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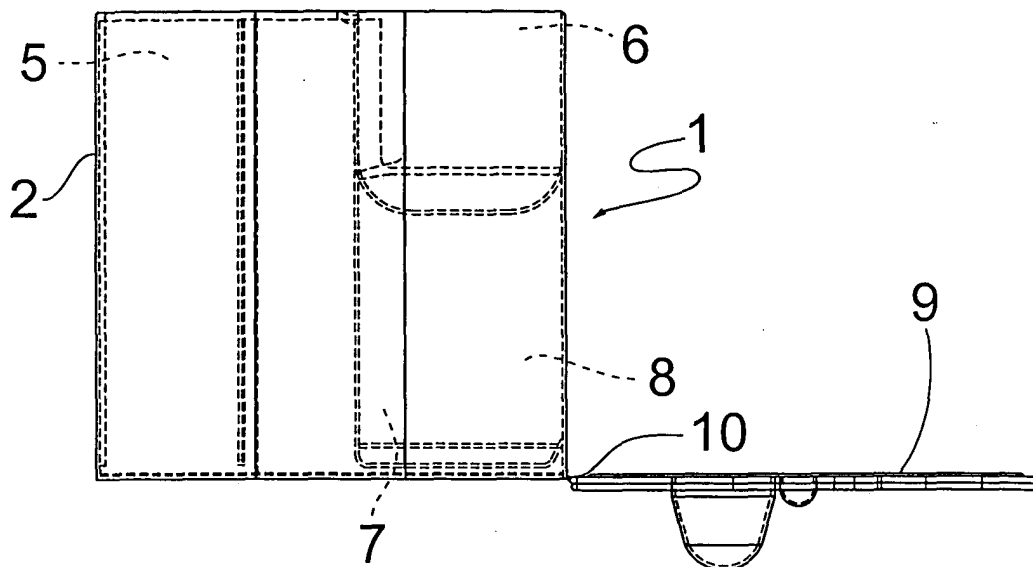
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(54) **A container with several compartments**

(57) A container for solid, semi-dense and liquid foods comprising a cylindrical hollow body (2) made of moulded plastic material having three receptacles (5, 6, 7) whereof at least one extends only for a part of the

axial dimensions of the body (2). The space (8) available between said receptacle (7) and the bottom of the body (2) is accessible through an openable lid (9) formed in a single piece with the body (2).

Fig. 3



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Description

[0001] The present invention relates specifically relates to the containers for foods of the type marketed by Ferrero S.p.A. with the name "Snack & Drink". Such containers comprise a hollow, generally cylindrical body made of moulded plastic material having a receptacle of greater angular amplitude substantially extending along the entire axial dimension of the body and a pair of receptacles of smaller angular amplitude whereof at least one extends only for a part of the axial dimension of the body, in which said receptacles are open at an end of the body and closed at the opposite end. The hollow body is closed on the bottom.

[0002] In the specific case of the product called "Snack & Drink" the receptacle of greater angular amplitude is destined to receive a sealed container which contains a drink (typically, cold tea), whilst one of the two receptacles with smaller angular amplitude is destined to house a packet of bread sticks or the like. A second receptacle with smaller angular amplitude is provided to house a cup containing a semi-dense food, typically a cream of chocolate and hazelnuts ("Nutella"). The container thus packaged is sealed in correspondence with the access end of the three receptacles, and is sold with a straw applied externally, usable to consume the drink.

[0003] This arrangement has essentially three drawbacks: in the first place, the straw applied externally is subject to accidental separations or undesired removals from the container. In the second place, the reduced axial dimensions of the receptacle destined to contain the cream, which constitutes the most valuable component of the product, is not visible from the exterior of the container, with the risk of deceivingly inducing the consumer to believe that it also extends over the entire axial dimension of the container. In the third place, the space available in the cavity of the container in correspondence with the at least one receptacle of reduced axial dimension is unused.

[0004] The aim of the present invention is to overcome the aforesaid drawbacks, and to provide a container of the type defined above which, without changing current conditions for filling and packaging the food products within it, allows to make visible and use the space available within the container for useful functions.

[0005] According to the invention, said aim is achieved thanks to the fact that the bottom of the body of the container is constituted by a lid that can be opened to allow access to the space available within said body.

