contact while cap 24' is in the closed position, as well as being spaced apart farther than is shown in Figure 14. Further, rim 62c' of spout 58' may contact the underside surface 39' of cap 24', and/or rim 72c' of cover 40' may contact deck top surface 54' while cap 24' is in its closed position. Spout cover bead 73' is disposed below spout bead 63, thereby inhibiting cap 24' from moving upward relative to body 20' so as to retain cap 24' in its closed position.

[0064] Hinge 28' may provide a small force urging cap 24' toward the open position to bias cover bead lower surface 74b' toward and against spout bead lower surface 64b'. The contacts between tip 74c' and surface 62b' and between tip 64c' and surface 72a', and preferably also bead surfaces 64b' and 74b', preferably are continuous around the entire periphery of spout 58'. However, the present invention encompasses discontinuous sealing contact.

[0065] Thus, according to an aspect of the present invention, the sealing contact between spout 58' and spout cover 40' form an outside seal that is disposed on the exterior surface of the spout sidewall 60' and is spaced apart from the rim 62c' of spout 58'. In this regard, during normal dispensing of the material contents from container 11' through orifice 50', the material contents do not come into contact with the sealing contact area that is defined between the spout exterior surface 62b' and the spout cover sidewall 72b'. Therefore, during normal dispensing of the contents from the container package, the sealing contact between the spout 58' and the spout cover 40' is spaced apart from the contents and does not become sullied thereby.

[0066] According to another aspect of the present invention, as shown in Figures 11 and 13, an annular closure seal 80' is formed on an underside of deck 32' such that a body 82' of seal 80' protrudes downwardly from deck bottom surface 56'. As best shown in Figure 13, closure seal 80' includes a pointed annular protrusion 82' that extends downwardly from body of 84. Protrusion 82' preferably is continuous to form an unbroken circle in transverse cross section. An edge 86' of body 82' may

form an acute angle, in longitudinal cross section as shown in Figure 13.

[0067] For clarity, Figure 13 shows closure 10' in an un-torque position such that seal 80' is in light contact with liner 19. Upon tightening of closure 10' onto container 11', the point or tip of protrusion 82' may deform a portion of liner 19 so as to form a seal therebetween. Edge 86' may also contact liner 19 to form or to enhance the seal. Seal 80' may, thus, prevent liquid in the thread area from splashing onto the top surface of liner 19 or from running onto the top surface of liner 19 upon inversion of container package 8' or upon washing.

[0068] Further seal 80' may prevent or inhibit water vapor from entering the head-space, which is above the liner 19 and below deck 32', and condensing therein. The sealing contact between spout 58' and spout cover 40' also inhibits water vapor from entering the head-space. Thus, seal 80' and the sealing contact between spout 58' and spout cover 40' substantially eliminate or diminish the problem of water condensation on the top of liner 19.

[0069] To open container package 8', a user may grasp container neck 14 with cap 24' in the closed position, as shown in Figure 9, in which tip 74c' and surface 62b', tip 64c' and surface 72a', and spud exterior surface 77b' and spout interior surface 62a' are in contact. The user may urge thumb tab 42' upwardly to urge cover bead lower surface 74b' against spout bead lower surface 64b'. Because spout cover 40' extends below spud 75', as shown in Figure 14, during the opening process spud 75' disengages with spout 58' while tip 74c' and surface 62b', and tip 64c' and surface 72a', are in contact. Thus, spout 58' preferably is not inwardly constrained by spud 75' while tips 74c' slides past tip 64c', thereby facilitating inward flexing or deforming of spout 58'. Each of the surfaces 64b' and 74b' are rounded or inclined to facilitate mutual sliding in response to upward urging of thumb tab 42' until cover bead tip 74c' slips upward past spout bead tip 64c'.

[0070] Cap 24' continues to rotate relative to body 20' by continued urging of thumb tab 42' and/or by the action of snap hinge 28' until it reaches its rest-open position, which is likely be less than 180' degrees from its fully closed position, according to the configuration of hinge 28'. The position of cap 24' relative to body 20' shown Figures 10 and 11 is the position in which closure 10' is molded, and may not represent the rest-open position of cap 24'.

[0071] Upon cap 24' being disposed in its rest-open position, the user may invert container package 8' to dispense the material contents through orifice 50'. For containers with flexible sidewalls, the user may squeeze the container sidewalls to urge the material contents through orifice 50'. The elongated shape of orifice 50' provides greater open area through which material contents may pass.

[0072] The user may urge cap 24' toward deck 32' to pivot closure 10' from its open position to toward its

closed position. Hinge 28' may also urge cap 24' toward its closed position upon reaching its snap action point. The orifice being spaced apart from a center of deck 32', as best shown in Figure 10, enables spout cover 40' to clear spout 58' during pivoting about hinge 28'. To move cap 24' into its fully closed position, the user may urge cap 24' downwardly such that the distal rim of cap sidewall 36' moves past the rounded portion of shoulder portion 53a'. Further, spout cover bead upper surface 74a' (which is the leading surface of bead 73' because cap 24' is in an inverted position from its molded state) may contact spout bead upper surface 64a'.

