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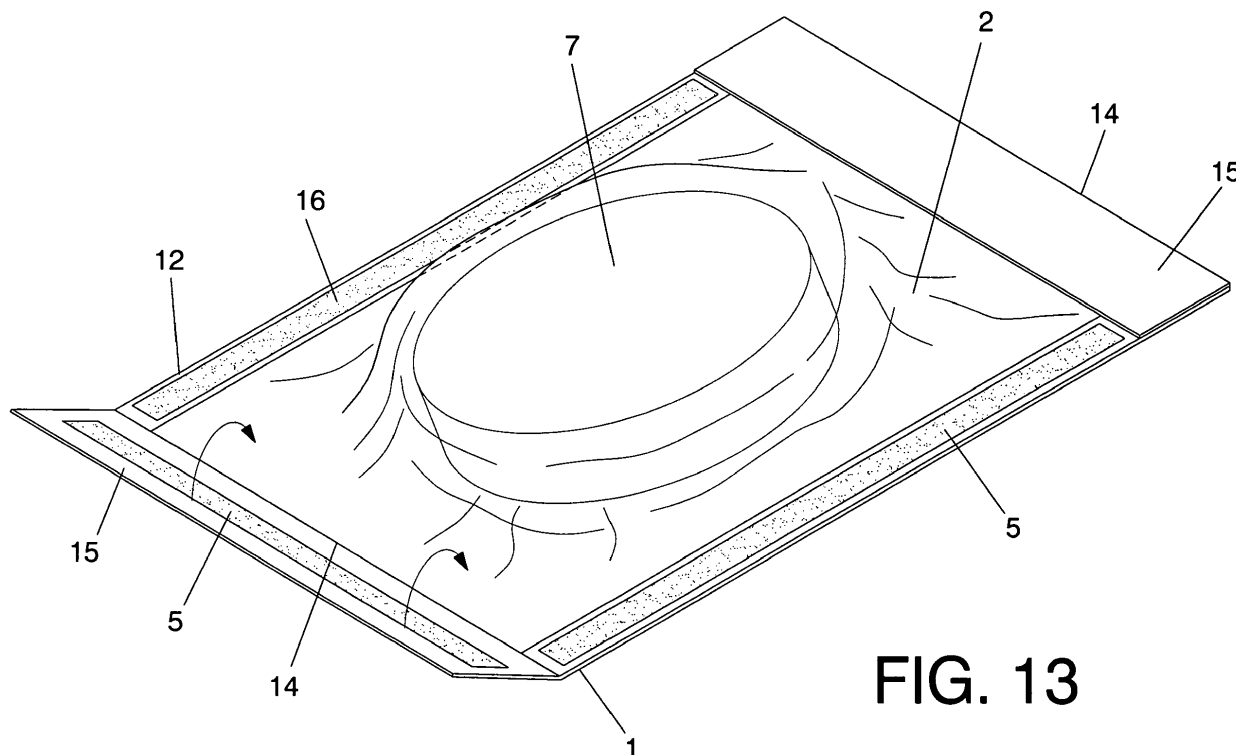
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(54) **Packaging for food products**

(57) The packaging has two sheets, one flexible (2) and other rigid or semi-rigid (1) which is essentially flat, both being joined at their edges with the exception of a mouthpiece including a seal (5, 6) for introducing the product to be packaged. Said seal is selected between adhesive means (5) with removable protective strip (6) and mechanical seal pressure. The constitution of the

flexible sheet (2) is selected from a completely transparent material and a partially transparent material. The constitution of the rigid or semi-rigid sheet (1) is selected between a plastic material and a cardboard material laminated at least on its inner face. This allows advantageously replacing the classical non-planar, polystyrene or the like, trays.



