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(54) Container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid

(57) A container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid, comprising a tray (11) inside which a removable basket (12) is arranged, the basket being pro-

vided laterally with at least one pocket (15) which is open upward and is delimited by uninterrupted walls and bottom.

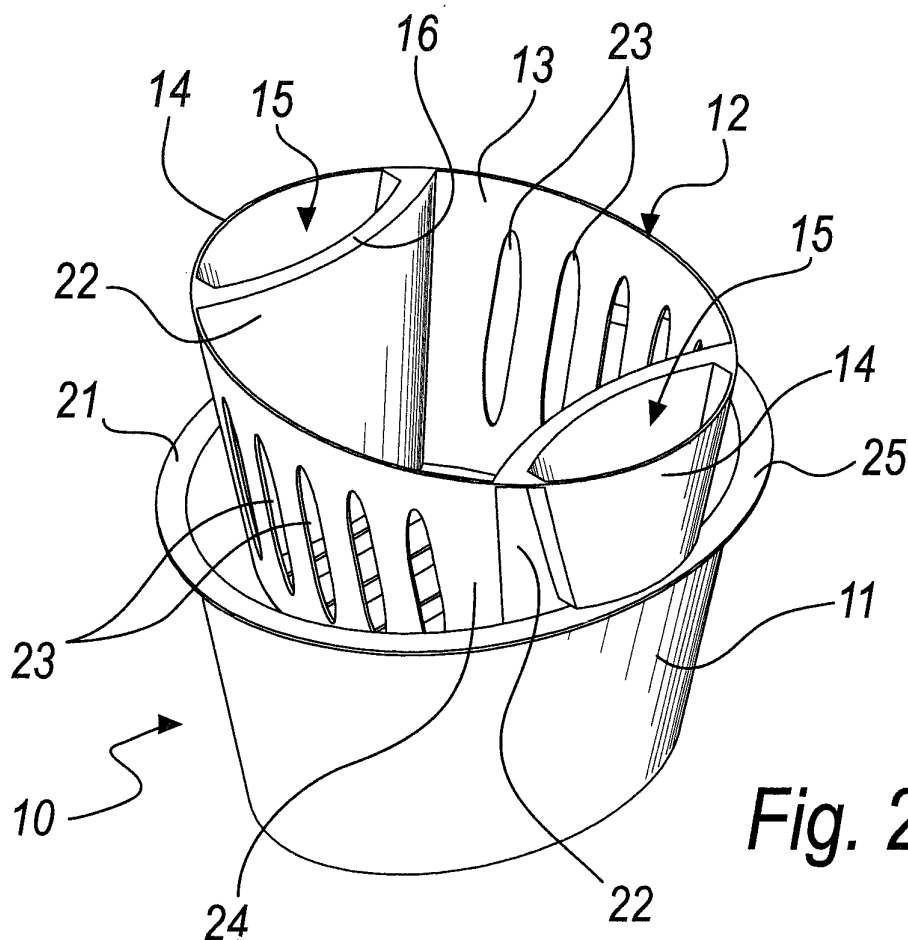


Fig. 2

EP 1 659 074 A1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid.

[0002] It is known that many kinds of food, particularly fresh food, require a preserving liquid for their preservation.

[0003] One example is constituted by mozzarellas, which must be preserved in a milky preserving liquid.

[0004] The containers of these foods are generally constituted by a simple tray, inside which the food and the preserving liquid are present.

[0005] These trays usually have, at their rim, a flat flange on which it is possible to heat-seal a peel-off film, which is designed to seal the container.

[0006] To be able to consume the food present in such containers, it is necessary to peel off the sealing film, remove the food with a kitchen utensil, optionally drain it, and then place it on a plate or on crocker in general.

[0007] As an alternative, it is possible to tilt the container and pour the preserving liquid, keeping only the food inside the tray.

[0008] This operation, which is in any case quicker than the previous one, is certainly more problematic, since it is easy for the food to escape together with the preserving liquid; this becomes easier as the dimensions of the individual portions of food decrease.