[0073] A user applies force downwardly on cap 24' such that cover bead upper surface 74a' slides relative to spout bead upper surface 64a'. Spout cover sidewall 70' and/or spout sidewall 60' deform or deflect relative to one another until cover bead tip 74c' is urged downwardly past spout bead tip 64c'. Spout tip 62c' may contact spud tip 77c' such that spout 58' is urged against spout cover 40'. As cover bead lower surface 64b' comes into contact with spout bead lower surface 74b' such that cap 24' reaches its fully closed position, cap sidewall rim 62c' may contact seating surface 53b'.

[0074] Embodiments of the closure, disclosed herein have been employed to illustrate aspects of the present invention. The scope of the present invention, however, is given by the appended claims.

Claims

1. A closure (10') for resealably closing a container (11'), the closure comprising:

a closure body (20') including a top deck (32'), a skirt (30') downwardly depending from a periphery of the top deck, an orifice (50') formed in the top deck, and a spout (58') extending upwardly from the top deck substantially coextensive with the orifice (50'),
a cap (24') including a lid member (38'), a cap sidewall (36') extending downwardly from a periphery of the lid member,
a spout cover (40') extending downwardly from the lid member (38') in the closed position,
a hinge (28') coupled between the body (20') and the cap (24') for enabling actuation of the cap relative to the body between an open position in which the spout cover (40') is disengaged with the spout and the closed position in which the spout cover (40') is engaged with the spout,

characterised in that the spout cover (40') includes an interior surface (72a') that receives the spout (58') therein, the spout cover interior surface (72a') and an exterior surface (62b') of the spout (58') form a sealing contact therebetween while the

cap is in a closed position thereby forming an outside seal relative to the spout, and the closure (10') further comprises an inner spud (75') extending downwardly from the lid member (38') in the closed position substantially within the spout cover (40') and spaced apart therefrom, an exterior surface (77b') of the inner spud contacting an interior surface (62a') of the spout (58') while the closure (10') is in the closed position, whereby the sealing contact between the spout cover interior surface (72a') and the spout exterior surface (62b') is enhanced.

2. A closure (10') according to claim 1, wherein the height of the spud (75') is less than the height of the spout cover (40').
3. A closure (10') according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the spout cover (40') is adapted to deflect outwardly relative to the spout (58') while the cap is moved from the open position to the closed position, thereby forming an interference fit between the spout (58') and the spout cover (40').
4. A closure (10') according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the orifice (50') is elongated, having length (L1) that is greater than its width (W1).
5. A closure (10') according to any preceding claim, further comprising an outer spud (75") extending upwardly from the top deck (32') substantially around the spout (58') and spaced apart therefrom, an interior surface of the outer spud contacting an exterior surface (74a') of the spout cover (40') while the closure is in the closed position, whereby the sealing contact between the spout cover interior surface (72a') and the spout exterior surface (62b') is enhanced.
6. A closure (10') according to any preceding claim, further comprising a continuous, annular seal (80') extending downwardly from an underside of the deck, whereby the annular seal (80') and the sealing contact between the spout (58') and the spout cover (40') inhibit vapor infiltration into a head-space within the closure.
7. A closure (10') according to any preceding claim, wherein the spout cover (40') includes a spout cover bead (73') extending inwardly from the spout cover interior surface (72a'), the spout cover bead (73') engaging the spout exterior surface (62b') to form sealing contact therebetween while the cap (24') is in the closed position.
8. A closure (10') according to any preceding claim, wherein the spout (58') includes a spout bead (53') extending outwardly from the spout exterior surface (62b'), the spout bead (63') engaging the spout cov-

er interior surface (72a') to form sealing contact therebetween while the cap (24') is in the closed position.

Patentansprüche

1. Verschluss (10') zum wiederholten Verschließen eines Behälters (11'), bestehend aus Folgendem:

einem Verschlussgrundkörper (20'), der ein oberes Deck (32'), einen Mantel (30'), der sich ausgehend von einer Peripherie des oberen Deckes nach unten erstreckt, eine Öffnung (50'), die in das obere Deck eingeformt ist und eine Tülle (58') aufweist, die sich ausgehend von dem oberen Deck im Wesentlichen gleichermaßen wie die Öffnung 50' erstreckt,

mit einer Kappe (24'), die ein Deckelteil (38') und eine Kappenseitenwandung (36') einschließt, welche sich ausgehend von einer Peripherie des Deckelteils nach unten erstreckt,

einer Abdeckung (40') für die Tülle, die sich ausgehend von dem Deckelteil (38') in der Schließstellung nach unten erstreckt,

einem Gelenk (28'), welches sich zwischen dem Grundkörper (20') und der Kappe (24') befindet, um eine Betätigung der Kappe relativ zu dem Grundkörper zwischen einer Öffnungsstellung, in welcher die Abdeckung (40') der Tülle von der Tülle gelöst ist und einer Schließstellung, in welcher die Abdeckung (40') der Tülle mit dieser im Einriff steht, zu bewirken.

dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass die Abdeckung (40') der Tülle eine innere Oberfläche (72a') aufweist, welche die Tülle (58') aufnimmt, wobei die innere Oberfläche (72a') der Abdeckung der Tülle und eine äußere Oberfläche (62b') der Tülle (58') in dichtender Berührung untereinander stehen, sobald sich die Kappe in der Schließstellung befindet, so dass eine außenseitige Dichtung relativ zu der Tülle gebildet ist, und

dass der Verschluss (10') ferner ein inneres Passstück (75') aufweist, welches sich ausgehend von dem Deckelteil (38') in der Schließstellung nach unten erstreckt, und zwar im Wesentlichen innerhalb der Abdeckung (40') der Tülle und von dieser beabstandet, wobei eine äußere Oberfläche (77b') des inneren Passstückes mit einer inneren Oberfläche (62a') der Tülle (58') in Berührung steht, sobald sich der Verschluss (10') in der Schließstellung befindet, so dass die dichtende Berührung zwischen der inneren Oberfläche (72a') der Abdeckung der Tülle und der äußeren Oberfläche (62b') der Tülle

verbessert wird.

