(19) Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

(11) EP 2 222 573 B1

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION**

(45) Date of publication and mention of the grant of the patent:
18.07.2012 Bulletin 2012/29

(21) Application number: **08861837.6**

(22) Date of filing: **12.12.2008**

(51) Int Cl.:
B65D 75/12 *(2006.01)*

(86) International application number:
PCT/GB2008/004100

(87) International publication number:
WO 2009/077724 (25.06.2009 Gazette 2009/26)

(54) **PACKAGING AND METHOD FOR PACKAGING**

VERPACKUNG UND VERPACKUNGSVERFAHREN

EMBALLAGE ET PROCEDE D'EMBALLAGE

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MT NL NO PL PT RO SE SI SK TR

(30) Priority: **14.12.2007 GB 0724474**

(43) Date of publication of application:
01.09.2010 Bulletin 2010/35

(73) Proprietor: **Cadbury Holdings Limited**
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1DH (GB)

(72) Inventor: **CHEEMA, Parbinder**
Middlesex UB8 1DH (GB)

(74) Representative: **Wilson Gunn**
Charles House
148/9 Great Charles Street
Birmingham
B3 3HT (GB)

(56) References cited:
EP-A- 0 101 298
EP-A- 1 059 243
EP-A- 1 288 139
GB-A- 1 107 200
US-A- 4 826 011

Note: Within nine months of the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent in the European Patent Bulletin, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to that patent, in accordance with the Implementing Regulations. Notice of opposition shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European Patent Convention).

EP 2 222 573 B1

Printed by Jouve, 75001 PARIS (FR)

Description

Technical Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to packaging, and in particular to improved packaging for packaging generally block-shaped food products. The present invention is also directed to a method of packaging such food products.

Background to the Invention

[0002] It is known to package generally block-shaped food products, such as chocolate bars and other snack type confectionery products, in a wrapper that is fabricated from a material that is substantially gas and moisture impervious, in order to maintain the freshness of the product.

[0003] Such known wrappers comprise a sheet of flat, foldable material. The sheet is often rectangular and has an inner surface directed to the food product and an outer surface. The outer surface may be printed on or otherwise be provided with information for the consumer. An adhesive or a pressure sealable and re-sealable coating is applied to the inner surface of the sheet. The sheet is folded about the product so that an inner portion encloses the top, bottom, side and end surfaces of the product. The sheet is sufficiently long that it extends beyond the front and rear surfaces of the product and opposing inner surfaces of the sheet are brought into contact to form seals along the front and rear edges of the package. The inner surfaces of side portions of the sheet are also brought into contact to form a fin seal along the length of the package.

[0004] The known package forms a fully sealed package for the product, which is substantially gas and moisture impervious. However, because the material from which the sheet is made is quite tough, the known package can be difficult to open.

[0005] To address this problem, it has been proposed in GB 1, 107, 200 A to provided tabs along each of the sides of the sheet by folding the side edges of the sheet inwardly and sealing them in position. When the package is formed, the tabs project from an outer edge of the longitudinal fin seal. The inner and outer surfaces of the tabs are accessible by a consumer, who can grasp the tabs and pull them apart to open the package by pealing apart the longitudinal fin seal. However, it has been found that the tabs, which are of double thickness when compared to the remainder of the sheet, tend to jam when used in conventional packaging machinery.

[0006] An alternative proposal to the problem of opening the known packaging has been proposed in EP 1 288 139 A1. In this arrangement, the adhesive or pressure sealable and re-sealable coating is only applied to the inner surface in a frame-shape sealing portion surrounding the inner portion. The frame-shaped sealing portion has opposing end portions and opposing side portions. The sheet is also provided with a flap adjacent each of the side portions. In the finished packaging, the flaps project from an outer edge of the longitudinal fin seal. Both the inner and outer surfaces of the flaps are accessible such that they can be grasped by a consumer and pulled apart to open the package in a similar manner to the tabs. Because the flaps are the same thickness as the remainder of the sheet, this arrangement does not tend to jam in conventional packaging machinery. However, the flaps have been found to be not entirely satisfactory to consumers as a means of opening of the packaging.

[0007] Further prior art is disclosed in US 4, 826, 011 A and EP 0 101 298 A2.

[0008] It is an object of the invention to provide an improved packaging for a generally block-shaped product which overcomes or at least mitigates the above problems.

[0009] It is a particular object of the invention to provide a package for a generally block-shaped product which is conveniently opened and which can be applied to the product using conventional packaging machinery.

[0010] It is a further object of the invention to provide a method of packaging a generally block-shaped food product.

Summary of the Invention

[0011] In accordance with a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a package for packaging a generally block-shaped food product, the package comprising a sheet of foldable packing material having an inner surface and an outer surface, the sheet having an inner portion for enclosing the top, bottom, side, and end surfaces of the product, a frame-shaped scaling portion enclosing the inner portion for sealing the package and comprising opposing end portions and opposing side portions, the sheet extending outwardly from an outer edge one of the side portions to form a flap, the sheet also extending outwardly from an outer edge of the other side portion to form an outer edge region, wherein said outer edge region is folded inwardly to form a tab outside of said other side portion, the sheet being folded around the product such that the inner portion encloses the block-shaped product with the inner surface of the sheet directed towards the product, the inner surfaces of the two side portions of the frame-shaped sealing portion abutting one another to form a longitudinal seal, and opposing inner surface regions of the end portions of the frame-shaped sealing portions abutting each other to form seals along respective ends, the flap and the tab projecting beyond an outer edge of the longitudinal seal, the flap and the tab overlapping one another and the tab having a width which is greater than the width of the longitudinal seal, the longitudinal seal, the flap and the tab being folded over to one side so as to overlie a surface of the package, the inner and outer surfaces of the flap portion and the tab being accessible.

[0012] The provision of a tab along one side edge of the packaging in combination with a flap along the other side edge has been found to provide a particularly convenient means for opening the package. Rather surprisingly, it has also been found that having a tab along one side of the sheet only does not result the sheet becoming jammed when used with conventional packaging machinery to form the package.

[0013] The outer edge region of the other side of the sheet may be sealed to an opposing region of the sheet, inner face to inner face, to hold the tab in position.