[0009] If one wishes to use the tray as a "plate" from which food portions are served, it is necessary to empty the preserving liquid completely.

[0010] Complete emptying is extremely problematic, since the risk of causing the portions of food to escape increases as the amount of preserving liquid present inside the tray decreases.

[0011] As such preserving liquid decreases, it is in fact necessary to tilt the tray more, consequently increasing the risk that the portions of food may escape.

[0012] With reference to the use of the container also as a plate, when one wishes to consume the food that is present in the container outside a facility equipped for a meal, such as for example a home or canteen, it is also necessary to provide oneself with condiments for the food, such as for example salt, oil and various spices; it is evident that such a need can be extremely difficult, particularly in all situations entailing an "off premises" meal, which are typically occasional.

[0013] The aim of the present invention is to provide a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid which allows to solve the problems linked to containers of the known type.

[0014] Within this aim, an object of the present invention is to provide a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid which allows to facilitate the separation of the food from its preserving liquid.

[0015] Another object of the present invention is to provide a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid which can be used as a vessel during meals.

[0016] Another object of the present invention is to pro-

vide a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid which can be used as a vessel also for meals outside equipped facilities.

[0017] Another object of the present invention is to provide a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid which can be manufactured with known systems and technologies.

[0018] This aim and these and other objects, which will become better apparent hereinafter, are achieved by a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid, characterized in that it comprises a tray inside which a removable perforated basket is arranged, said basket being provided laterally with at least one pocket which is open upward and is delimited by uninterrupted walls and bottom.

[0019] Advantageously, the removable basket has two surfaces which are undercut with respect to the extraction direction and are formed by two respective lateral recesses of said basket, said surfaces being adapted to rest on the upper edge rim of said tray once the basket has been extracted from it and rotated through 180° with respect to the arrangement inside the tray.

[0020] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become better apparent from the following detailed description of a preferred but not exclusive embodiment thereof, illustrated by way of non-limiting example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective review of a container according to the invention, with a partially-open peel-off sealing film;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a container according to the invention, arranged in a configuration for using it for the meal;

Figure 3 is a longitudinal sectional view of the container according to the invention;

Figure 4 is a top view of the container according to the invention;

Figure 5 is an exploded perspective view of the container according to the invention.

[0021] With reference to the figures, a container according to the invention is generally designated by the reference numeral 10.

[0022] The container 10 comprises a tray 11, inside which a removable basket 12 is arranged.

[0023] In this embodiment, the removable basket 12 is formed by a perforated main body 13 for containing the food and by two mutually opposite cups 14, which form, laterally with respect to the perforated main body 13, two pockets 15, which are open upward and are delimited by uninterrupted walls and bottom.

[0024] In particular, the cups 14 are connected monolithically to the perforated main body 13, each by means of a respective spacing tab 16.

[0025] Both the tray 11 and the removable basket 12 are made of plastic material.

[0026] The spacing tab 16 acts in practice as a flexible

hinge for connection between the perforated main body 13 and each cup 14.

[0027] The removable basket 12 has two surfaces 17 which are undercut with respect to the direction of extraction from the tray 11 and are formed by two respective lateral recesses 18 of the basket 12.

[0028] In particular, the undercut surfaces 17 are constituted by the outside of the bottom 19 of the cups 14.

[0029] Further, the cups 14 are shallower than the perforated main body 13 and accordingly the bottom 19 of said cups is at a greater height than the base 20 of the main body 13.

[0030] The surfaces 17 are adapted to rest on an end rim 21 of the tray 11 after the basket 12 has been extracted from said tray and turned through 180° with respect to the arrangement inside the tray 11.

[0031] The plan contour of the removable basket 12 is shaped complementarily with respect to the inside of the tray.

[0032] In particular, the tray 11 and the removable basket 12 have a substantially elliptical plan shape.

[0033] In order to allow the surfaces 17 to rest on the end rim 21 of the tray 11, the width of said tray in the resting region is smaller than the length of the perforated main body 13, which is thus partially inserted transversely in the tray 11.

