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(54) **Machine for banding groups of palletised products.**

Vorrichtung zum Binden von palettierten Produkten

Dispositif pour banderoler des produits palettisés

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a machine for banding groups of palletised products, in particular palletised loads consisting of stacked products (such as, for example, but not restricted to, packs of bottles or other containers) to undergo intermediate processes and to be transported from one factory to another or from one processing station to another).

[0002] Machines of this type are used to wrap a band of material around a groups of palletised products stacked to a certain height and relatively light in weight, in such a way as to stabilise the stacks during transportation or normal handling in processing lines. Typically, the palletised load consists of bottle crates placed side by side and stacked in two or more layers.

[0003] To stabilise a load of this type, the banding machine wraps a first band of plastic film at a certain height in order to hold the stack together at the most unstable part of it (usually the top of the stack) which would be the first to topple during transportation.

[0004] Prior art machines that perform banding operations of this type comprise a portal frame whose uprights mount a pair of film rolls at a predetermined height. The film is unwound by suitable rollers in such a way that it is positioned transversely between the uprights to intercept the palletised load as the pallet moves under the portal frame on a conveyor.

[0005] The forward motion of the pallet, after its front end has come into contact with the band of film, causes the rolls to unwind so as to wrap the band around the sides of the products stacked on the pallet. As soon as the pallet has moved past the portal frame, it is stopped and a unit comprising a sealer and a cutter, mounted behind the uprights, runs along the back of the palletised load on suitable supports in a direction parallel to the rear face of the load in such a way that the band of film is wrapped right around the load.

[0006] In other words, the film forms a loop around the upper section of the palletised product load and, since the film used is usually stretch film, also has a tightening effect which holds the load together.

[0007] At this point, the section of the band at the back of the palletised load is sealed and, as soon as this has been done, the cutter cuts the band half way between the two sealed ends: that means the looped band wrapped around the palletised load is closed, sealed and cut off, while the seal keeps the two rolls joined to each other by the remaining film positioned transversely between the two uprights and ready to intercept the next palletised load moving forward on the conveyor, thus ensuring that the process is not interrupted.

[0008] An increasingly frequent requirement is for banding machines to apply to the palletised load a second band of film, lower down than the first and bearing a distinguishing mark, such as, for example, a label identifying the products transported, their factory of origin, or other information.

[0009] To make applications of this type possible, the following have been added to banding machines:

- a pair of rolls mounted on the uprights of the portal frame and designed to wrap a second band of plastic film, to which labels can be applied, at a fixed height relative to the uprights themselves; and
- a second sealer and cutter assembly similar to the first assembly, and independent of it, mounted close to the base of the portal frame and mobile in synchrony with the first assembly by means of two additional arms, designed to seal and cut the second band in the same way as the first.

[0010] This type of solution consists basically of a machine already well known in the trade used to apply a single band, with the simple addition of another pair of film rolls and a second, fixed, independent unit but without adapting its constructional philosophy to suit the new requirement.

[0011] This type of structure has several disadvantages which have been overcome in a new solution proposed by the same Applicant as the present (see Italian patent application BO2002 A000232), in which the two sealing and cutting units are supported by a single mounting unit that projects from the portal frame and that slides along the frame crossbeam to and from the idle and working positions of the units: this solution has made the sealing and cutting units extremely, practical and adaptable to any type of production line in which the portal frame is used.

[0012] This improvement has led to a widespread and increased use of labels applied to the plastic bands and bearing information such as product type, destination, origin, quantity, weight, etc.

[0013] The labels, usually placed on three sides of the palletised load, are applied to the plastic band at a station located downstream of the banding machine and equipped with independent label application means.

[0014] This type of configuration, however, tends to slow down the flow of the pallets that have already been banded to enable the labels to be applied and requires an independent, dedicated labelling station which increases the overall dimensions of the production line.

[0015] The present invention has for an object to overcome the above mentioned disadvantages by providing a machine for banding palletised products that has a very compact structure, and is equipped with units for sealing and cutting the plastic band and for applying alphanumeric characters, all mounted in a single station that is quick and easy to adjust and operates in highly synchronised fashion.

[0016] According to the invention, this object is achieved by a machine for banding individual, grouped or palletised products and comprising at least: a conveyor, extending in a direction of feed, for transporting the products; a frame mounted over the conveyor and equipped with at least two rolls of film mounted with their

axis vertically on the frame uprights in such a way as to form a band of film positioned transversely relative to the uprights so as to intercept the front of the products as they move forward; at least one unit for sealing and cutting the film, supported by the frame and mobile between an idle position, where the unit is close to the uprights, and a working position, where the unit is away from the uprights so that it intercepts, seals and cuts the portion of film band wrapped around the products; the machine further comprises at least one unit located in the vicinity of a section of the film band unwinding path and designed to apply at least one distinctive code to a part of the film band, while the film band (9, 9') is moving.

[0017] The technical characteristics of the invention, with reference to the above objects, are clearly described in the claims below and its advantages are apparent from the detailed description which follows, with reference to the accompanying drawings which illustrate a preferred embodiment of the invention provided merely by way of example without restricting the scope of the inventive concept, and in which:

- Figure 1 is a side view, with some parts cut away to better illustrate others, of a machine according to the present invention for banding groups of palletised products;
- Figure 2 is a front view of the banding machine of Figure 1;
- Figure 3 is a top plan view of the banding machine illustrated in the figures listed above;
- Figures 4 to 6 are schematic top plan views illustrating a series of steps in the application of codes to a band placed round the groups of products in a machine according to the present invention.

[0018] With reference to the accompanying drawings, in particular Figures 1 to 3, the machine according to the invention, denoted in its entirety by the numeral 1, is used for banding, individual, grouped or palletised products.

[0019] More specifically, the machine is used, for example, for palletised stacks 3 of products which have undergone intermediate processes and have to be transported from one factory to another or from one processing station to another.

[0020] For example, and without restricting the scope of the invention, the machine is used for banding palletised loads which consist of bottle crates placed side by side and stacked in two or more layers and which necessitate a band of film to stabilise them at the top, and another band of film bearing a series of identification codes at the bottom.

[0021] The machine 1 comprises a conveyor 2, a frame 4, here in the form of a portal, and a pair of sealing and cutting units 10 and 10'. Obviously, the fact that it comprises two sealing and cutting units 10 and 10' is a non-restrictive example of the solution according to the invention.