[0014] The seals may be formed by means of a sealing composition applied to the inner surface of the sheet within the sealing portion.

[0015] The sealing composition may also be applied to the inner surface of the outer edge region of the other side of the sheet. In which case, the sealing composition may be applied to the inner surface of the sheet on the other side, from the respective side portion substantially up to the side edge of the sheet.

[0016] In one embodiment, no sealing composition is applied to the inner surface of the flap.

[0017] The tab may be positioned adjacent an outer edge of the longitudinal seal or it may be spaced from the outer edge of the longitudinal seal by a flap region.

[0018] In one embodiment no sealing composition is applied to the inner surface of the inner portion.

[0019] In an alternative embodiment, at least some of the seals are formed by welding.

[0020] In accordance with a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of packing a generally block-shaped food product by means of a package in accordance with the first aspect, the method comprising:

a. folding the outer edge region inwardly to form the tab;

b. positioning the food product on the inner surface of the sheet in the inner portion;

c. folding the sheet around the product so that the product is enclosed by the inner portion of the sheet, the inner surfaces of the side portions of the seal portion being brought into abutment;

d. forming the longitudinal seal along the abutting area;

e. bringing opposing inner surfaces of the end portions of the sealing portion into abutment;

f. forming end seals in the abutting areas;

g. folding the longitudinal seal, the tab and the flap over to one side so as to overlie a surface of the package.

[0021] The method may comprise folding the longitudinal seal, the tab and the flap around a fold line at the border of the inner portion and one of the side portions.

Detailed Description of the Invention

[0022] An embodiment of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic plan view of the inner surface of a sheet for forming a package in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 shows the sheet of Figure 1, which one side edge folded over to form a tab;

Figure 3 is a schematic lateral cross section view through a package in accordance with the invention, shown on an enlarged scale;

Figure 4 is a schematic perspective view of a finished package in accordance with the invention;

Figures 5 and 6 are views similar to those of Figures 1 and 2 but showing an alternative embodiment of a sheet for forming a package in accordance with the invention.

[0023] Figure 1 shows schematically a flat sheet 10 of foldable material for forming a package 11 in accordance with the invention. The sheet can be made of any foldable material suitable for packaging food products. Preferably, the material is substantially moisture and gas impervious. For example, the sheet may be made of a paper based material, flexible films, one or more polymers, or a metallic foil. The sheet may also be a laminated sheet comprising layers of different materials, including any those mentioned above in any suitable combination. In one embodiment, the sheet comprises an orientated polypropylene (OPP) laminate. The sheet may be made from any of the materials discussed in the prior art patent applications discussed above, details of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

[0024] The sheet 10 has an inner surface 12 (shown in Figures 1 and 2) and an outer surface 14. The sheet has an inner portion 16 for enclosing the top, bottom, side, and end surfaces of a block-shaped food product. The food product may be a confectionery product and in particular a snack type confectionery product such as a chocolate bar.

[0025] Surrounding the inner portion 16 is a frame-shaped sealing portion 18 (indicated with cross hatching in Figures 1 and 2). The frame-shaped sealing portion is coated on the inner surface of the sheet with a sealing composition that enables a seal to be formed when opposing inner surface regions of the sealing portion 18 are contacted together during fabrication of the package. The composition may be a pressure sensitive coating which

forms a seal upon the application of moderate pressure without the need to apply additional heat. The coating may be a sealable and re-sealable wax-like composition. Such a composition can be pealed apart to open the packaging but will re-seal if the surfaces are brought back into contact to re-close the package. The seal formed when the package is re-closed need not be as strong as the initial seal but will be sufficient to prevent the opposing surfaces from falling apart without the application of at least a minimal force to separate them. The sealing composition could, for example, be a pressure sensitive cold-seal adhesive or a self-adhesive thermoplastic material.

[0026] Alternatively, the sealing composition may be a temperature sensitive adhesive. The sealing composition may be any of those disclosed in the prior art patent applications discussed above, details of which are also hereby incorporated by reference.

[0027] In a further alternative embodiment, the longitudinal and/or the end seals may be welded without a sealing composition. Welding can be carried by any suitable means and may involve heating the material in the sealing portion under pressure so that the opposing surfaces melt and fuse together to form a welded seam. For example, the end seals may be welded seals and the longitudinal seal may be formed by means of a peelable and re-sealable composition applied to the material.

[0028] The frame-shaped sealing portion has a two opposing end portions 20, 22 and two opposing side portions 24, 26. When being applied to a food product, the sheet will be fed into a packaging machine in the direction of arrow A in Figure 1. With reference to the direction of feed, the end portion 20 can be considered a front end portion and the end portion 22 can be considered a rear end portion. The corresponding ends of the product may also be considered as a front and rear end respectively. For the sake of convenience, the terms "front" and "rear" and "side" are used herein in relation to the direction of feed but should not be regarded as limiting.

[0029] The front and rear portions 20, 22 extend from respective front and rear edges of the inner portion 16 to the front and rear edges of the sheet 10 itself. Along one side of the sheet (the left as shown in Figures 1 and 2) the sheet extends beyond the outer edge of the side portion 26 to form a flap 28 on which no sealing composition is applied.

[0030] The sheet 10 also extends laterally outwardly from the outer edge (indicated by dashed line 30) of the other side portion 24 by a distance that is greater than the width of the flap 28. On this side of the sheet, the sealing composition is applied to the inner surface right up to the side edge of the sheet itself. An outer edge region 32 of the sheet is folded inwardly about line 34 to form a tab 36, as shown in Figure 2. The inner surface of the outer edge region 32 is brought into contact with the inner surface of an opposing region of the sheet 10 to form a seal to hold the tab 36 in position. With the tab 36 formed, the sealing composition applied to the inner surface of the side portion 24 of the frame-shaped sealing portion is still exposed between the inner edge 38 of the tab 36 and the inner portion 16. In this embodiment, the tab 36 is wider than the flap 28 but this need not be the case and the flap 28 and tab 36 could be the same width or the flap 28 could be wider than the tab 36.