[0034] In particular, the length of the perforated main body 13 is determined by the distance of the lateral sides 22 of the perforated main body 13, which correspond substantially to the lateral recesses 18; in this embodiment, the lateral sides 22 are contoured so as to be concave outward.

[0035] A plurality of through holes, designated by the reference numeral 23, are provided in the main body 13 and are formed on the longitudinal sides 24 and on the base 20 of the basket 12.

[0036] In particular, in this embodiment the holes 23 are constituted by through slots.

[0037] In other embodiments, the perforation of the basket can be provided in an equivalent manner by a plurality of circular or otherwise shaped holes distributed on the basket according to requirements.

[0038] The end rim 21 of the tray 11 is constituted by a flat flange 25, on which it is possible to thermally bond (for example by heat-sealing) a peel-off film, which is generally designated by the reference numeral 26 in the figures.

[0039] Once the peel-off film 26 has been removed, the user can remove the basket 12 from the tray 11 by inserting two opposable fingers of the same hand within the cups 14.

[0040] At this point it is possible to empty easily the preserving liquid that is present inside the tray 11.

[0041] The user then repositions the basket, rotated through 180°, on the tray 11 so that the bottom 19 of the cups 14 rests on the end rim 21 of the tray 11 and so that the lower portion of the basket 12 is inserted in the tray 11.

[0042] The circular arc-like shape ensured by the el-

liptical shape of the tray 11 causes the basket 12 to remain stably rested on the tray 11.

[0043] Advantageously, spices, oil or vinegar or other condiments packaged simultaneously with the food product present in the container may be present inside the cups 14.

[0044] In this case, it is possible to pour the content of the cups into the basket, for example by turning said cups around the spacing tabs 16 which connect them to the main perforated body 13 and act in practice as a flexible hinge.

[0045] In practice it has been found that the invention thus described solves the problems noted in known types of container with foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid; in particular, the present invention provides a container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid which allows to empty easily the liquid without the risk of causing the escape of the food.

[0046] The provision of a basket which can be removed easily in fact allows to separate easily the preserving liquid from the food.

[0047] Ease of removal is ensured by the lateral pockets, which allow the grip of the fingers for removal (a single pocket might also be provided, and in this case the opposable fingers of the user press against the wall that divides the pocket from the perforated main body).

[0048] Advantageously, furthermore, said pockets allow to preserve the condiment, while the particular shape of the basket allows stable positioning thereof on the tray, allowing in this way to use the basket itself as a container for the meal.

[0049] In practice, the materials employed, so long as they are compatible with the specific use, as well as the dimensions, may be any according to requirements and to the state of the art.

[0050] The disclosures in Italian Patent Application No. PD2004A000287, from which this application claims priority, are incorporated herein by reference.

[0051] Where technical features mentioned in any claim are followed by reference signs, those reference signs have been included for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the interpretation of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

Claims

1. A container for foods to be preserved with a preserving liquid, **characterized in that** it comprises a tray (11) inside which a removable perforated basket (12) is arranged, said basket being provided laterally with at least one pocket (15) which is open upward and is delimited by uninterrupted walls and bottom.
2. The container according to claim 1, **characterized in that** it comprises two of said at least one pocket

(15), arranged on mutually opposite sides of said removable basket (12).

3. The container according to one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said removable basket (12) has two surfaces (17) which are undercut with respect to the extraction direction and are formed by two respective lateral recesses (18) of said removable basket (12), said surfaces (17) being adapted to rest against the end rim (21) of said tray (11) after the basket (12) has been extracted from it and turned through 180° with respect to the arrangement inside said tray (11). 5

4. The container according to claim 3, **characterized in that** said removable basket (12) is formed by a perforated main body (13) for containing the food and by two mutually opposite cups (14), which form said pockets (15), said cups (14) being connected monolithically to said perforated main body (13), each by means of a respective spacing tab (16), said undercut surfaces (17) coinciding with the outside of the bottom of said cups. 10