2. Verschluss (10') nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Höhe des Passstückes (75') geringer ist als die Höhe der Abdeckung (40') der Tülle.

3. Verschluss (10') nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei die Abdeckung (40') der Tülle dahingehend ausgebildet ist, dass sie relativ zu der Tülle (58') in auswärtiger Richtung ausgelenkt wird, während die Kappe von der Öffnungsstellung in die Schließstellung bewegt wird, so dass sich ein Festsitz zwischen der Tülle (58') und der Abdeckung (40') der Tülle ergibt.

4. Verschluss (10') nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, wobei die Öffnung (50') langgestreckt ausgebildet ist und eine Länge (L1) aufweist, die größer bemessen ist als ihre Breite (W1).

5. Verschluss (10') nach einem der vorangegangenen Ansprüche, **gekennzeichnet** ferner durch ein äußeres Passstück (75'), welches sich ausgehend von dem oberen Deck (32') aufwärts und im Wesentlichen um die Tülle (58') herum erstreckt und gegenüber dieser beabstandet ist, wobei eine innere Oberfläche des äußeren Passstückes mit einer äußeren Oberfläche (74a') der Abdeckung (40') der Tülle in Berührung steht, sobald sich der Verschluss in der Schließstellung befindet, so dass eine dichtende Berührung zwischen der inneren Oberfläche (72a') der Abdeckung der Tülle und der äußeren Oberfläche (62b) verbessert wird.

6. Verschluss (10') nach einem der vorangegangenen Ansprüche **gekennzeichnet** ferner durch eine kontinuierliche ringförmige Dichtung (80'), die sich von der Unterseite des Deckes nach unten erstreckt, so dass die ringförmige Dichtung (80') und die dichtende Berührung zwischen der Tülle (58') und der Abdeckung (40) der Tülle eine Dampfinfiltration in den Kopfraum innerhalb des Verschlusses verhindern.

7. Verschluss (10') nach einem der vorangegangenen Ansprüche, wobei die Abdeckung (40') der Tülle eine Sicke (73') der Abdeckung der Tülle umfasst, die sich von der inneren Oberfläche (72a') der Abdeckung der Tülle einwärts erstreckt, wobei die Sicke (73') der Abdeckung der Tülle mit der äußeren Oberfläche (62b') der Tülle im Eingriff steht und eine dichtende Berührung bildet, sobald sich die Kappe (24') in der Schließstellung befindet.

8. Verschluss (10') nach einem der vorangegangenen Ansprüche, wobei die Tülle (58') eine Sicke (53') der Tülle umfasst, die sich ausgehend von der äußeren Oberfläche (62b') der Tülle in auswärtiger Richtung erstreckt, wobei die Sicke (63') der Tülle mit der inneren Oberfläche (72a') der Abdeckung der Tülle

im Eingriff steht und eine Dichtung bildet, sobald sich die Kappe (24') in der Schließstellung befindet.

5 Revendications

1. Fermeture (10') pour refermer hermétiquement un récipient (11'), la fermeture comprenant :

un corps de fermeture (20') comprenant un plateau supérieur (32'), une jupe (30') pendant à une périphérie du plateau supérieur, un orifice (50') formé dans le plateau supérieur et un bec verseur (58') s'étendant vers le haut depuis le plateau supérieur sensiblement dans la même extension que l'orifice (50'), un bouchon (24') comprenant un élément formant couvercle (38'), une paroi latérale de bouchon (36') s'étendant vers le bas depuis une périphérie de l'élément formant couvercle, un couvercle de bec verseur (40') s'étendant vers le bas depuis l'élément formant couvercle (38') dans la position fermée, une charnière (28') couplée entre le corps (20') et le bouchon (24') pour permettre d'actionner le bouchon par rapport au corps entre une position ouverte dans laquelle le couvercle de bec verseur (40') est dégagé du bec verseur et la position fermée dans laquelle le couvercle de bec verseur (40') est engagé avec le bec verseur,

caractérisée en ce que le couvercle de bec verseur (40') comprend une surface intérieure (72a') qui reçoit le bec verseur (58') en son sein, la surface intérieure (72a') de couvercle de bec verseur et une surface extérieure (62b') du bec verseur (58') forment un contact d'étanchéité entre elles tandis que le bouchon est dans une position fermée afin de former un joint extérieur relativement au bec verseur, et la fermeture (10') comprend également un ergot interne (75') s'étendant vers le bas depuis l'élément formant couvercle (38') dans la position fermée sensiblement au sein du couvercle de bec verseur (40') et espacé de celui-ci, une surface extérieure (77b') de l'ergot interne contactant une surface intérieure (62a') du bec verseur (58') tandis que la fermeture (10') est dans la position fermée, de manière que le contact d'étanchéité entre la surface intérieure de couvercle de bec verseur (72a') et la surface extérieure de bec verseur (62b') soit accru.