[0031] To form the package 12, the food product is positioned substantially centrally within the inner portion 16 so as to contact the inner surface of the sheet. The sheet 10 is then folded around the food product so that the inner surfaces of the side portions 24, 26 contact one another as shown in Figure 3. A seal 40 is then formed between the two side portions, typically by the application of a moderate pressure. With the sheet folded about the food product, the front and rear portions 20, 22 of the sealing portion over hang the front and rear ends of the product respectively and are folded back over themselves so that opposing regions of the inner surface of the front and rear portions are in contact. Front 42 and rear 44 seals are formed, typically by the application of a moderate pressure to the front and rear sealing portions.

[0032] The product is now sealed inside the package 12 by virtue of the front 42, rear 44 and longitudinal 40 seals. As shown in Figure 3, the flap 28 and tab 36 project outwardly beyond the outer edge of the longitudinal seal 40. Because no sealing composition is applied to the flap 28 or the outer surface of the tab 36, the two remain separated so that a consumer can grasp them and pull them apart to open the package.

[0033] For neatness, the longitudinal seal 40, the flap 28 and the tab 36 are folded over to one side or the other so as to lie generally parallel to the surface of the product as illustrated in Figure 4. The longitudinal seal, flap and tab may be folded about a fold line at the border of the inner portion and one of the side portions so that either tab 36 or the flap 28 is uppermost.

[0034] To further assist a consumer in opening the package, an embossed pattern may be applied to all or part of the tab 36 and/or the flap 28.

[0035] The package 12 is formed in a form-fill-seal (FFS) packaging machine and the sheet 10 is preferably provided as part of a continuous roll of sheets (roll-fed) fed into the machine in the direction of arrow A. The material is folded about each product in turn so that opposing longitudinal edge regions of the material are brought into contact and bonded together to form the longitudinal seam, opposing regions of the material at either end of the product are brought into contact and bonded to form the transverse end seams and the material is cut to separate the package from the remainder of the film.

[0036] Where a sealing composition is used to form the seals, it may be pre-applied to the sheets or roll or it may be applied during formation of the package. The tab 36 may also be pre-formed before the sheets are wound on to the roll or it may be formed as part of the package formation process. Typically, the tab 36 will be formed before the sheet is folded around the food product but it can be formed at any stage in the packaging process.

The tab 36 may be formed by welding the opposing regions of the sheet together.

[0037] In an alternative embodiment illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, the sealing composition is not applied continuously from the side portion 24 to the outer edge of the sheet 10. Rather there is gap between the outer edge 30 of the side portion 24 and an area 46 of sealing composition applied to the inner surface of the sheet to form the tab 36. In this case, when the outer edge region 32 of the sheet is folded inwardly to form the tab 36, the inner end 38 of the tab 36 is spaced from the outer edge of the side portion 24. Thus, in the completed package 12, a small flap portion 48 is formed between the outer edge of longitudinal seal 40 and the tab 36.

[0038] Various changes and modifications may be made to the above described package without departing from the scope of the present invention as defined in the claims. For example, in the embodiments illustrated, the sheet 10 is rectangular and is suitable for packaging a rectangular block-shaped food product. However, the shape and dimensions of the sheet 10 can be varied to suit the shape and dimensions of the product which could be a square generally block-shaped product, for example.

Claims

1. A package (11) for packaging a generally block-shaped food product, the package comprising a sheet (10) of foldable packing material having an inner surface (12) and an outer surface (14), the sheet having an inner portion (16) for enclosing the top, bottom, side, and end surfaces of the product, a frame-shaped sealing portion (18) enclosing the inner portion for sealing the package and comprising opposing end portions (20, 22) and opposing side portions (24, 26), the sheet (10) extending outwardly from an outer edge of one of the side portions (26) to form a flap (28), the sheet (10) also extending outwardly from an outer edge (30) of the other side portion (24) to form an outer edge region (32), wherein said outer edge region (32) is folded inwardly to form a tab (36) outside of said other side portion (24), the sheet being folded around the product such that the inner portion (16) encloses the block-shaped product with the inner surface of the sheet directed towards the product, the inner surfaces of the two side portions (24, 26) of the frame-shaped sealing portion (18) abutting one another to form a longitudinal seal (40), and opposing inner surface regions of the end portions (20, 22) of the frame-shaped sealing portion abutting each other to form seals (42, 44) along respective ends, the flap (28) and the tab (36) projecting beyond an outer edge of the longitudinal seal (40), the flap (28) and the tab (36) overlapping one another and the tab (36) having a width which is greater than the width of the longitudinal seal, the longitudinal seal (40), the flap (28) and the tab (36) being folded over to one side so as to overlie a surface of the package, the inner and outer surfaces of the flap portion (28) and the tab (36) being accessible.

2. A package (11) as claimed in claim 1, in which the outer edge region (32) of the other side of the sheet (10) is sealed to an opposing region of the sheet, inner face to inner face, to hold the tab in position.

3. A package (11) as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, in which the seals (40, 42, 44) are formed by means of a sealing composition applied to the inner surface (12) of the sheet within the sealing portion (18).

4. A package (11) as claimed in claim 3, in which the sealing composition is also applied to the inner surface (12) of the outer edge region (32) of the other side of the sheet.

5. A package (11) as claimed in claim 4, in which the sealing composition is applied to the inner surface (12) of the sheet on the other side, from the side portion (24) substantially up to the side edge of the sheet (10).

6. A package (11) as claimed in any one of the previous claims, in which no sealing composition is applied to the inner surface of the flap (28).

7. A package (11) as claimed in any one of the previous claims, in which no sealing composition is applied to the inner surface of the inner portion (16).

8. A package (11) as claimed in any one of the previous claims, in which the tab (36) is adjacent an outer edge of the respective side portion (24).

9. A package (11) as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, in which the tab (36) is spaced from an outer edge of the respective side portion (24) by a flap region (48).