[0022] More specifically, the conveyor 2 may consist

of a roller conveyor or a conveyor belt extending in a direction of feed A and used to carry the pallets, each supporting a stack 3 of the aforementioned products.

[0023] The frame 4 is mounted over the conveyor 2 and is equipped, in this non-restrictive embodiment, with two pairs 5, 6 and 16, 17 of film rolls, each pair being mounted at a different height from the other on the uprights 7 and 8 of the frame 4.

[0024] The pairs of film rolls 5, 6 and 16, 17 are mounted in such a way as to form respective bands of film 9, 9' positioned transversely relative to the uprights 7 and 8 so as to intercept the front of the product stack 3 as it moves forward (see Figure 3).

[0025] The upper band 9' is designed to stabilise the stack 3, whilst the second band 9 usually has the twofold purpose of stabilising the stack 3 and presenting information or codes C relating to the products in the stack 3.

[0026] The units 10 and 10' for sealing and cutting the bands of film 9 and 9' are mounted, relative to the direction of feed A, at the back of the frame 4 and are mobile between:

- an idle position, where the units 10 and 10' are close to the uprights 7 and 8 (as shown in Figure 3); and
- a working position, where the units 10 and 10' are away from the uprights 7 and 8 so that each intercepts, seals and cuts a respective portion of the film bands 9 and 9' wrapped around the product stack 3. (as shown in Figure 2), leaving other portions of the bands 9 and 9' positioned transversely between the uprights 7 and 8 for the next stack 3.

[0027] Still with reference to Figure 2, the sealing and cutting units 10 and 10' are supported by a single mounting unit 22 that projects from the frame 4 and that slides along the crossbeam 4c of the latter to and from the idle and working positions (as indicated by the arrows F in Figures 1 and 2).

[0028] This structure is exhaustively described in Italian patent application BO2002 A000232 by the same Applicant as the present and will not therefore be described in further detail herein.

[0029] The rolls 5, 6 and 16, 17 are mounted on the uprights 7 and 8 and are equipped with rollers 23 for feeding and tensioning the respective bands of film 9 and 9' being unwound so as to keep the bands of film properly tensioned when they are intercepted by the product stack 3.

[0030] Each of the rolls 5, 6 and 16, 17 also has a carriage 24 coupled to a power driven worm screw shaft 25 that enables adjustment in both directions along the respective upright 7 and 8 (see arrows F2): this permits adjustment of the position of the bands 9, 9' on the stack 3 according to the height of the stack.

[0031] The banding machine 1 also comprises a unit 11, mounted in the vicinity of a section of the path P (shown in Figure 3) along which one of the two bands of film - the one labelled 9 - is unwound and designed to

apply at least one distinctive code C to at least one part of the band 9 itself.

[0032] The code C may be any type of label or similar device including any combination of alphanumeric strings, graphics, symbols or logos or any other alternative reference systems such as bar codes.

[0033] The unit 11 may be mounted in the vicinity of one of the film rolls 5 and 6 (in this case it is the lower pair and the roll is the one labelled 6). The unit 11 is equipped with a plurality of rollers 12 forming the unwinding path P and defining at least one straight section of film facing the unit 11: in this way, the codes C can be applied to the part of the band 9.

[0034] Similarly (see dashed line in Figure 1), the unit 11 may be mounted at the upper pair of rollers 16 and 17 so as to apply the codes C to the respective upper band 9' without thereby limiting the scope of the inventive concept.

[0035] As shown in the accompanying drawings, the unit 11 is mounted outside the frame 4, on one side of the frame 4.

[0036] As mentioned above, the pairs of rolls 5, 6 and 16, 17 can be adjusted in height in both directions and, for this purpose, the unit 11 is equipped with vertical drive means 13 allowing the band 9 and the code C application unit 11 to assume predetermined positions relative to each other.

[0037] Preferably, but without restricting the scope of the invention, the drive means 13 may synchronise the unit 11 with the lower pair of rolls 5 and 6.

[0038] The drive means 13 may, purely by way of example, comprise a beam mounting unit 14 for the unit 11, coupled with a worm screw shaft 15 that may be power driven or actuated manually by an operator in order to drive the unit 11 up and down in synchrony with the rolls 5 and 6 (see arrows F11 in Figure 1).

[0039] As regards the type of codes C applicable to the band 9, the unit 11 may consist of a customary labelling unit 11e equipped with means 11m, a kind of application pad, designed to apply at least one label C to the band of film 9.

[0040] The labelling unit 11e may apply labels C made of paper or plastic, depending on working requirements.

[0041] In an alternative embodiment, the code C application unit 11 may comprise means 11s (illustrated schematically in Figures 4, 5 and 6) for printing the codes C directly on the band of film 9 being unwound.

[0042] Obviously, the unit 11 is connected to a data processing and transmission system 30 (illustrated as a block in Figure 3) to enable the unit 11 to receive the codes C to be printed on the band 9.

[0043] Similarly, there may be means 31 for controlling the unwinding of the band 9 and activating the unit 11 in accordance with the parts of the band 9 on which the codes C have to be printed: in practice, the parts where the codes C are to be applied are decided in accordance with the size of the product stack 3 and, hence, the length of the band 9 unwound before the unit 11 is activated.

[0044] Thus, the codes C to be applied to the band 9 are generated while the band 9 itself is being unwound and printed on predetermined parts of the latter (as shown in Figure 1) calculated in accordance with the size of the stack 3 passing by.

[0045] For easy legibility of the codes C when the stack 3 is in a warehouse or is being transported from one place to another, the band 9 may have three sets of codes C applied to it, positioned on the front 3f, on one side 3g and at the back 3r of the stack 3.

[0046] On the side 3g and back 3r of the stack 3 the codes C are generated or applied to the predetermined part Z' during the step of feeding the stack 3 along the conveyor 2 while the band 9 is being unwound and in such a way that the stack front 3f intercepts the film bands 9 and 9' positioned transversally with respect to the uprights 7 and 8. The step of generating and applying the codes C to the band 9 is performed preferably while the band 9 is moving normally, or it may be performed while the band 9 is slowed down slightly. Alternatively, depending on the type of unit 11 used, the unit 11 may be made to move at the same speed as the band 9 being unwound and to generate and apply the codes as it follows the band 9.