2. Fermeture (10') selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle la hauteur de l'ergot (75') est inférieure à la hauteur du couvercle de bec verseur (40').

3. Fermeture (10') selon la revendication 1 ou la re-

vendication 2, dans laquelle le couvercle de bec verseur (40') est apte à fléchir vers l'extérieur relativement au bec verseur (58') tandis que le bouchon est déplacé de la position ouverte à la position fermée, de manière à former un joint à ajustement serré entre le bec verseur (58') et le couvercle de bec verseur (40'). 5

4. Fermeture (10') selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans laquelle l'orifice (50') est allongé, ayant une longueur (L1) qui est supérieure à sa largeur (W1). 10
5. Fermeture (10') selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, comprenant également un ergot externe (75") s'étendant vers le haut depuis le plateau supérieur (32') sensiblement autour du bec verseur (58') et espacé de celui-ci, une surface intérieure de l'ergot externe étant en contact avec une surface extérieure (74a') du couvercle de bec verseur (40') tandis que la fermeture est dans la position fermée, de manière que le contact d'étanchéité entre la surface intérieure de couvercle de bec verseur (72a') et la surface extérieure de bec verseur (62') soit accru. 15 20 25
6. Fermeture (10') selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, comprenant également un joint annulaire continu (80') s'étendant vers le bas depuis un dessous du plateau, de manière que le joint annulaire (80') et le contact d'étanchéité entre le bec verseur (58') et le couvercle de bec verseur (40') empêche une infiltration de vapeur dans un espace vide au sein de la fermeture. 30 35
7. Fermeture (10') selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle le couvercle de bec verseur (40') comprend un bourrelet de couvercle de bec verseur (73') s'étendant vers l'intérieur de la surface intérieure de couvercle de bec verseur (72a'), le bourrelet de couvercle de bec verseur (73') engageant la surface extérieure de bec verseur (62b') pour former un contact d'étanchéité entre eux tandis que le bouchon (24') est dans la position fermée. 40 45
8. Fermeture (10') selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle le bec verseur (58') comprend un bourrelet de bec verseur (63') s'étendant vers l'extérieur depuis la surface extérieure de bec verseur (62b'), le bourrelet de bec verseur (63') engageant la surface intérieure de couvercle de bec verseur (72a') pour former un contact d'étanchéité entre eux tandis que le bouchon (24') est dans la position fermée. 50 55

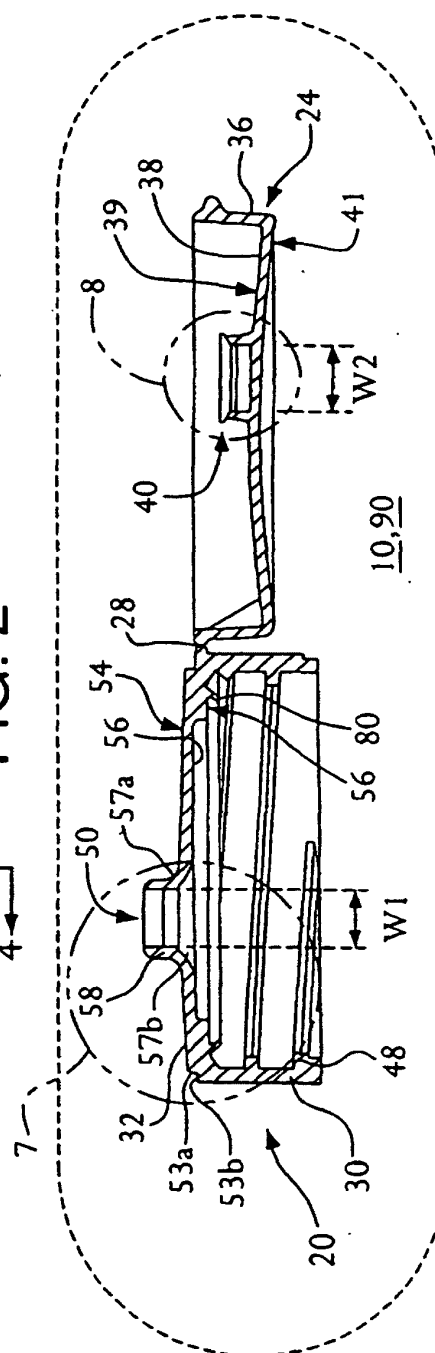
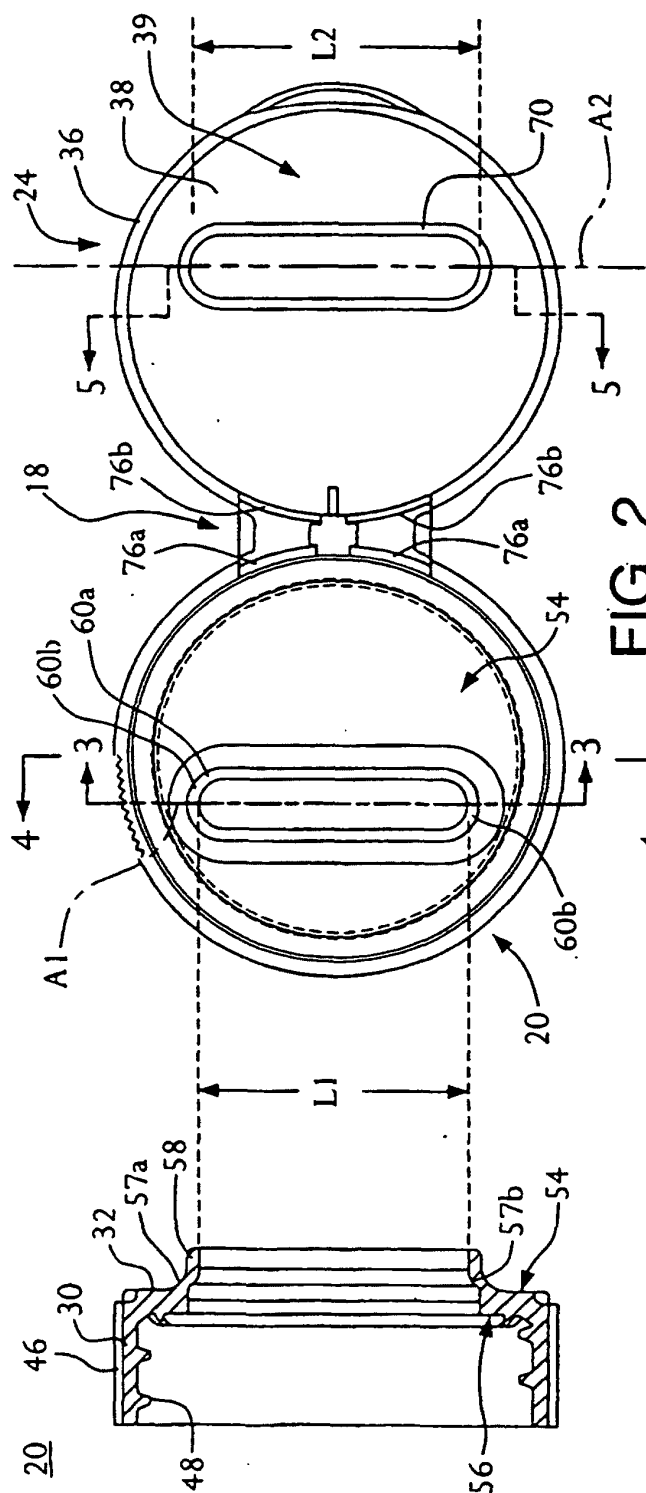