**FIG. 13**

**Description****OBJECT OF THE INVENTION**

[0001] The present invention, as this specification states in its title, refers to a packaging for food products purpose of which is to provide packages manufacture at the point of sale after packaging on-site foods such as meat, fish, meats or others that do not require vacuum packaging, also providing a geometric shape on the packaging suitable for the shape of the product to be packaged. Another purpose of the invention consists in that the packaging can be easily stored, with low occupancy of space when products have not yet been packaged, by virtue of the flat constitution of its components, so that it can advantageously replace the non-planar trays made of expanded polystyrene with shrunk plastic film and the like; an objective of the invention being further that the used materials have a total recycling facility involving advantages of ecological nature.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] Currently, the packages that are used for the delivery of food and produced at the very point of sale, usually consist of a plastic tray, made of expanded polystyrene or other materials having a certain rigidity to accommodate the product portions such as pieces of meat, fish or others within a suitable volume, which are then capped with a plastic film that may be shrunk or not. At the very point of sale the clerk prepares such packages for their distribution on the shelves of the store, which has drawbacks because the empty trays or baskets have to be provided on a normally vertical stack, besides having means for cutting and applying the referred plastic film. Another drawback, besides the great use of space that defines the storage of empty trays consists in that the material used in their manufacture, although provides means for recycling thereof, it lacks from the ecological advantages of other materials such as cardboard.

[0003] Moreover, types of packages in which a part thereof is perimeter thermosealed so as to form the seal are known, in these cases problems related to the rigidity of one of the packaging parts that is not sufficient for the correct stabilization of the product packed inside, and also problems related to the need of having to provide thermosealing machines at the points wherein the packaging seals are made after introducing the product therein are raised.

[0004] Any packaging for food products having two flat and flexible sheets are not known in the current state of the art, in which one or both have volume adjustment means providing the packaging a shape corresponding to that of the packaged product, and which are capable of advantageously replacing the classical volumetric polystyrene trays, such as the packaging for food products of the present invention does provide.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

[0005] In order to achieve the objectives and avoid the drawbacks mentioned in previous paragraphs, the invention relates to a packaging for food products provided with two bodies or sheets, a first one being flexible and the second one being rigid or semi-rigid, a tray or basket shape of that rigid or semi-rigid body or sheet presenting the state of the art intended to be improved; these bodies or sheets may be joined through their edges, except for a mouthpiece including a seal to facilitate the entry of a product to be packaged, and the flexible sheet can be closed over the other one after the introduction of the product to be packaged by shrinking or perimeter thermosealing; this being used in delivery fresh food on-site for linear supplies and points of sale

[0006] With regard to novelty, according to the invention, the rigid or semi-rigid body or sheet is essentially flat and closed around the edge by the flexible sheet or body, except for one open side with sealing means for introducing the product to be packaged, these sealing means of that the open side being selected between adhesive sealing means coated with a removable protective strip and a mechanical seal pressure; the constitution of the flexible sheet being selected between a completely transparent material and a partially transparent material, while the constitution of the rigid or semi-rigid sheet is selected between a plastic material and a cardboard material laminated at least on its inner face.

[0007] In the preferred embodiment of the invention, one or both of these sheets have volume adjustment means that make easier to provide the packaging the geometric shape corresponding to that of the product to be packaged; such means consisting of fold lines or split lines for the rigid or semi-rigid sheet, thus allowing its bent, and folds or corrugations for the flexible sheet facilitating its extension.

[0008] Moreover, according to various embodiments of the invention, the aforementioned means for sealing the open side can be such as to join the sheets in a reversible manner so that the user can access the packaged product and return it to the closed packaging several times, which can be done with the aforementioned mechanical pressure seals and also with seals through adhesive allowing multiple attachments and detachments.

[0009] In the preferred embodiment of the invention the mentioned flexible sheet is entirely made of plastic material.

[0010] Moreover, according to various embodiments of the invention, the flexible sheet can dimensionally protrude or not from the rigid or semi-rigid through the mouthpiece area for establishing the seal by depleting the surplus in the first case and by coincidence of the end edges in the second case.

[0011] In a second preferred embodiment of the invention the flexible sheet or first sheet will be permanently adhered to at least one side of the semi-rigid sheet and

more preferably adhered to one of the longer sides of the semi-rigid sheet. The flexible sheet will be adhered to the remaining longer sides of the semi-rigid sheet through a removable adhesive, i.e. an adhesive that allows attaching and detaching said sheets several times while maintaining a sufficient adhesion degree. The removable adhesive side of the packaging opposite to the permanent adhesive side is thus defined as the mouthpiece of the packaging.