[0047] The codes C on the front 3f of the stack 3, on the other hand, are obtained by a step of generating the codes C prior to the step of feeding the stack 3.

[0048] As illustrated in Figure 4, the step of feeding the stack 3 may be preceded by:

- a step of moving the branch R of the band 9 positioned transversally with respect to the uprights 7 and 8 by an amount sufficient to position at least one part Z of it at the unit 11 that applies the codes C;
- a step of generating at least the codes C on the part Z of the band 9 (see Figure 5);
- a step of further moving the branch R of the band 9 by an amount sufficient to reposition the branch R between the uprights 7 and 8 and with the part Z with the codes C applied to it at a predetermined position depending on the size of the incoming stack 3 (see Figure 6).

[0049] These steps of moving the part z of the band 9 towards and away from the uprights 7 and 8 is accomplished by jointly turning the pair of film rolls 5 and 6.

[0050] A machine structured as described above therefore achieves the aforementioned objects by incorporating into the banding machine structure a code application unit in such a way that operations previously carried out at two different operating stations are now carried out at a single operating station.

[0051] This architecture makes it possible to speed up stack processing without affecting normal banding time and with the advantage that the stacks have the codes assigned to them applied at the same time as they are banded.

[0052] The incorporation of the code application unit

into the banding machine eliminates the need for a labelling station downstream of the banding machine, thus saving time, space and money.

[0053] The invention described has evident industrial applications and may be subject to modifications and variations without thereby departing from the scope of the inventive concept. Moreover, all the details of the invention may be substituted by technically equivalent elements.

Claims

1. A machine for banding individual, grouped or palletized products, the machine (1) comprising at least:

- a conveyor (2) extending in a direction of feed (A) and used to transport the products (3);
- a frame (4) mounted over the conveyor (2) and equipped with at least two rolls (5, 6) of film mounted with their axis vertically on the frame uprights (7, 8) in such a way as to form a band of film (9, 9') positioned transversely relative to the uprights (7, 8) and intercepted by the front of the products (3) as they move forward in such a way as to unwind the film from the pair of rolls (5, 6);
- at least one unit (10) for sealing and cutting the film (9, 9'), supported by the frame (4) and mobile between an idle position, where the unit (10) is close to the uprights (7, 8), and a working position, where the unit (10) is away from the uprights (7, 8) so that it intercepts, seals and cuts the portion of film (9, 9') wrapped around the products (3), the machine being **characterised in that** it further comprises at least one unit (11) located in the vicinity of a section of the film band (9, 9') unwinding path (P) and designed to apply at least one distinctive code (C) to a part (Z) of the film band (9, 9') while the film band (9, 9') is moving.

2. The machine according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the unit (11) is positioned in the vicinity of one of the film rolls (5, 6) and is equipped with a plurality of feed rollers (12) forming the unwinding path (P) and defining at least one straight section of the film (9) facing the unit (11).

3. The machine according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the unit (11) is mounted outside the frame (4), on one side of the frame (4).

4. The machine according to claim 1, where the pair of rolls (5, 6) can be adjusted vertically in both directions along the uprights (7, 8) of the frame (4), **characterised in that** the unit (11) is equipped with vertical drive means (13) allowing the band (9, 9') and the

unit (11) to assume predetermined positions relative to each other.

5. The machine according to claim 1, where the pair of rolls (5, 6) can be adjusted vertically in both directions along the uprights (7, 8) of the frame (4), **characterised in that** the unit (11) is equipped with vertical drive means (13) that permit synchronised drive between the band (9, 9') and the unit (11).

6. The machine according to claim 1, where there are two pairs of rolls (5, 6; 16, 17) forming respective bands (9, 9') around the palletised product stack (3) and two units (10, 10') for sealing and cutting the respective bands (9, 9'), **characterised in that** the code (C) application unit (11) is positioned along the path (P) of the band (9) closest to the conveyor (2), that is to say, in the vicinity of a lower roll (6).

7. The machine according to claim 1, where there are two pairs of rolls (5, 6; 16, 17) forming respective bands (9, 9') around the palletised product stack (3) and two units (10, 10') for sealing and cutting the respective bands (9, 9'), **characterised in that** the code (C) application unit (11) is positioned along the path (P) of the band (9') furthest from the conveyor (2), that is to say, in the vicinity of an upper roll (16).

8. The machine according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the unit (11) comprises a labelling unit (11e) and means (11 m) for applying at least one label (C) to the band of film (9, 9').

9. The machine according to claim 8, **characterised in that** the unit (11) is equipped with means (11 m) for applying at least one label (C) made of paper.

10. The machine according to claim 8, **characterised in that** the unit (11) is equipped with means (11m) for applying at least one label (C) made of plastic.

11. The machine according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the code (C) application unit (11) comprises means (11 s) for printing the codes (C) directly on the band of film (9, 9').

12. The machine according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the unit (11) is connected to a data processing and transmission system (30) to enable the unit (11) to receive at least one signal corresponding to at least one distinctive code (C) to be applied to the band (9, 9').

13. The machine according to claim 1, **characterised in that** it comprises means (31) for controlling the unwinding of the band (9, 9') and activating the unit (11) in accordance with the parts (Z, Z') of the band (9, 9') to which the codes (C) have to be applied.

14. A method for applying codes (C) to bands of film (9, 9') wrapped around products (3) by a machine (1) as defined in claims 1 to 13, the method comprising at least the step of:

- feeding the products (3) along the conveyor (2) in such a way that the front (3f) of the products intercepts at least one band of film (9, 9') positioned transversally with respect to the uprights (7, 8), causing the film (9, 9') to be unwound at least from the pair of rolls (5, 6), the method being **characterised in that** the step of feeding the products (3) and intercepting the film band (9, 9') is preceded by:

- a step of moving the branch (R) of the band (9, 9') positioned transversally by an amount sufficient to position at least one part (Z) of it at the unit (11) that applies the codes (C);
- a step of applying at least one distinctive code (C) to the part (Z) of the film (9, 9');
- a step of further moving the branch (R) of the band (9, 9') by an amount sufficient to reposition the branch (R) between the uprights (7, 8) and with the part (Z) with the code (C) applied to it at a predetermined position.