10. A method of packing a generally block-shaped food product by means of a package (11) as claimed in any one of the previous claims, the method comprising:

    a. folding the outer edge region (32) inwardly to form the tab (36);
    b. positioning the food product on the inner surface (12) of the sheet in the inner portion (16);
    c. folding the sheet (12) around the product so that the product is enclosed by the inner portion (16) of the sheet, the inner surfaces of the side portions (24, 26) of the seal portion (18) being brought into abutment;

d. forming the longitudinal seal (40) along the abutting area;
e. bringing opposing inner surfaces of the end portions (20, 22) of the sealing portion (18) into abutment;
f. forming end seals (42, 44) in the abutting areas;
g. folding the longitudinal seal (40), the tab (36) and the flap (28) over to one side so as to overlie a surface of the package.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10, the method comprising folding the longitudinal seal (40), the tab (36) and the flap (28) around a fold line at the border of the inner portion (16) and one of the side portions (24, 26).

Patentansprüche

1. Verpackung (11) zum Verpacken eines allgemein blockförmigen Nahrungsmittelproduktes, wobei die Verpackung eine Lage (10) eines faltbaren Verpakkungsmaterials aufweist, mit einer Innenoberfläche (12) und einer Außenoberfläche (14), und die Lage einen Innenabschnitt (16) zum Umschließen der oberen, unteren, seitlichen und endständigen Oberflächen des Produktes, einen rahmenförmigen Dichtungsabschnitt (18), der den Innenabschnitt zum Abdichten der Verpackung umschließt, aufweist, und gegenüberliegende Endabschnitte (20, 22) und gegenüberliegende Seitenabschnitte (24, 26) aufweist, wobei sich die Lage (10) von einer Außenkante von einem der Seitenabschnitte (26) nach außen erstreckt, um eine Lasche (28) zu bilden, und sich die Lage (10) auch von einer Außenkante (30) des anderen Seitenabschnitts (24) nach außen erstreckt, um einen äußeren Kantenbereich (32) zu bilden, wobei der äußere Kantenbereich (32) einwärts gefaltet ist, um eine Klappe (36) außerhalb des anderen Seitenabschnitts (24) zu bilden, und die Lage um das Produkt derart gefaltet ist, dass der Innenabschnitt (16) das blockförmige Produkt mit der Innenoberfläche der Lage, die auf das Produkt gerichtet ist, umschließt, und die Innenoberflächen der zwei Seitenabschnitte (24, 26) des rahmenförmigen Dichtungsabschnitts (18) aneinander angrenzen, um eine Längsdichtung (40) zu bilden, und gegenüberliegende innere Oberflächenbereiche der Endabschnitte (20, 22) des rahmenförmigen Dichtungsabschnitts jeweils aneinander angrenzen, um Abdichtungen (42, 44) entlang betreffender Enden zu bilden, und sich die Lasche (28) und die Klappe (36) über eine Außenkante der Längsdichtung (40) hinaus erstrekken, wobei die Lasche (28) und die Klappe (36) einander überlappen, und die Klappe (36) eine Weite aufweist, die größer ist als die Weite der Längsdichtung, und die Längsdichtung (40), die Lasche (28) und die Klappe (36) über einer Seite gefaltet sind, um über einer Oberfläche der Verpackung zu liegen, und die Innen- und Außenoberflächen des Laschenabschnitts (28) und der Klappe (36) zugänglich sind.

2. Verpackung (11) nach Anspruch 1,
in der der äußere Kantenbereich (32) der anderen Seite der Lage (10) gegenüber einem gegenüberliegenden Bereich der Lage, Innenseite zu Innenseite, abgedichtet ist, um die Klappe in Position zu halten.

3. Verpackung (11) nach Anspruch 1 oder Anspruch 2, in der die Dichtungen (40, 42, 44) mittels einer Dichtungszusammensetzung gebildet sind, welche auf die Innenoberfläche (12) der Lage innerhalb des Dichtungsabschnitts (18) aufgetragen ist.

4. Verpackung (11) nach Anspruch 3,
in der die Dichtungszusammensetzung auch auf die Innenoberfläche (12) des äußeren Kantenbereichs (32) der anderen Seite der Lage aufgetragen ist.

5. Verpackung (11) nach Anspruch 4,
in der die Dichtungszusammensetzung auf die Innenoberfläche (12) der Lage auf der anderen Seite von dem Seitenabschnitt (24) im Wesentlichen bis zu der Seitenkante der Lage (10) aufgetragen ist.

6. Verpackung (11) nach einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche,
in der keine Dichtungszusammensetzung auf die Innenoberfläche der Lasche (28) aufgetragen ist.

7. Verpackung (11) nach einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche,
in der keine Dichtungszusammensetzung auf die Innenoberfläche des Innenabschnitts (16) aufgetragen ist.

8. Verpackung (11) nach einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche,
in der die Klappe (36) einer Außenkante des betreffenden Seitenabschnitts (24) benachbart ist.

9. Verpackung (11) nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 7, in der die Klappe (36) von einer Außenkante des betreffenden Seitenabschnitts (24) durch einen Laschenbereich (48) beabstandet ist.

10. Verfahren zum Verpacken eines allgemein blockförmigen Nahrungsmittelproduktes mittels einer Verpackung (11) nach einem der vorstehenden Ansprüche,
wobei das Verfahren aufweist:

a. Falten des äußeren Kantenbereichs (32) nach innen, um die Klappe (36) zu bilden;
b. Positionieren des Nahrungsmittelproduktes

auf der Innenoberfläche (12) der Lage in dem Innenabschnitt (16);
c. Falten der Lage (12) um das Produkt herum, so dass das Produkt durch den Innenabschnitt (16) der Lage umschlossen wird, wobei die Innenoberflächen der Seitenabschnitte (24, 26) des Dichtungsabschnitts (18) in Anschluss gebracht werden;
d. Bilden der Längsdichtung (40) entlang der Anschlussfläche;
e. in Anschluss Bringen gegenüberliegender Innenoberflächen der Endabschnitte (20, 22) des Dichtungsabschnitts (18);
f. Bilden von Endabdichtungen (42, 44) in den Anschlussflächen;
g. Falten der Längsdichtung (40), der Klappe (36) und der Lasche (28) herüber zu einer Seite, um über einer Oberfläche der Verpackung zu liegen.

11. Verpackung nach Anspruch 10, wobei das Verfahren das Falten der Längsabdichtung (40), der Klappe (36) und der Lasche (28) um eine Faltungslinie am Rand des Innenabschnitts (16) und einem der Seitenabschnitte (24, 26) aufweist.