**[0012]** The packaging arrives fully extended and therefore plane to the points of sale. Thus the operator firstly detaches the sides of the flexible sheet that have no permanent bond to the semi-rigid sheet, and introduces the product to be packaged. The semi-rigid sheet fits to the packaged product thanks to the pleats or folds presented, and the operator re-attaches the flexible sheet to the semi-rigid sheet by sealing the packaging.

**[0013]** Said second preferred embodiment comprises that the semi-rigid sheet has angular cuts at the corners. Said angular cuts will range from innermost fold or split line, which runs parallel to each side of the semi-rigid sheet to the edge of said sheet, said cuts being parallel to the edges of the sheet. The innermost fold lines will define the base of the packaging once the product to be packaged is introduced, and similarly they will define the folding wings of the packaging. The folding wings comprise at least one additional longitudinal fold line that will define the area for attaching the flexible sheet to the semi-rigid sheet.

**[0014]** In a third preferred embodiment of the invention, the semi-rigid sheet will have beveled cuts from the intersection points of the inner fold lines or split lines, which lines define the base of the packaging when the product has been introduced, to the corners of the semi-rigid sheets. The folding wings defined by the cuts and the inner fold lines have at least one longitudinal fold line that will define the area for attaching the flexible sheet to the semi-rigid sheet. In the same way as in the previous embodiment, the removable adhesive side of the packaging opposite to the permanent adhesive side is defined as the mouthpiece of the packaging.

**[0015]** In a fourth embodiment of the invention, the packaging object of the invention comprises having, at least on two of its adjacent sides, removable adhesive strips that allow the attachment and detachment of the transparent sheet to the semi-rigid sheet. It further comprises that in at least one of the sides opposite to that of the at least two adjacent sides comprising the removable adhesive strips, the flexible sheet is permanently fixed to the semi-rigid sheet. In a more preferred embodiment, the packaging will have a permanent adhesive side and three with removable adhesive. Note that when along the present description a removable adhesive is mentioned, it does not mean an adhesive that can be put on and take off, but an adhesive that allows the attachment and detachment from, in this case the transparent sheet and the semi-rigid sheet, several times while maintaining perfect sealing conditions. In addition the packaging will

have a tab or flap on the opposite side comprising having permanent adhesive for fixing the semi-rigid sheet and flexible sheet, which is bent upon itself along a fold line for once the flexible sheet has been attached on the semi-rigid sheet, this tongue, which comprises a removable adhesive strip is attached on the outer face of the flexible sheet providing the packaging a tighter seal and with greater rigidity. Any of the sides with removable adhesive and having no tongue are defined as the mouthpiece of the packaging.

**[0016]** In another preferred embodiment of the invention, the semi-rigid sheet comprise having at least two tabs or flaps in at least two of the sides wherein the joint of the transparent sheet with the semi-rigid sheet with removable adhesive has been provided, which have adhesive strips. Said adhesive strips are preferably protected with a protective paper strip such as conventional postal envelopes. Thus once the product has been introduced into the packaging and the sides of the semi-rigid sheet have been closed through the removable adhesive, the at least two tabs are folded on themselves through the fold lines matching the outline of the packaging once completely sealed, and once the respective paper strips have been removed, the outer face of the transparent sheet is attached thereto. These tabs create two side strips of rigid material that provide higher strength and better appearance to the packaging. The removable adhesive side of the packaging opposite to the permanent adhesive side is thus defined as the mouthpiece of the packaging.

**[0017]** In another embodiment of the invention it has been envisaged to integrate permanent adhesive strips complementing the removable adhesive strips so that once the product has been introduced into the packaging the inviolability of the packaging is ensured through its permanent attachment.

**[0018]** In another embodiment of the invention, the dimensions of the first sheet are higher than those in the area bounded by the innermost fold lines of the second sheet defining the base of the packaging so once the product to be packaged is introduced, the largest size of the first sheet compensates the thickness or volume of packaged product always coming to the removable adhesive area.