[0006] Said available space can be used both for containing the straw traditionally applied to the exterior of the body, and to house a paper napkin or a serviette, as well as a gadget. According to another advantageous characteristic of the invention, the lid is formed in a single piece with the body and it is connected thereto by means of a flexible hinge.

[0007] The invention shall now be described in detail

with reference to the accompanying drawing provided purely by way of non limiting example, in which:

- Figure 1 is a schematic perspective view of a container for foods according to the invention,
- Figure 2 is a similar view to Figure 1 but from a different angle, with the bottom lid shown in open position,
- Figure 3 is an elevation view of Figure 2,
- Figure 4 is a bottom plan view of Figure 3, and
- Figure 5 shows an enlarged scale section view of a detail of the container.

[0008] Referring to the drawings, the reference number 1 globally designates a container for solid, semi-dense and liquid foods according to the invention, typically destined to the use of the "Snack & Drink" product marketed by Ferrero S.p.A.

[0009] The container 1 is formed by a hollow body 2 made of moulded plastic material with cylindrical shape and circular cross section, whose cavity is divided by a diametrical baffle 3 and by a radial baffle 4 which substantially intersects the diametrical baffle 3 centrally, thereby defining three receptacles 5, 6 and 7.

[0010] The receptacle 5 has an angular amplitude that is substantially equal to 180° and an axial dimension corresponding to that of the body 2. The receptacles 6 and 7 instead have at least an angular amplitude of the order of 90° and at least one of the them, in particular the receptacle 6, extends axially for less than half the axial dimension of the body 2. In the case of the example illustrated herein, the other receptacle 7 axially extends substantially over the entire axial dimension of the body 2.

[0011] With this arrangement, below the receptacle 6 a space 8 is made available within the body 2, which space 8, in the current configuration of the container for the Ferrero "Snack & Drink" product, is unused: currently, the body 2, which is open superiorly to allow access to the receptacles 5, 6 and 7 following the removal of a flexible protection guard, is closed inferiorly by a bottom wall.

[0012] According to the invention, said bottom wall is replaced by a lid 9 able to be opened and closed, which allows access to the compartment 8 thereby allowing the introduction therein of an object to be used (such as a straw and a napkin or serviette), and of a possible promotional object or gadget.

[0013] The lid 9 is preferably formed in a single piece by moulding with the body 2, and is joined thereto by means of a flexible hinge 10, shown in detail in Figure 5.

[0014] It should be noted that the presence of the lid 9 entails no change to the current conditions of filling of the container (i.e. the introduction of the cold tea into the related cup inside the receptacle 5, of the cup of "Nutella" into the receptacle 6 and of the bag of breadsticks into the receptacle 7), or to the current packaging, sealing and labelling conditions.

[0015] Naturally, the construction details and the embodiments may be widely varied from what is described and illustrated herein, without thereby departing from the scope of the present invention as defined in the claims that follow.

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Claims

1. A container for solid, semi-dense and liquid foods, comprising a generally cylindrical hollow body (2) made of moulded plastic material having a receptacle with greater angular amplitude (5) substantially extending over the entire axial dimension of the body (2) and a pair of receptacles of smaller angular amplitude (6, 7), whereof at least one extends only for a part of the axial dimension of the body (2), said receptacles (5, 6, 7) being open at an end of said body (2) and closed at the opposite end, **characterised in that** said opposite end of the body (2) is constituted by an openable lid (9) to allow access to the space available in the interior (8) of the body (2).
2. A container as claimed in claim 1, **characterised in that** the lid (9) is formed in a single piece with the body (2) and is connected thereto by means of a flexible hinge (10).