Revendications

1. Emballage (11) destiné à emballer un produit alimentaire généralement en forme de bloc, l'emballage comprenant une feuille (10) de matériau d'emballage pouvant être pliée, qui présente une surface intérieure (12) et une surface extérieure (14), la feuille présentant une partie intérieure (16) destinée à enfermer les surfaces supérieure, inférieure, latérales et d'extrémités du produit, une partie de scellement en forme de cadre (18) qui enferme la partie intérieure pour sceller l'emballage et qui comprend des parties d'extrémités opposées (20, 22) et des parties latérales opposées (24, 26), la feuille (10) s'étendant vers l'extérieur à partir d'un bord extérieur de l'une des parties latérales (26) pour former un rabat (28), la feuille (10) s'étendant également vers l'extérieur à partir d'un bord extérieur (30) de l'autre partie latérale (24) pour former une région de bord extérieure (32), dans lequel ladite région de bord extérieure (32) est pliée vers l'intérieur pour former une languette (36) à l'extérieur de ladite autre partie latérale (24), la feuille étant pliée autour du produit de telle sorte que la partie intérieure (16) enferme le produit en forme de bloc, la surface intérieure de la feuille étant orientée vers le produit, les surfaces intérieures des deux parties latérales (24, 26) de la partie de scellement en forme de cadre (18) venant en butée les unes contre les autres de façon à former un joint longitudinal (40), et les régions de surfaces intérieures opposées des parties d'extrémités (20, 22) de la partie de scellement en forme de cadre venant en butée les unes contre les autres de façon à former des joints (42, 44) le long des extrémités respectives, le rabat (28) et la languette (36) faisant saillie au-delà d'un bord extérieur du joint longitudinal (40), le rabat (28) et la languette (36) se chevauchant l'un l'autre et la languette (36) présentant une largeur qui est plus grande que la largeur du joint longitudinal, le joint longitudinal (40), le rabat (28) et la languette (36) étant repliés sur un côté, de façon à recouvrir une surface de l'emballage, les surfaces intérieures et extérieures de la partie de rabat (28) et de la languette (36) étant accessibles.

2. Emballage (11) selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la région de bord extérieure (32) de l'autre côté de la feuille (10) est scellée à une région opposée de la feuille, une face intérieure à une face intérieure, afin de maintenir la languette en position.

3. Emballage (11) selon la revendication 1 ou 2, dans lequel les joints (40, 42, 44) sont formés au moyen d'une composition de scellement appliquée sur la surface intérieure (12) de la feuille, à l'intérieur de la partie de scellement (18).

4. Emballage (11) selon la revendication 3, dans lequel la composition de scellement est également appliquée sur la surface intérieure (12) de la région de bord extérieure (32) de l'autre côté de la feuille.

5. Emballage (11) selon la revendication 4, dans lequel la composition de scellement est appliquée sur la surface intérieure (12) de la feuille de l'autre côté, à partir de la partie latérale (24) sensiblement jusqu'au bord latéral de la feuille (10).

6. Emballage (11) selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel aucune composition de scellement n'est appliquée sur la surface intérieure du rabat (28).

7. Emballage (11) selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel aucune composition de scellement n'est appliquée sur la surface intérieure de la partie intérieure (16).

8. Emballage (11) selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel la languette (36) est adjacente à un bord extérieur de la partie latérale respective (24).

9. Emballage (11) selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 7, dans lequel la languette (36) est espacée d'un bord extérieur de la partie latérale respective (24) par une région de rabat (48).

10. Procédé destiné à emballer un produit alimentaire

généralement en forme de bloc au moyen d'un emballage (11) selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, le procédé comprenant les étapes consistant à :

a. plier la région de bord extérieure (32) vers l'intérieur afin de former la languette (36) ;
b. positionner le produit alimentaire sur la surface intérieure (12) de la feuille, dans la partie intérieure (16) ;
c. plier la feuille (12) autour du produit de telle sorte que le produit soit enfermé par la partie intérieure (16) de la feuille, les surfaces intérieures des parties latérales (24, 26) de la partie de joint (18) étant mises en butée ;
d. former le joint longitudinal (40) le long de la zone de butée ;
e. mettre en butée les surfaces intérieures opposées des parties d'extrémités (20, 22) de la partie de scellement (18) ;
f. former les joints d'extrémités (42, 44) dans les zones de butée ;
g. plier le joint longitudinal (40), la languette (36) et le rabat (28) sur un côté, afin de recouvrir une surface de l'emballage.

11. Procédé selon la revendication 10, le procédé comprenant une étape consistant à plier le joint longitudinal (40), la languette (36) et le rabat (28) autour d'une ligne de pliage à la frontière de la partie intérieure (16) et de l'une des parties latérales (24, 26).