**[0019]** In another embodiment of the invention, the second sheet comprises being manufactured from a set of layers selected from a single layer of plastic material, a lower layer of rigid material and an upper layer of plastic material, the layer made of plastic material being in contact with the product to be packaged, and a lower layer of rigid material, an intermediate layer of metallic material and an upper layer of plastic material, the layer of plastic material being in contact with the product to be packaged.

**[0020]** The adhesive, both removable and permanent, used in the present invention will comply with health standards relating to its use for food packaging.

**[0021]** With the various embodiments described referring to the structure of the invention, the packaging for

food products of the invention has advantages over the state of the art because it provides packages that, being empty, have very low occupancy of space in view to their storage, since these occupy a volume equivalent to that of a conventional cardboard sheet, being however adapted to volumes of various geometries by using a simple fold in one of the constituting sheets and/or a simple extension of the other sheet. Another advantage of the packaging of the invention consists in that it can include a very simple seal therein, such as an adhesive with protective strip area; being also an advantage of the invention that can be made from recyclable materials thus allowing greater respect for the environment.

**[0022]** The clearest advantage of the invention is that the packaging thereof can advantageously replace the traditional trays for fresh food supply, through the provision of the transparent sheet in a pre-attached manner and with self-sealing means, also having a minimum vacuum storage and very reduced volume compared to said trays, because the rigid or semi-rigid sheet is flat and together with the flexible sheet occupy a volume similar to that of a cardboard sheet, instead of the large volume occupied by the polystyrene or similar trays, which by being volumetric bodies have a large thickness and high space requirements for storing thereof. The packaging of the invention still provides suitable rigidity for use, as that similarly provided by the aforementioned and classic trays, but holding the content therein more firmly because of the resistance to folding that the rigid or semi-rigid sheet has and the tension applied to the product in terms of its volume through the two sheets of the packaging of the invention.

**[0023]** Then, to facilitate a better understanding of this specification and being an integral part thereof, some figures in which the object of the invention has been represented in an illustrative and not limitative manner are attached.

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES**

**[0024]**

**Figure 1.** - Shows a profile and exploded view of a packaging for food products made according to the present invention.

**Figure 2.** - Shows a profile view of the packaging mentioned in the previous figure 1 after introducing a product to be packaged therein, and having performed the corresponding seal, as well as a conformation in volume, also showing an enlarged detail of the section of one of its components.

**Figure 3.** - Is a partial and in profile and exploded view of a packaging for food products made according to the present invention, similar to that of the previous figure 1 but with a variation in the extension of the edges corresponding to the seal for facilitating a seal by depleting the surplus shown in the following figure 4.

**Figure 4.** - Shows a profile view of the packaging mentioned in the previous figure 3 after introducing a product to be packaged therein and having performed the corresponding seal by depleting the surplus, as well as a conformation in volume, also showing, in a similar manner to the previous figure 2, an enlarged detail of the section of one of its components.

**Figure 5.** - Is a partial and in profile view of a packaging similar to that of the previous figures 3 and 4, but with the variation that the sealing elements are arranged here in the other of its two constituting sheets.

**Figure 6.** - Shows an exploded view of a second embodiment of a packaging for food products made in one of the preferred embodiments of the invention.

**Figure 7.** - Shows a profile view of the packaging mentioned in the previous figure 6.

**Figure 8.** - Shows another profile view of the packaging mentioned in the previous figure 6.

**Figure 9.** - Is an exploded view of the packaging of figures 6 to 8 with the packaging opened.

**Figure 10.** - Is an exploded view of the packaging of figures 6 to 9 with the product to be packaged introduced therein and the packaging closed.

**Figure 11.** - Is an exploded view of a third embodiment of the packaging of the invention.

**Figure 12.** - Is an exploded view of a fourth embodiment of the invention having a tab on each side adjacent to the side comprising the permanent adhesive.

**Figure 13.** - Is an exploded view of the embodiment of the invention shown in figure 12 with the product to be packaged inside the packaging and in the closed state, also showing one of the two tabs closed.

**Figure 14.** - Is an exploded view of a fifth embodiment of the invention having a tab on the side opposite to the side that comprises the permanent adhesive.

**Figure 15.** - Shows a profile view of the packaging mentioned in the previous figure 14.

**Figure 16.** - Shows a profile view of the packaging mentioned in the previous figures 12 and 13.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION**

**[0025]** A description of various embodiments of the invention is made below by referring to the references of the figures.