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Fig. 1

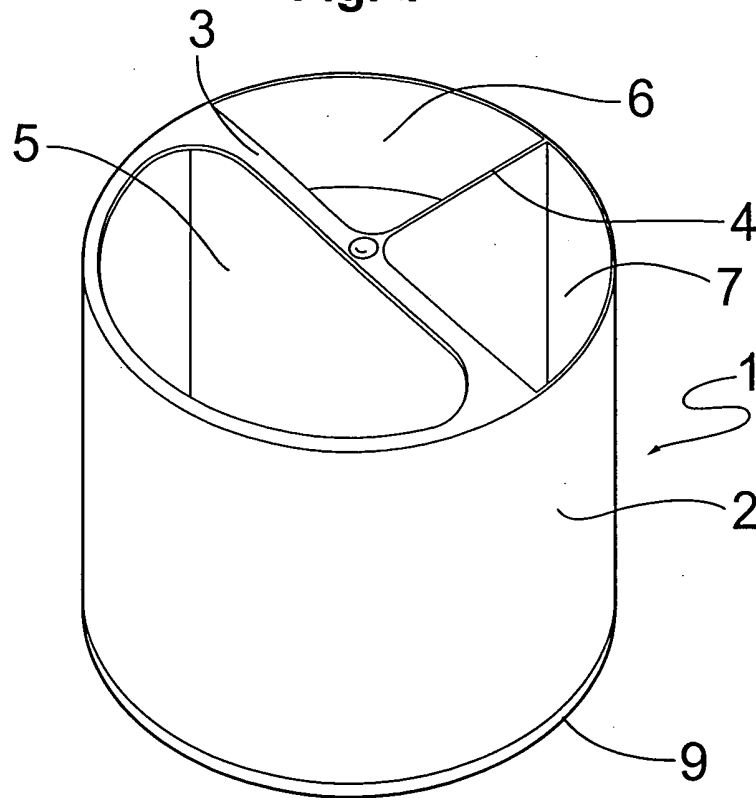


Fig. 2

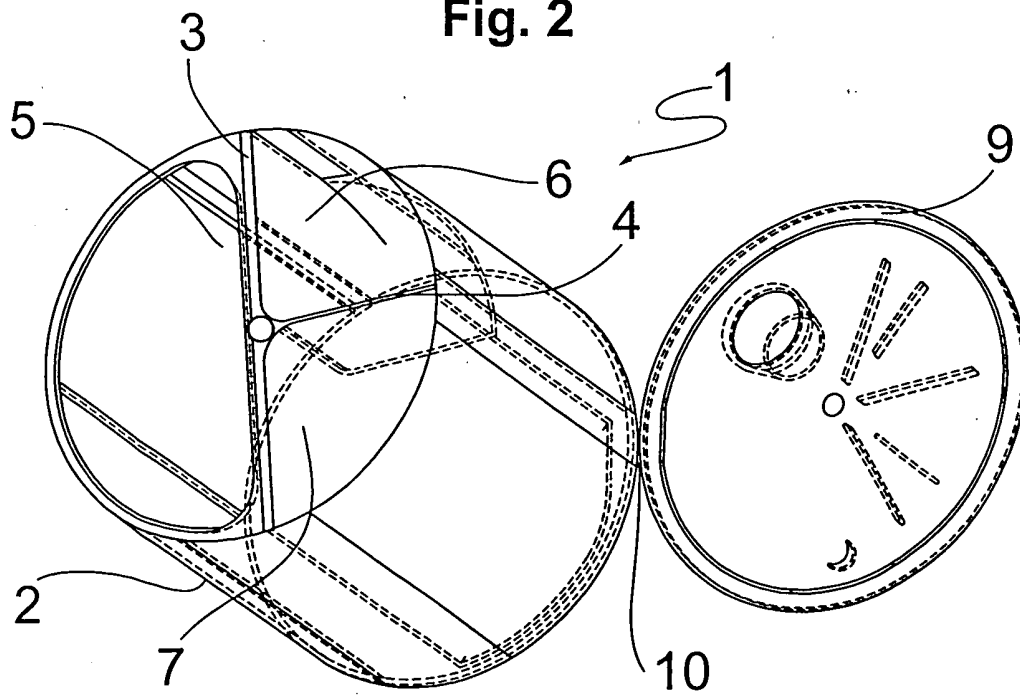


Fig. 3

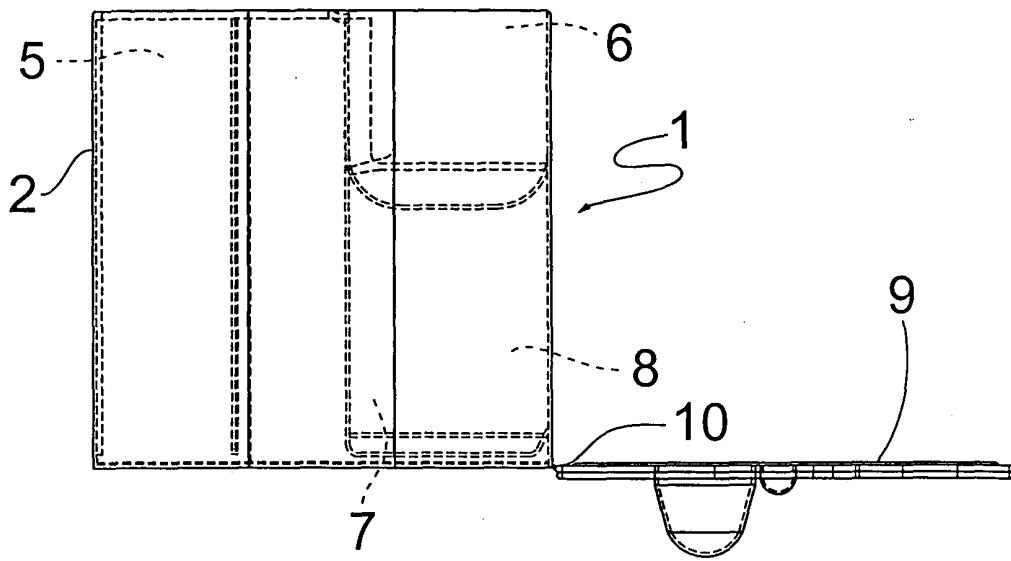


Fig. 4

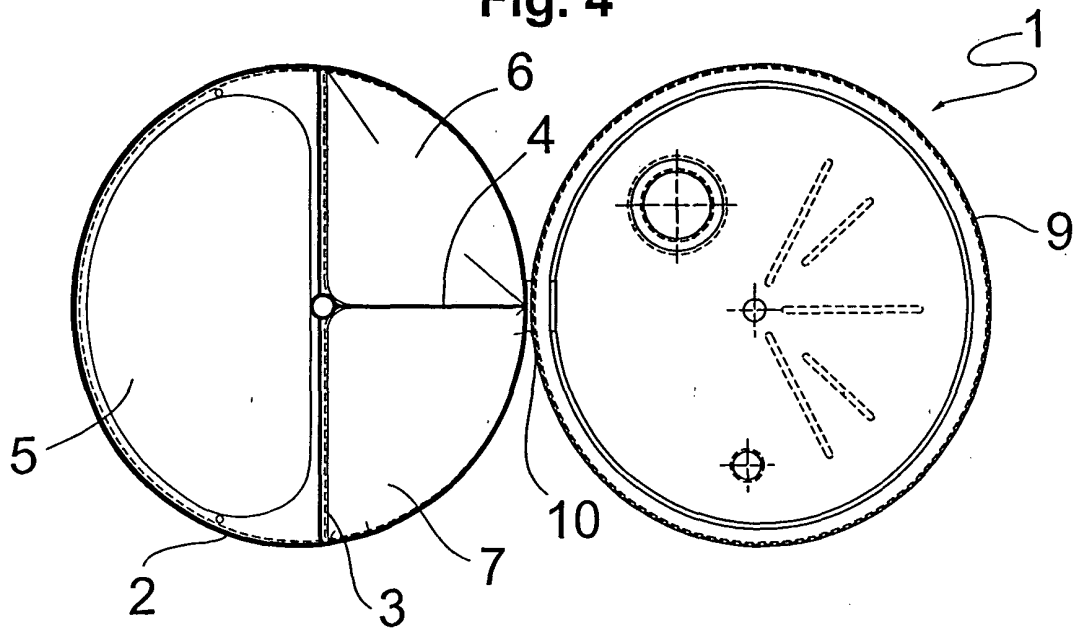
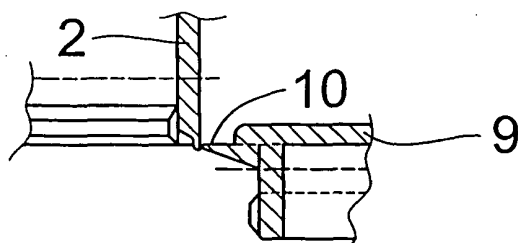


Fig. 5





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 03 01 5271

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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			B65D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
MUNICH		16 March 2004	Damiani, A
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
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EP 03 01 5271

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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