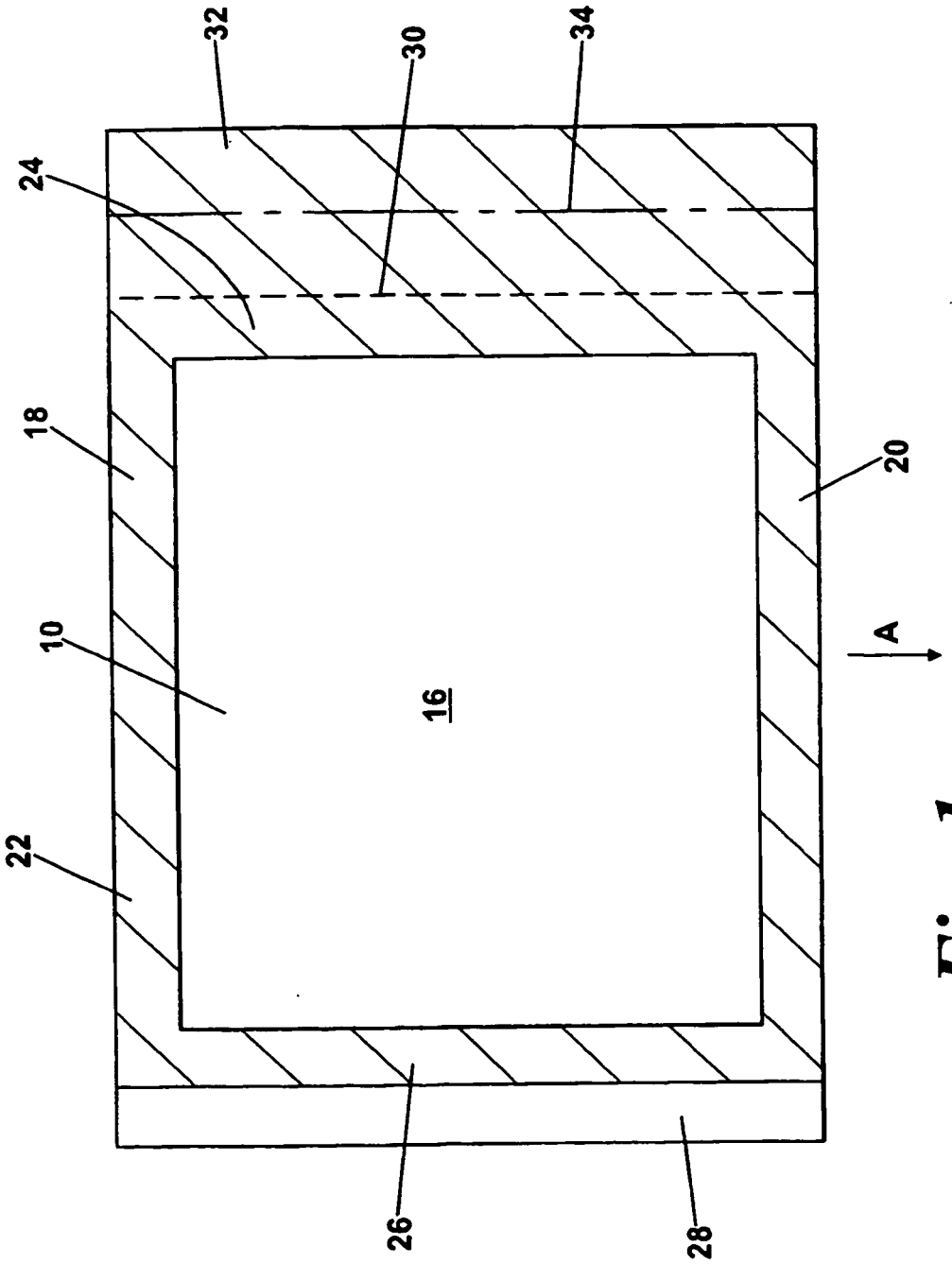


Fig. 1

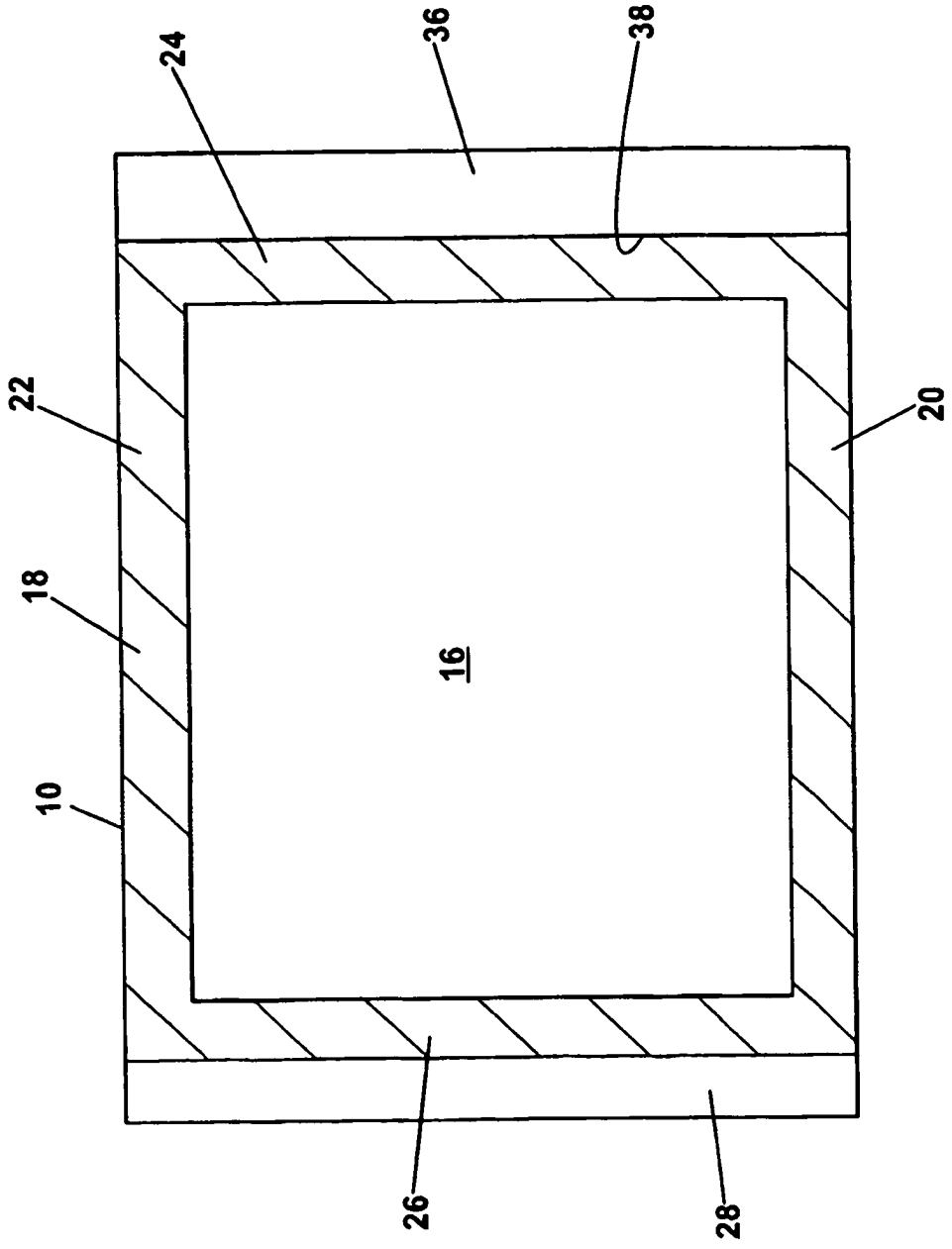


Fig. 2

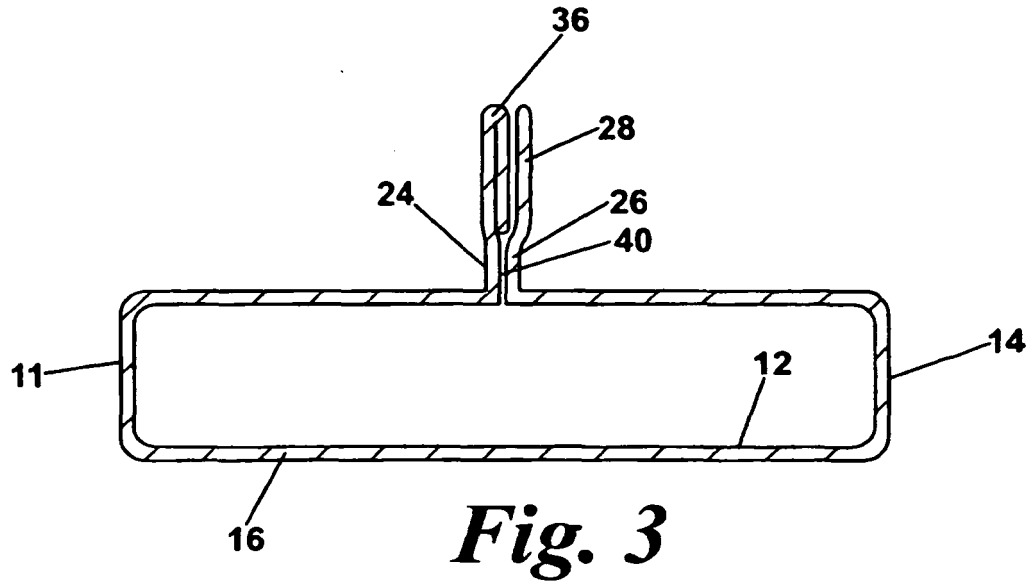


Fig. 3