FIG. 1

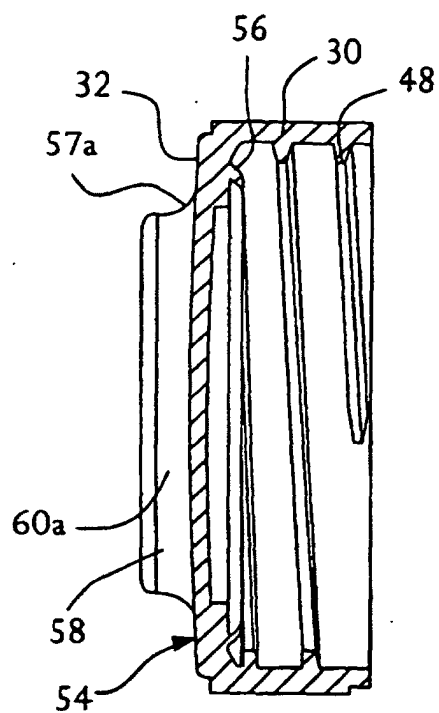


FIG. 4

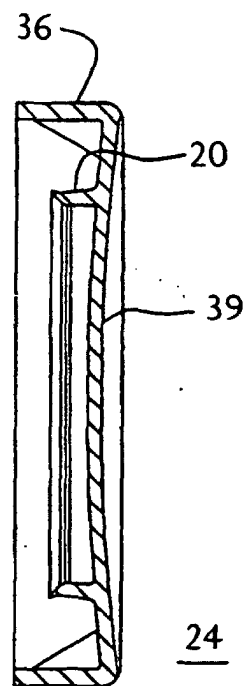


FIG. 5