15. The method according to claim 14, **characterised in that** the steps of moving the part (Z) of the band (9, 9') towards and away from the uprights (7, 8) is accomplished by the joint rotation of the pair of film rolls (5, 6).

Patentansprüche

1. Maschine zum Binden von einzelnen, gruppierten oder palettisierten Produkten, wobei die Maschine (1) wenigstens enthält:

- einen Förderer (2), der sich in einer Zuführrichtung (A) erstreckt und zum Transportieren der Produkte (3) benutzt wird;
- einen Rahmen (4), montiert über dem Förderer (2) und versehen mit wenigstens zwei Folienrollen (5, 6), die mit ihren Achsen vertikal ausgerichtet an den Ständern (7, 8) des Rahmens auf solche Weise gehalten sind, dass sie ein Folienband (9, 9') bilden, welches quer im Verhältnis zu den Ständern (7, 8) angeordnet ist und durch die Vorderseite der Produkte (3) abgefangen wird, wenn diese sich auf solche Weise vorwärts bewegen, dass die Folie von dem Paar von Rollen (5, 6) abgewickelt wird;
- wenigstens eine Einheit (10) zum Versiegeln und Schneiden der Folie (9, 9'), getragen von dem Rahmen (4) und beweglich zwischen einer Ruheposition, in welcher sich die Einheit (10) dicht an den Ständern (7, 8) befindet, und einer

Arbeitsposition, in welcher die Einheit (10) von den Ständern (7, 8) entfernt ist, so dass sie den Abschnitt der um die Produkte (3) gewickelten Folie (9, 9') abfängt, versiegelt und schneidet, wobei die Maschine **dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, dass** sie ausserdem wenigstens eine Einheit (11) enthält, angeordnet in der Nähe eines Abschnittes der Abwickelbahn (P) des Folienbandes (9, 9') und dazu bestimmt, wenigstens einen Erkennungscode (C) an wenigstens einem Teil (Z) des Folienbandes (9, 9') anzubringen, während sich das Folienband (9, 9') bewegt.

2. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) in der Nähe von einer der Folienrollen (5, 6) positioniert und mit einer Anzahl von Zuführrollen (12) versehen ist, welche die Abwickelbahn (P) bilden und wenigstens einen der Einheit (11) zugewandten geradlinigen Abschnitt der Folie (9) beschreiben.

3. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) ausserhalb des Rahmens (4) auf einer Seite des Rahmens (4) montiert ist.

4. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, bei welcher das Paar von Rollen (5, 6) vertikal in beiden Richtungen entlang den Ständern (7, 8) des Rahmens (4) reguliert werden kann, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) mit vertikalen Antriebsmitteln (13) versehen ist, welche es dem Folienband (9, 9') und der Einheit (11) erlauben, vorgegebene Positionen im Verhältnis zueinander einzunehmen.

5. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, bei welcher das Paar von Rollen (5, 6) vertikal in beiden Richtungen entlang den Ständern (7, 8) des Rahmens (4) reguliert werden kann, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) mit vertikalen Antriebsmitteln (13) versehen ist, welche den synchronisierten Antrieb zwischen dem Folienband (9, 9') und der Einheit (11) erlauben.

6. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, bei welcher zwei Paare von Rollen (5, 6; 16, 17) vorhanden sind, welche zwei jeweilige Bänder (9, 9') um den palettisierten Stapel von Produkten (3) wickeln, sowie zwei Einheiten (10, 10') zum Versiegeln und Schneiden der jeweiligen Bänder (9, 9'), **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) zum Anbringen des Codes (C) entlang der Bahn (P) des Bandes (9) angeordnet ist, und zwar so dicht wie möglich an dem Förderer (2), das heisst in der Nähe einer unteren Rolle (6).

7. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, bei welcher zwei

Paare von Rollen (5, 6; 16, 17) vorhanden sind, welche zwei jeweilige Bänder (9, 9') um den palettisierten Stapel von Produkten (3) wickeln, sowie zwei Einheiten (10, 10') zum Versiegeln und Schneiden der jeweiligen Bänder (9, 9'), **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) zum Anbringen des Codes (C) entlang der Bahn (P) des Bandes (9') so weit wie möglich von dem Förderer (2) entfernt angeordnet ist, das heisst in der Nähe einer oberen Rolle (16).

8. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) eine Etikettier-einheit (11e) und Mittel (11m) zum Anbringen von wenigstens einem Etikett (C) an dem Folienband (9, 9') enthält.

9. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 8, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) mit Mitteln (11m) zum Anbringen von wenigstens einem Etikett (C) aus Papier versehen ist.

10. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 8, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) mit Mitteln (11m) zum Anbringen von wenigstens einem Etikett (C) aus Kunststoff versehen ist.

11. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) zum Anbringen des Codes (C) Mittel (11s) zum Drucken des Codes (C) direkt auf das Folienband (9, 9') enthält.

12. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einheit (11) an ein Datenverarbeitungs- und Übertragungssystem (30) angeschlossen ist, um die Einheit (11) zu befähigen, wenigstens ein Signal entsprechend wenigstens einem an dem Band (9, 9') anzubringenden Erkennungscode (C) zu empfangen.

13. Maschine nach Patentanspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** sie Mittel (31) zum Steuern der Abwicklung des Bandes (9, 9') und zum Aktivieren der Einheit (11) in Übereinstimmung mit den Abschnitten (Z, Z') des Bandes (9, 9') enthält, an welchen die Codes (C) anzubringen sind.

14. Verfahren zum Anbringen von Codes (C) auf Folienbändern (9, 9'), gewickelt um Produkte (3) durch eine Maschine (1), wie sie in den Patentansprüchen von 1 bis 13 festgelegt ist, wobei das Verfahren wenigstens die folgenden Phasen enthält:

- Zuführen der Produkte (3) entlang dem Förderer (2) auf solche Weise, dass die Vorderseite (3f) der Produkte wenigstens ein Folienband (9, 9') abfängt, das quer im Verhältnis zu den Ständern (7, 8) angeordnet ist, so dass das Abwick-

keln der Folie (9, 9') von wenigstens dem Paar von Rollen (5, 6) erfolgt, wobei das Verfahren **dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, dass** der Phase des Zuführens der Produkte (3) und des Abfangens des Folienbandes (9, 9') wie folgt vorausgeht:

- eine Phase des Bewegens des Abschnittes (R) des quer angeordneten Bandes (9, 9') um eine Strecke, die ausreichend ist, wenigstens einen Abschnitt (Z) desselben an der Einheit (11) zu positionieren, welche die Codes (C) anbringt;
- eine Phase des Anbringens von wenigstens einem Erkennungscode (C) an dem Abschnitt (Z) der Folie (9, 9');
- eine Phase des weiteren Bewegens des Abschnittes (R) des Bandes (9, 9') um eine Strecke, die ausreichend ist, den Abschnitt (R) wieder zwischen den Ständern (7, 8) zu positionieren und mit dem Abschnitt (Z) mit dem angebrachten Code (C) in einer vorgegebenen Position.