**[0026]** Thus, the packaging for food products of all embodiments of the invention described below, consists of a flexible sheet 2 made of transparent plastic material and a semi-rigid sheet 1 made of cardboard laminated on both faces, as can be seen in the enlarged detail of figure 2.

**[0027]** In a first preferred embodiment of the invention,

the semi-rigid sheet 1 has split lines 3, as shown in figure 1, that allow making volumetric conformations with great simplicity for adapting to the volume of product to be packaged 7, as can be seen in figure 2.

**[0028]** In turn, the flexible sheet 2 has corrugations or folds 4 which have been shown with the broken line in figure 1 by being optional in this example of the invention, showing however the volumetric adaptation facilitated after packaging the product 7 in the above figure 2.

**[0029]** The packaging of this example of the invention has a simple, effective and reversible seal that is defined by an adhesive area 5 in the sheet 2 covered by a protective strip of wax or similar paper 6 removal of which allows performing the seal when applying the adhesive area 5 to the sheet 1, as shown in the situation of the packaging in figure 2.

**[0030]** In figures 1 and 2, the edges of the adhesive area 5, the protective strip 6, and the edges corresponding to the sheets 1 and 2 are arranged in coincidence, however this arrangement may be varied, as shown in figures 3 and 4, for sealing by depleting the surplus rather than by matching the ends. Thus, in these figures 3 and 4, can be seen that the sealing elements 5 and 6 are in protruding part of the sheet 2 from the sheet 1 in the mouthpiece area, so as to be able to perform the seal by clamping by way of flap that sheet 1. Another variation on those sealing elements 5 and 6 consists in that these are located in the cardboard sheet 1 rather than in the flexible sheet 2 to facilitate, also in this case a seal by depleting the surplus, similar to that of the previous figure 4; this option of having the sealing elements 5 and 6 on sheet 1 being represented in figure 5.

**[0031]** In a second embodiment of the invention, such as shown in figures 6 to 10, the flexible sheet (2) is permanently adhered to at least one side (12), by using a permanent adhesive strip (16), of the semi-rigid sheet (1) and more preferably it will be adhered to one of the longer sides of the semi-rigid sheet (1). The flexible sheet (2) will be adhered to the remaining sides (11) of the semi-rigid sheet by using a removable adhesive, i.e. an adhesive that allows attaching and detaching said sheets several times while maintaining a sufficient adhesion degree.

**[0032]** The packaging arrives fully extended and therefore plane to the points of sale. Thus the operator firstly detaches the sides (11) of the flexible sheet (2) that have no permanent bond to the semi-rigid sheet (1) and introduces the product (7) to be packaged. The semi-rigid sheet (1) fits to the packaged product (7) thanks to the pleats or folds (8,9) presented, and the operator re-attaches the flexible sheet (2) to the semi-rigid sheet (1) by sealing the packaging.

**[0033]** Said second preferred embodiment comprises that the semi-rigid sheet (1) has angular cuts (10) at the corners. Said angular cuts (10) will range from innermost fold or split line (8), which runs parallel to each side of the semi-rigid sheet (1) to the edge of said sheet (1), said cuts (10) being parallel to the edges of the sheet (1). The innermost fold lines (8) will define the base of the pack-

aging once the product (7) to be packaged is introduced, and similarly they will define the folding wings of the packaging. The folding wings will comprise at least one additional longitudinal fold line (9) that will define the area for attaching (11) the flexible sheet (1) to the semi-rigid sheet (2).

**[0034]** In a third preferred embodiment of the invention, such as shown in figure 11, the semi-rigid sheet (2) will have beveled cuts (13) from the intersection points of the inner fold lines or split lines (8), which lines define the base of the packaging when the product (7) has been introduced, to the corners of the semi-rigid sheet (2). The folding wings defined by the cuts (13) and the inner fold lines (8) have at least one longitudinal fold line (9) that will define the area for attaching (11) the flexible sheet (1) to the semi-rigid sheet (2).