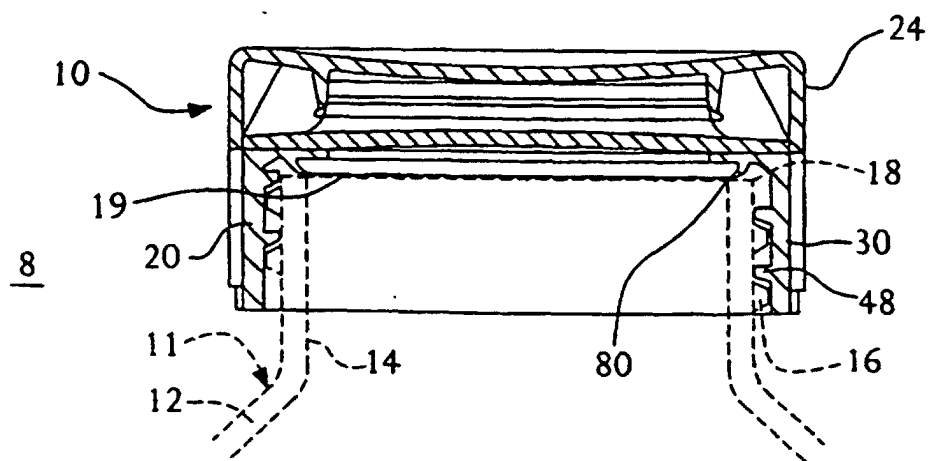


FIG. 6

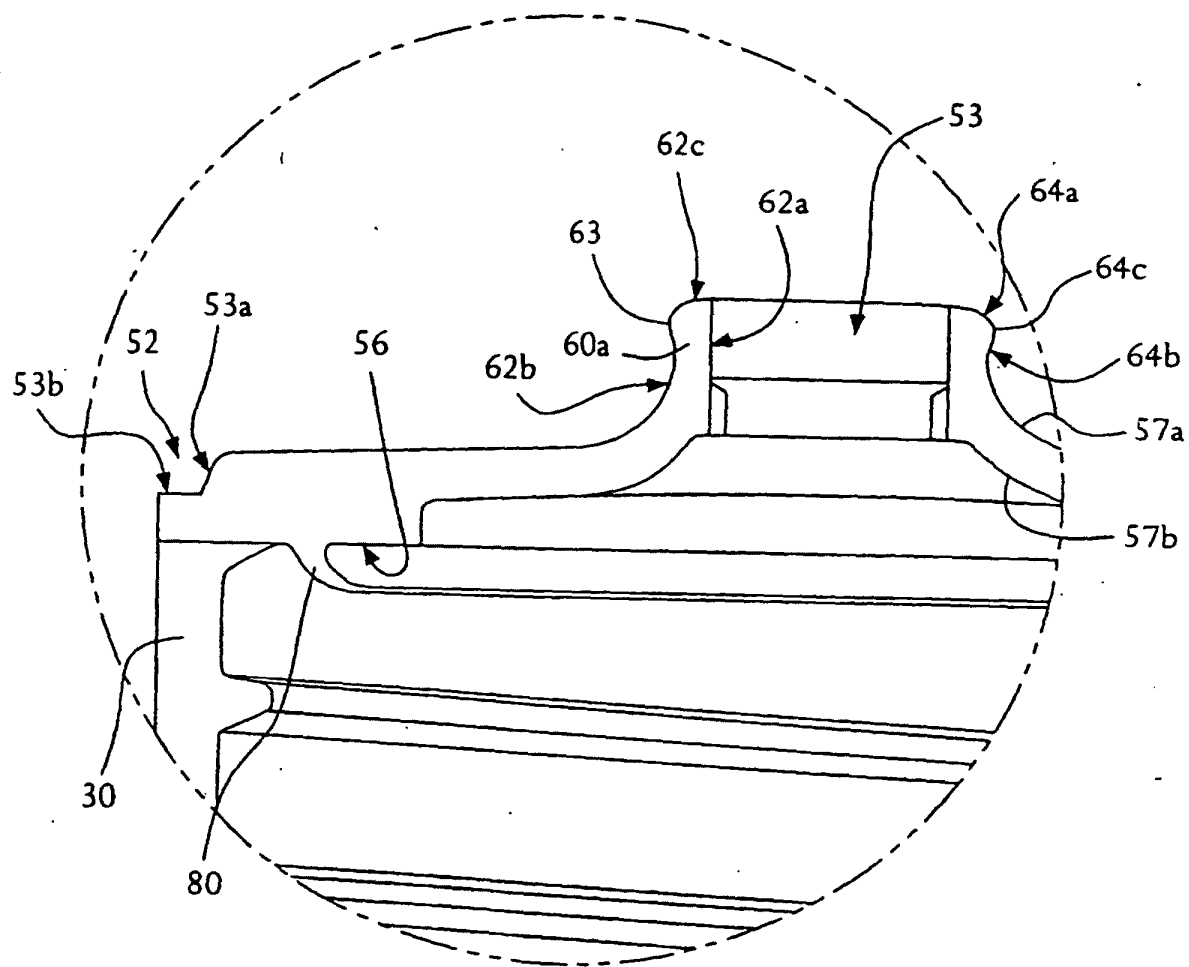


FIG. 7

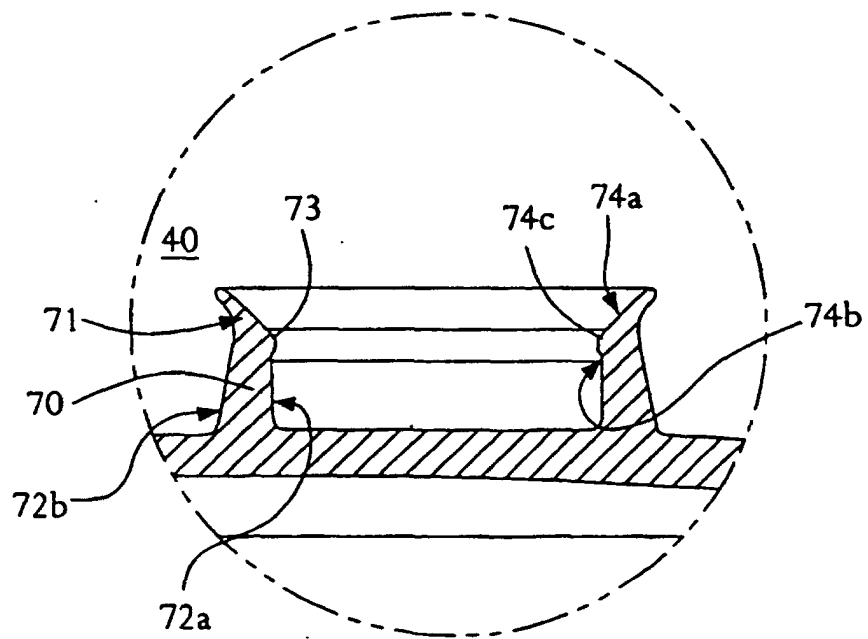