15. Verfahren nach Patentanspruch 14, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Phasen des Bewegens des Abschnittes (Z) des Bandes (9, 9') zu den Ständern (7, 8) hin und von diesen fort durch die gemeinsame Umdrehung des Paares von Folienrollen (5, 6) ausgeführt wird.

Revendications

1. Une machine pour banderoler des produits unitaires, groupés ou palettisés, la machine (1) comprenant au moins :

- un convoyeur (2) s'étendant dans une direction d'avancement (A) et utilisé pour transporter les produits (3) ;
- un châssis (4) monté au-dessus du convoyeur (2) et équipé d'au moins deux bobines (5, 6) de film montées, avec leur axe à la verticale, sur les montants (7, 8) du châssis de manière à former une bande de film (9, 9') disposée transversalement par rapport auxdits montants (7, 8) et interceptée par la partie frontale des produits (3) durant leur mouvement d'avancement de manière à dérouler le film à partir de la paire de bobines (5, 6) ;
- au moins un groupe (10) de scellage et de coupe du film (9, 9'), supporté par le châssis (4) et mobile entre une position de repos, dans laquelle le groupe (10) est à proximité des montants (7, 8), et une position opérationnelle, dans laquelle le groupe (10) est éloigné des montants (7, 8) de manière à intercepter, sceller et couper la portion de film (9, 9') enveloppée autour des produits (3), la machine étant **caractérisée en ce qu'elle** comprend en outre au moins une uni-

- té (11) située à proximité d'une section du parcours (P) de déroulement de la bande de film (9, 9') et destinée à appliquer au moins un code distinctif (C) sur une partie (Z) de la bande de film (9, 9') durant le mouvement de cette même bande de film (9, 9').
2. La machine selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) est positionnée à proximité d'une des bobines de film (5, 6) et est équipée d'une pluralité de rouleaux de renvoi (12) formant le parcours de déroulement (P) et définissant au moins une section rectiligne de film (9) faisant face à l'unité (11).
 3. La machine selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) est montée à l'extérieur du châssis (4), d'un côté de ce même châssis (4).
 4. La machine selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle la paire de bobines (5, 6) peut être réglée verticalement dans les deux sens le long des montants (7, 8) du châssis (4), **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) est équipée de moyens (13) d'actionnement vertical qui permettent à la bande (9, 9') et à l'unité (11) de prendre des positions prédéterminées l'une par rapport à l'autre.
 5. La machine selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle la paire de bobines (5, 6) peut être réglée verticalement dans les deux sens le long des montants (7, 8) du châssis (4), **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) est équipée de moyens (13) d'actionnement vertical qui permettent un actionnement synchronisé entre la bande (9, 9') et l'unité (11).
 6. La machine selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle il y a deux paires de bobines (5, 6; 16, 17) formant des bandes (9, 9') respectives autour de la pile (3) de produits palettisés et deux groupes (10, 10') pour le scellage et la coupe des bandes (9, 9') respectives, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) d'application des codes (C) est positionnée le long du parcours (P) de la bande (9) la plus proche du convoyeur (2), c'est-à-dire à proximité d'une bobine inférieure (6).
 7. La machine selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle il y a deux paires de bobines (5, 6; 16, 17) formant des bandes (9, 9') respectives autour de la pile (3) de produits palettisés et deux groupes (10, 10') pour le scellage et la coupe des bandes (9, 9') respectives, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) d'application des codes (C) est positionnée le long du parcours (P) de la bande (9') la plus éloignée du convoyeur (2), c'est-à-dire à proximité d'une bobine supérieure (16).
 8. La machine selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) comprend un groupe d'étiquetage (11e) et des moyens (11m) destinés à appliquer au moins une étiquette (C) sur la bande de film (9, 9').
 9. La machine selon la revendication 8, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) est équipée de moyens (11m) destinés à appliquer au moins une étiquette (C) en papier.
 10. La machine selon la revendication 8, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) est équipée de moyens (11m) destinés à appliquer au moins une étiquette (C) en plastique.
 11. La machine selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) d'application des codes (C) comprend des moyens (11s) destinés à imprimer les codes (C) directement sur la bande de film (9, 9').
 12. La machine selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce que** l'unité (11) est reliée à un système (30) de traitement et de transmission de données pour permettre à l'unité (11) elle-même de recevoir au moins un signal correspondant à au moins un code distinctif (C) à appliquer sur la bande (9, 9').
 13. La machine selon la revendication 1, **caractérisée en ce qu'elle** comprend des moyens (31) destinés à contrôler le déroulement de la bande (9, 9') et à activer l'unité (11) en fonction des parties (Z, Z') de la bande (9, 9') sur lesquelles les codes (C) doivent être appliqués.
 14. Un procédé pour appliquer des codes (C) sur des bandes de film (9, 9') enveloppées autour de produits (3) par une machine (1) telle que définie dans les revendications de 1 à 13, tel procédé comprenant au moins la phase consistant à :
 - alimenter les produits (3) le long du convoyeur (2) de manière à ce que la partie frontale (3f) des produits intercepte au moins une bande de film (9, 9') disposée transversalement par rapport aux montants (7, 8), entraînant ainsi le film (9, 9') à se dérouler au moins à partir de la paire de bobines (5, 6), le procédé étant **caractérisé en ce que** la phase d'alimentation des produits (3) et d'interception de la bande de film (9, 9') est précédée de :
 - une phase consistant à déplacer la branche (R) de la bande (9, 9') disposée transversalement d'une quantité suffisante pour positionner au moins une partie (Z) de celle-ci au niveau de l'unité (11) d'application des codes (C) ;
 - une phase consistant à appliquer au moins un code distinctif (C) sur la partie (Z) du film (9, 9') ;
 - une phase consistant à déplacer à nouveau la branche (R) de la bande (9, 9') d'une quantité suffisante pour repositionner la branche (R) elle-

même entre les montants (7, 8) et avec la partie (Z) portant le code (C) qui lui a été appliqué dans une position prédéterminée.