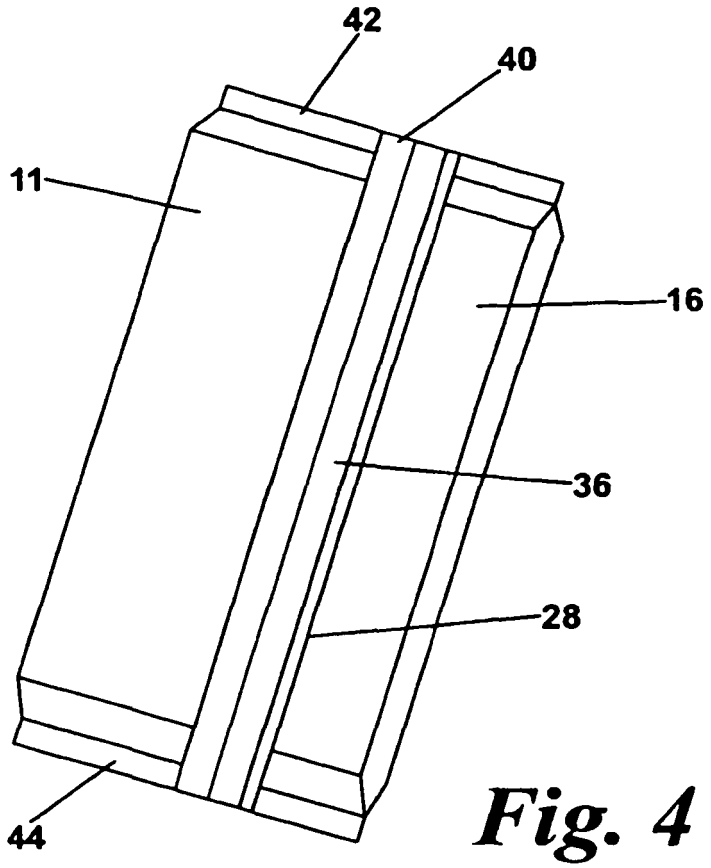


Fig. 4

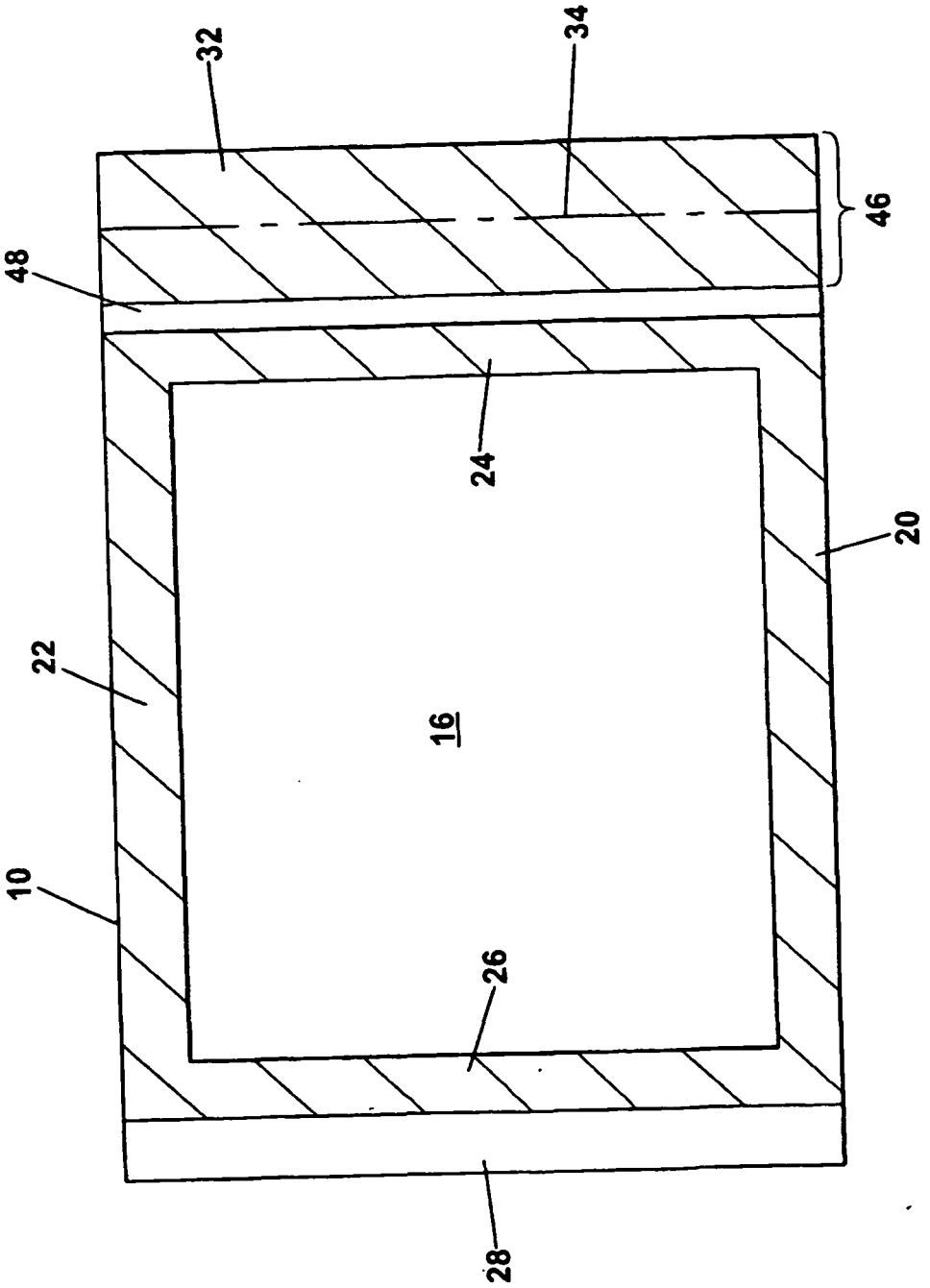


Fig. 5

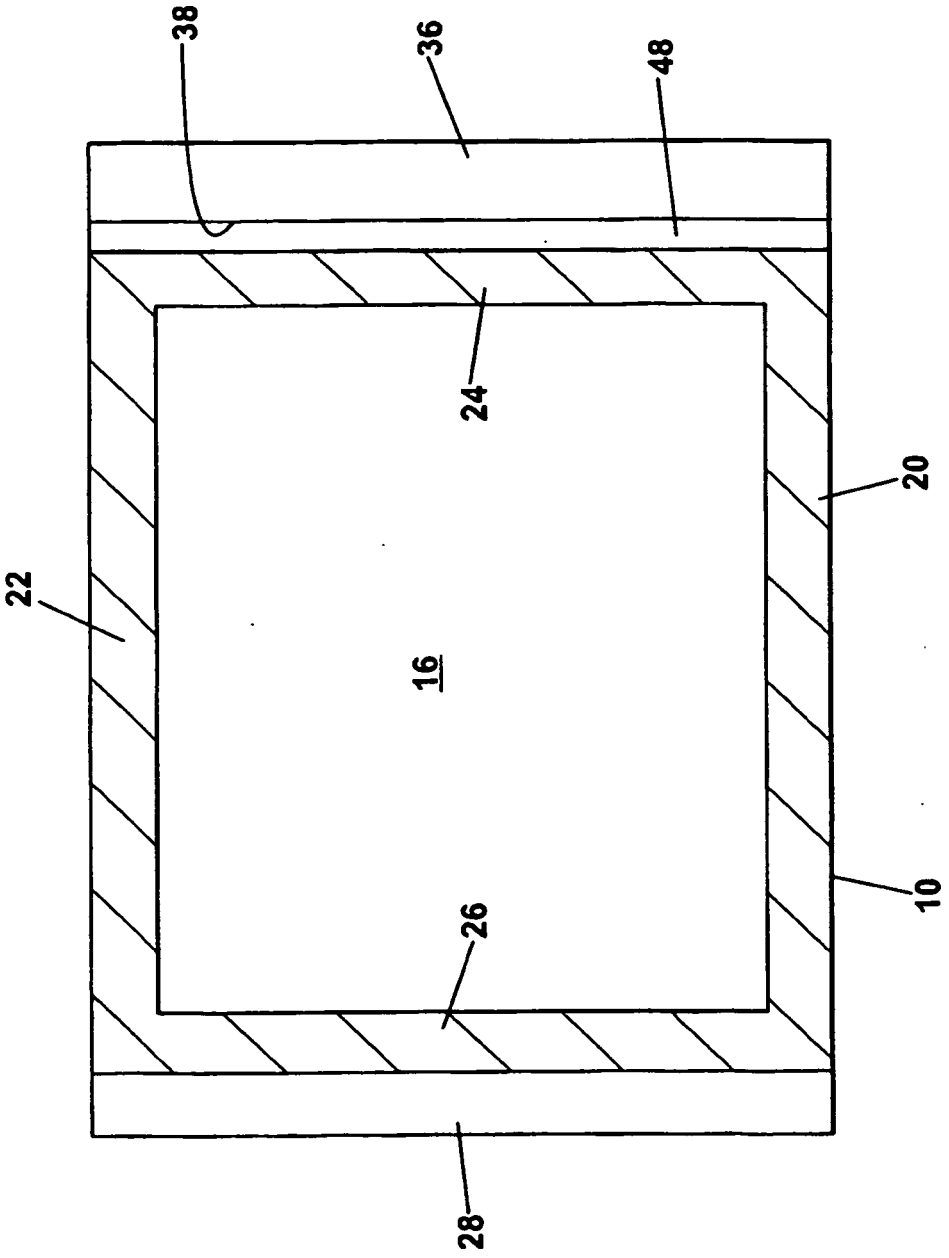


Fig. 6

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

Patent documents cited in the description

- GB 1107200 A **[0005]**
- EP 1288139 A1 **[0006]**
- US 4826011 A **[0007]**
- EP 0101298 A2 **[0007]**