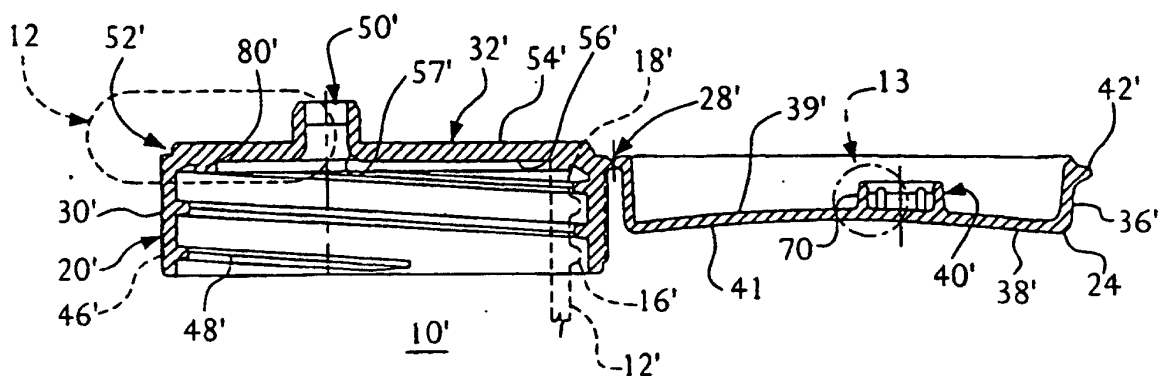
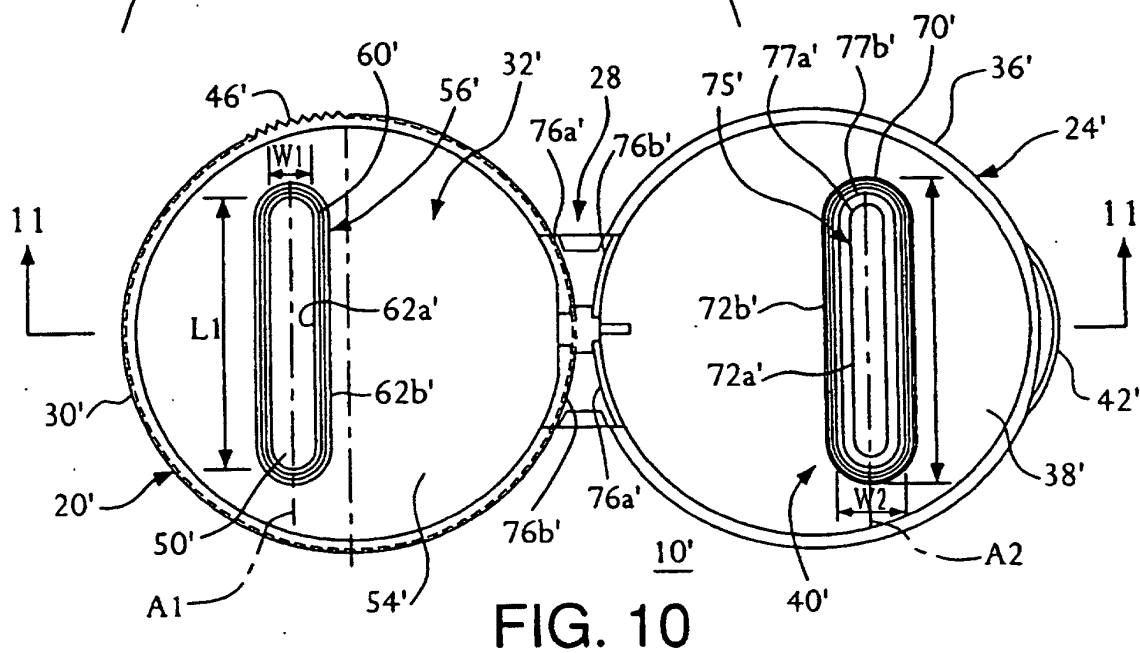
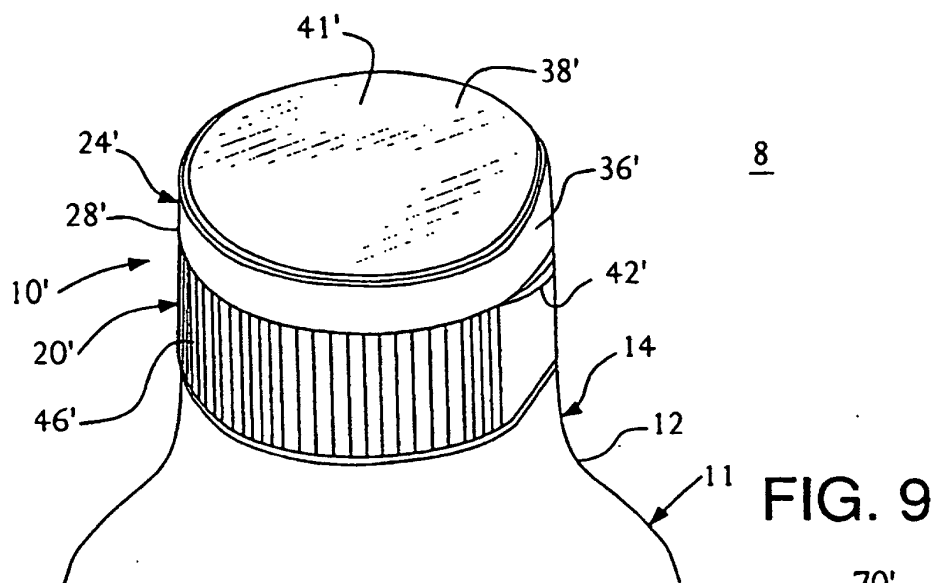