15. Le procédé selon la revendication 14, **caractérisé en ce que** les phases de déplacement de la partie (Z) de la bande (9, 9') pour l'approcher et l'éloigner des montants (7, 8) sont effectuées par le biais d'une rotation conjointe de la paire de bobines de film (5, 6).

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FIG.1

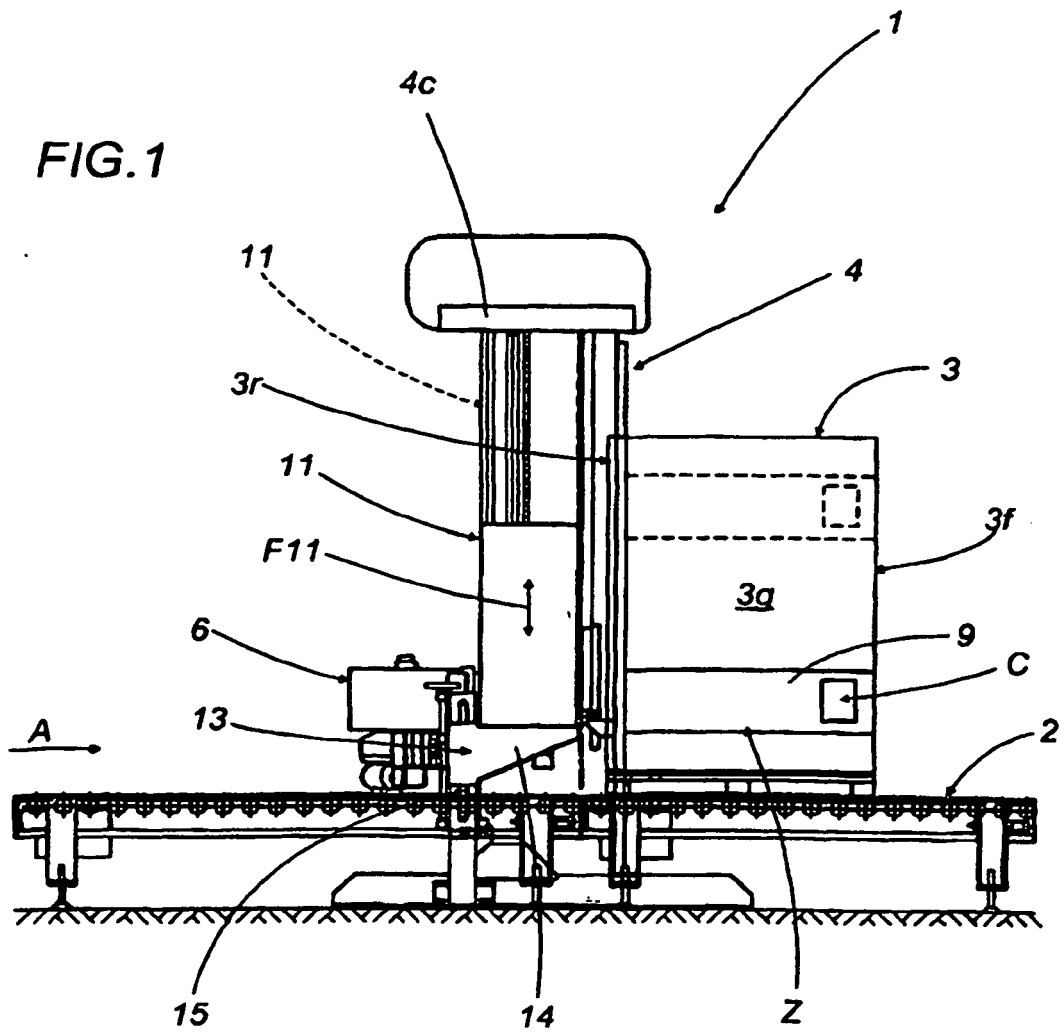


FIG.2

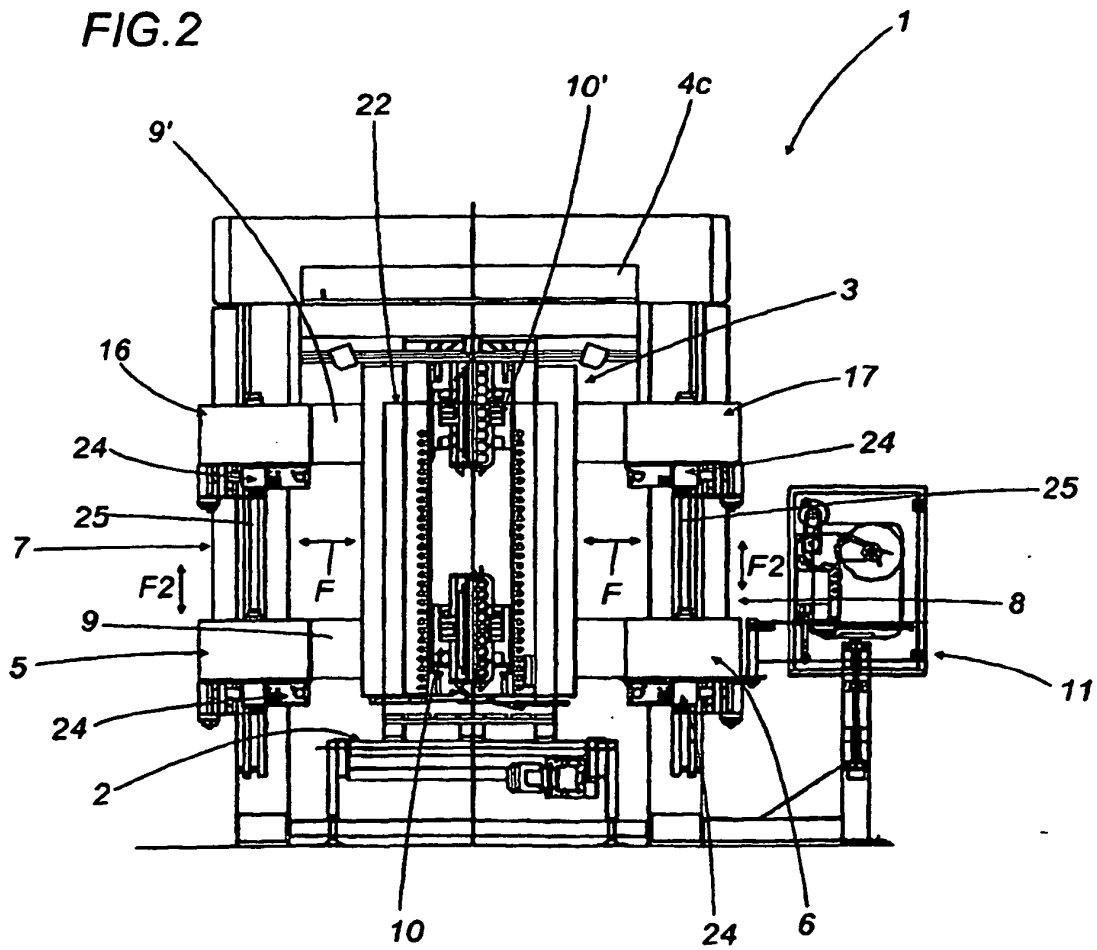


FIG.3

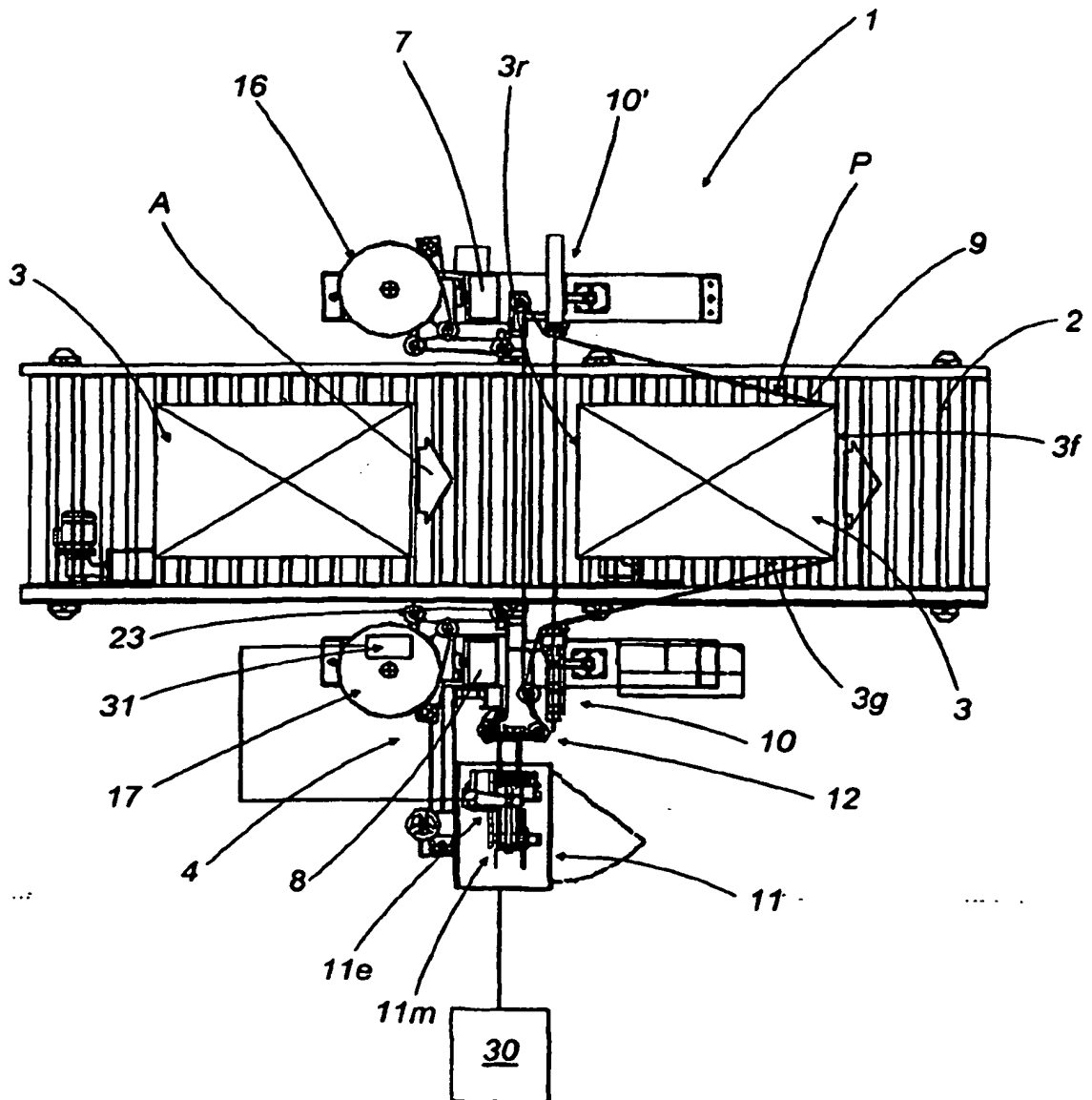


FIG.4