5. The container according to claim 4, **characterized in that** said undercut surfaces (17) are formed at a greater height than the base (20) of the perforated main body (13). 15

6. The container according to claim 5, **characterized in that** the width of said tray (11), in the region where said basket (12) rests, is smaller than the length of said perforated main body (13). 20

7. The container according to claim 6, **characterized in that** the lateral sides (22) of said perforated main body (13) are shaped so as to be concave outward. 25

8. The container according to claim 4, **characterized in that** said spacing tab (16) forms a flexible hinge for connection between said perforated main body (13) and each one of said cups (14). 30

9. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the plan shape of said removable basket (12) is complementary with respect to the inside of said tray (11). 35

10. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said tray (11) and said removable basket (12) have a substantially elliptical plan shape. 40

11. The container according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the end edge (21) of said tray (11) is constituted by a flat flange (25), on which it is possible to thermally bond a peel-off film (23). 45

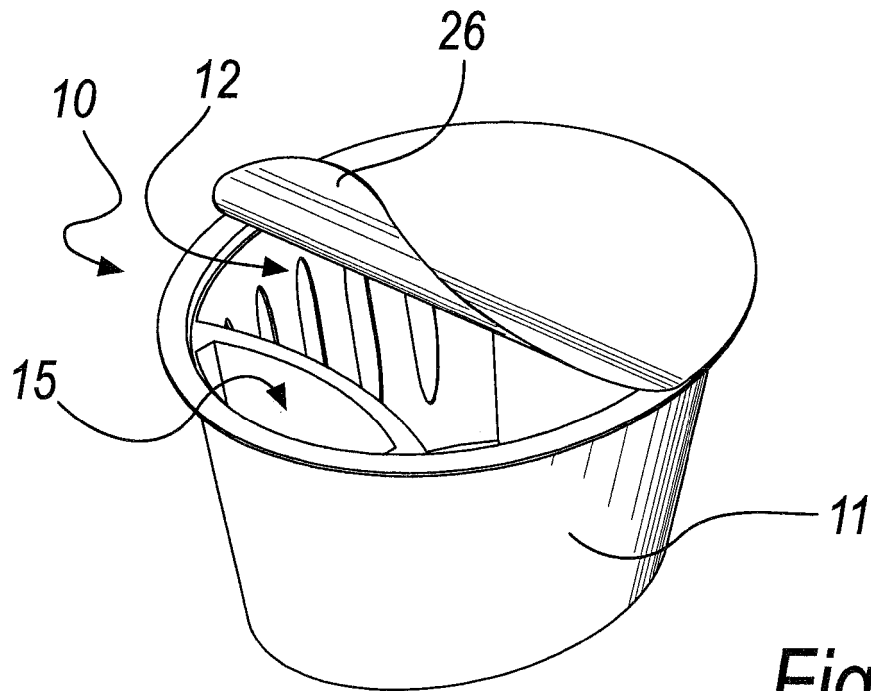


Fig. 1

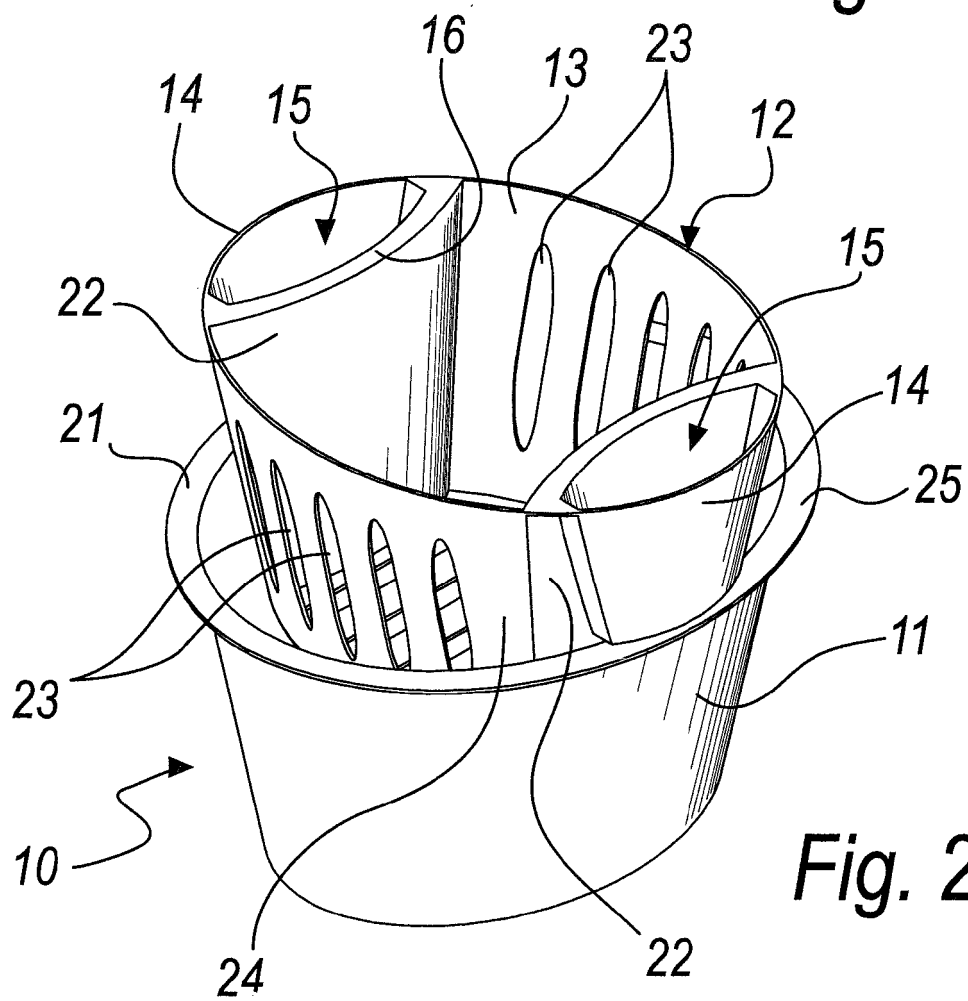


Fig. 2

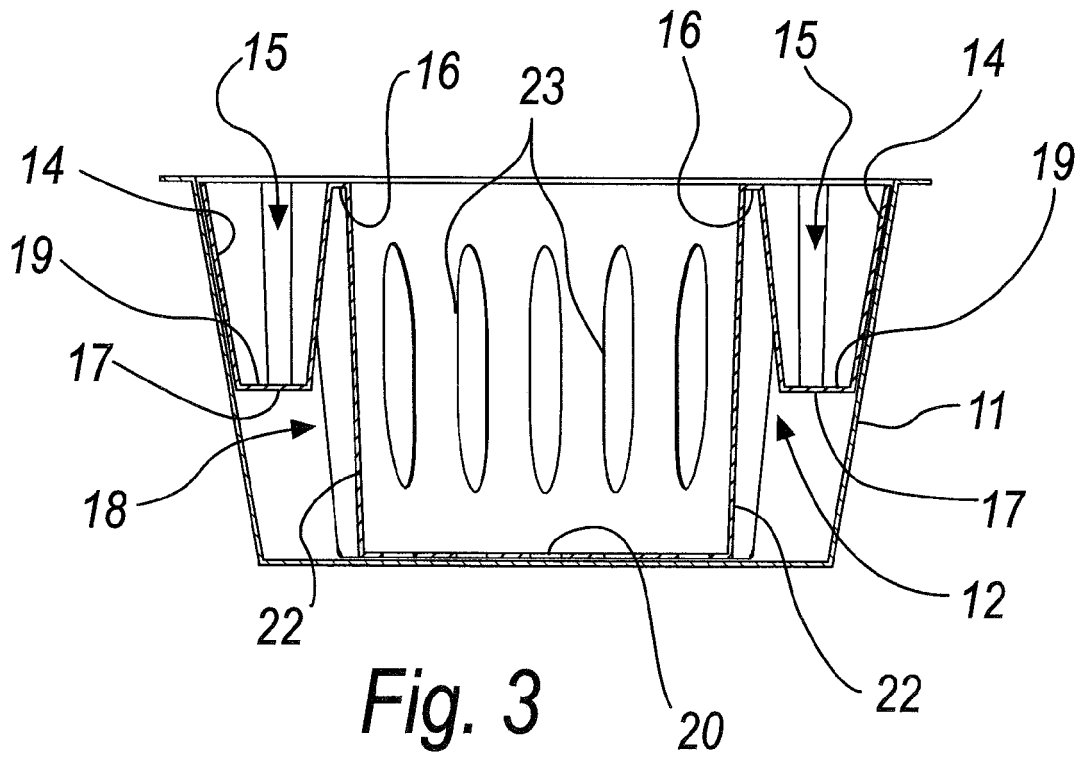


Fig. 3

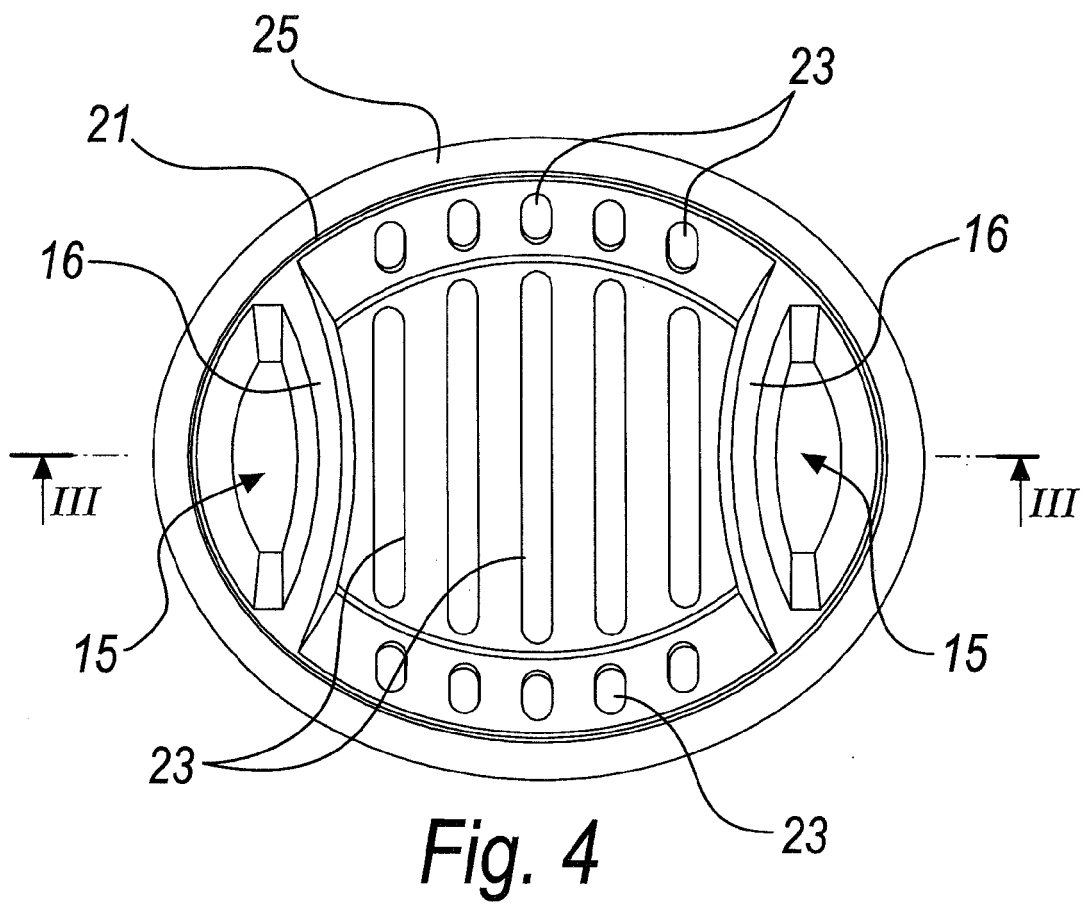


Fig. 4

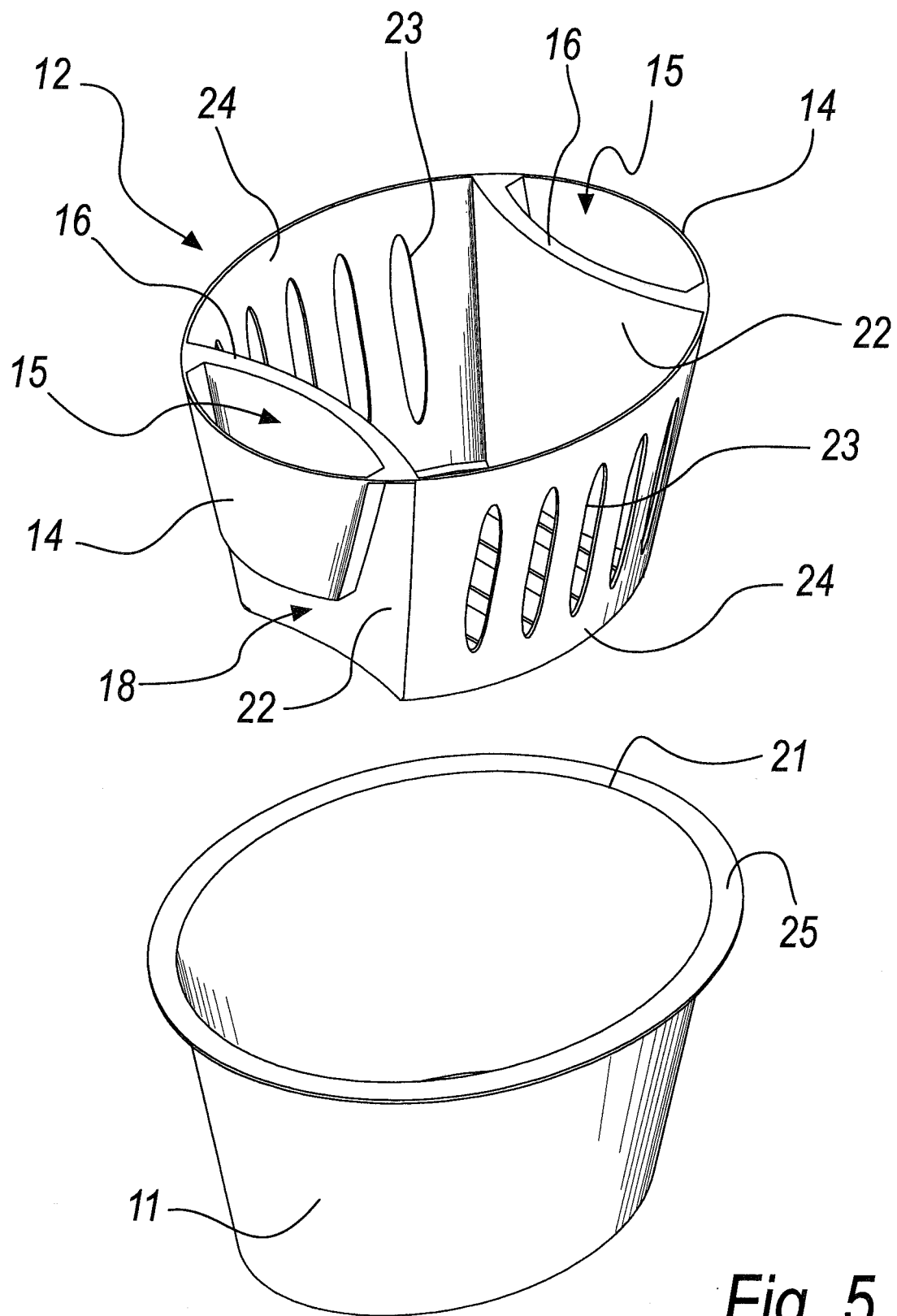


Fig. 5



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Application Number
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