FIG. 8



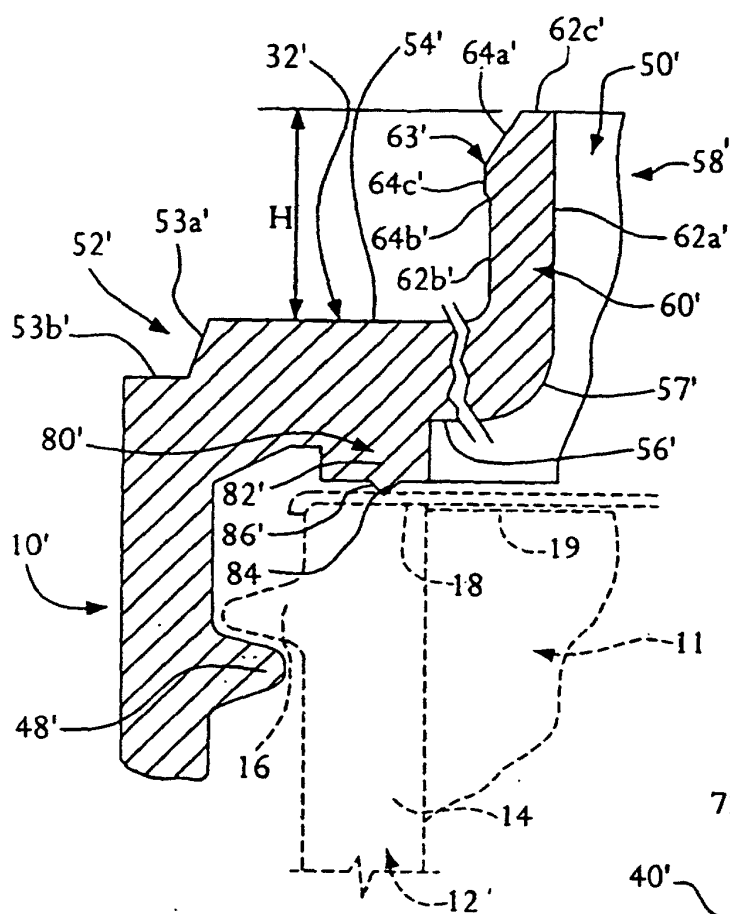


FIG. 12

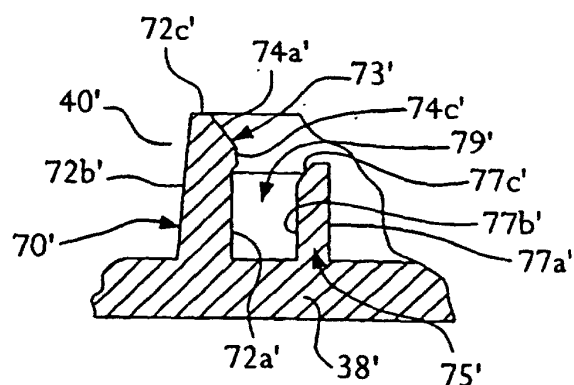


FIG. 13

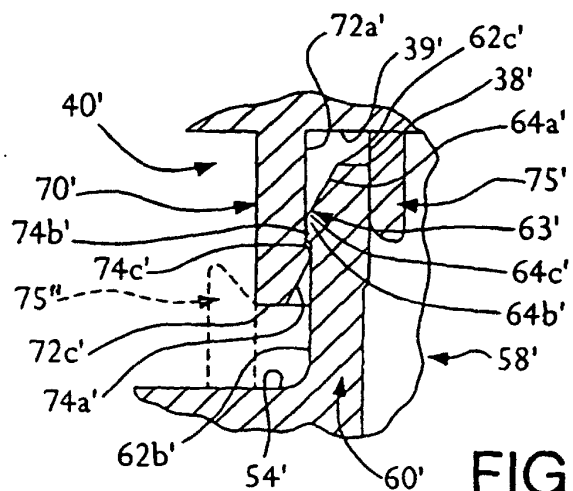


FIG. 14