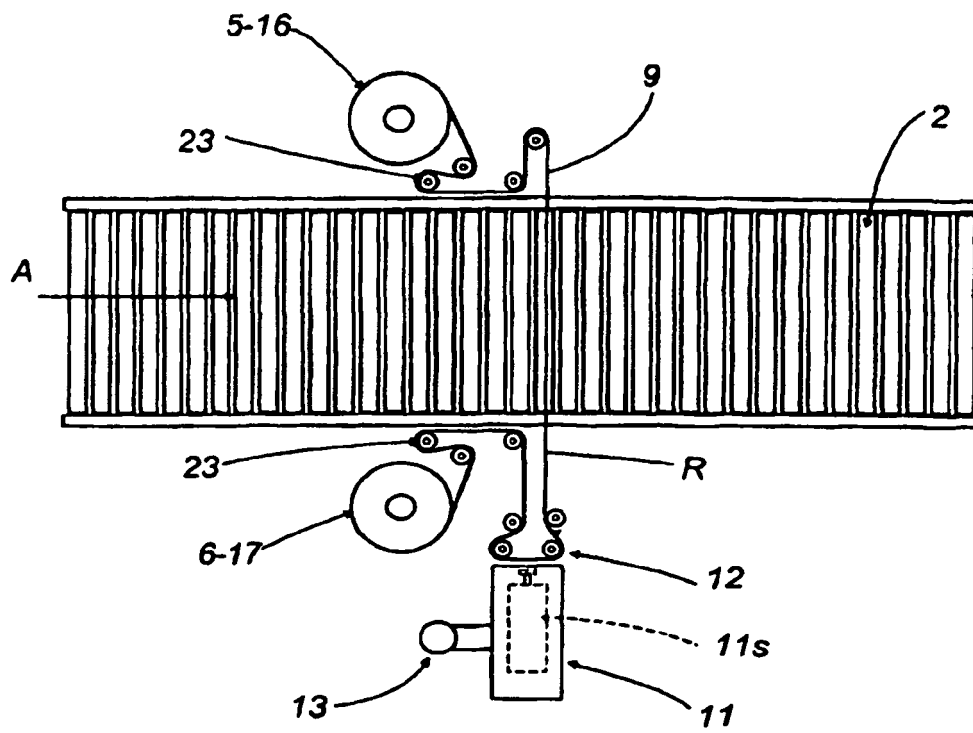


FIG.5

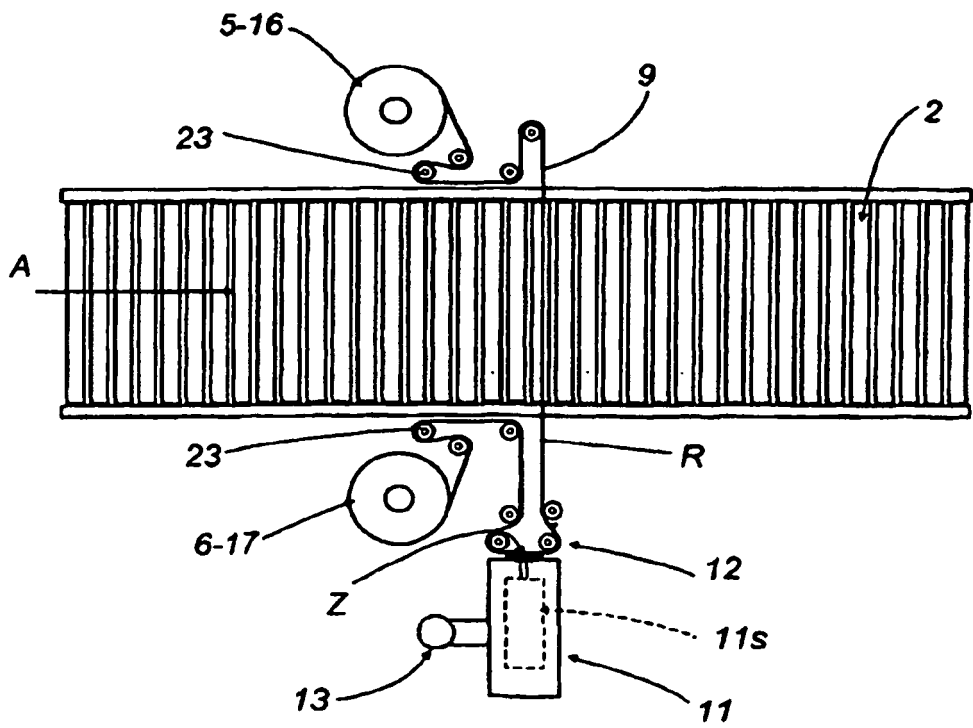
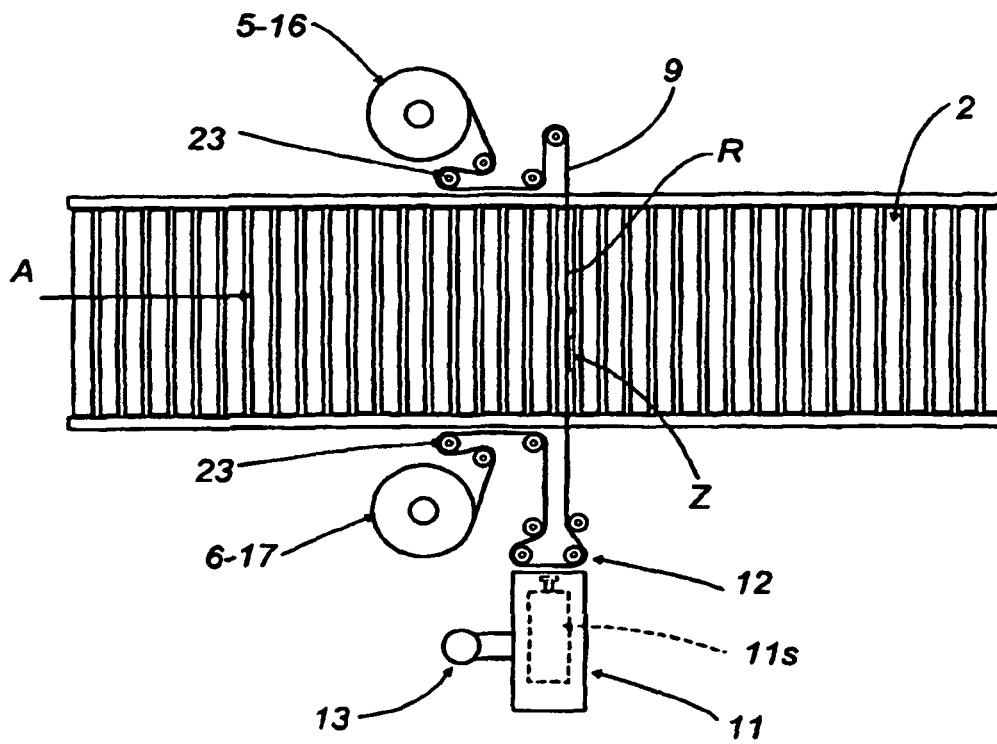


FIG. 6



REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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