**[0035]** Figures 12 and 13 show a fourth embodiment of the invention in which the semi-rigid sheet (1) includes having two tabs. One of the longer sides of the semi-rigid sheet comprises a permanent adhesive strip (16) that fixes two sheets together. Besides the long side that does not include a permanent attachment between the semi-rigid sheet and the flexible sheet comprises having a strip of removable adhesive material. The tabs each include a longitudinal removable adhesive strip. The three removable adhesive strips will be preferably protected with a paper strip (6) as the conventional postal envelopes. So once the product (7) has been introduced into the packaging and the side comprising the removable adhesive strip (5) of the rigid plate (2) has been closed, the two tabs (15) are folded on themselves by fold lines (14), which match the outline of the packaging once completely sealed, and once the respective paper strips (6) have been removed, the outer face of the of the flexible sheet (1) is attached thereto. These tabs (15) create two side strips of rigid material that provide greater strength and better appearance to the packaging. Note that the length of the flexible sheet (1) coincides with the distance between the two fold lines 14 and the width to the length of the semi-rigid sheet, the width of the flexible sheet may be slightly greater than that of the semi-rigid sheet in order to compensate the volume of product to be packaged.

**[0036]** In a fifth embodiment of the invention, such as shown in figure 15, the packaging object of the invention comprises having, at least in two of its adjacent sides, removable adhesive strips that allow attaching and detaching the transparent sheet to the semi-rigid sheet. It further comprises that in at least one (12) of the sides opposite to the at least two adjacent sides comprising the removable adhesive strips, the flexible sheet (2) is permanently attached to the semi-rigid sheet (1). In a more preferred embodiment, the packaging will have a permanent adhesive side (12) and three with removable adhesive (11). Note that when along the present description a removable adhesive is mentioned, it does not mean an adhesive that can be put on and take off, but an adhesive that allows the attachment and detachment from,

in this case the transparent sheet and the semi-rigid sheet, several times while maintaining perfect sealing conditions. In addition the packaging will have a tab or flap on the opposite side comprising having permanent adhesive for fixing the semi-rigid sheet and flexible sheet, which is bent upon itself along a fold line (14) so as once the flexible sheet has been attached on the semi-rigid sheet, this tongue, which comprises a removable adhesive strip is attached on the outer face of the flexible sheet providing the packaging a tighter seal and with greater rigidity.

[0037] Figures 16 and 17 show a profile view of the fourth and fifth embodiment described above.

## Claims

1. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, having has two sheets, a first of (2) of these being flexible and a second (1) being selected between rigid and semi-rigid, conventionally shaped as a tray, with both (1, 2) being joined at their edges with the exception of a mouthpiece including a seal for facilitating the entry of a product to be packaged (7), or sealing the first sheet (2) on the other one after the introduction of the product to be packaged (7) by shrinking or perimeter thermosealing, being used in on-site dispensing of fresh food for linear and point of sale supplying; **characterized in that** the second sheet (1) is flat and is closed all the way around by the first sheet (2), except for one side open with sealing means for introducing the product to be packaged (7), these sealing means of the open side being selected between seal adhesive means (5) covered with removable protective strip (6) and a mechanical seal pressure; with the constitution of the first sheet (2) being selected between a completely transparent material and a partially transparent material; while the constitution of the second sheet (1) is selected between a plastic material and a cardboard material laminated at least on its inner face.
2. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 1, **characterized in that** one or both of said sheets (1, 2) have a volume adjustment means (3, 4) in order to provide the packaging with the geometric shape corresponding to that of the product to be packaged (7); with such means being selected between fold lines and split lines (3) for the second sheet (1), thus allowing their folding, and being selected between folds and corrugations (4) for the first sheet (2) facilitating its extension thereon.
3. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 2, **characterized in that** the sealing means for the open side comprise reversibly attaching the sheets (1, 2) so that the user can access to the packaged product (7) and return it to the closed packaging

several times.

4. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to any one of preceding claims, **characterized in that** the first sheet (2) is completely made of plastic material.
5. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to any one of preceding claims, **characterized in that** the first sheet (2) dimensionally protrudes from the second sheet (1) by the mouth area for establishing the seal by folding the remaining.
6. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the first sheet (2) is permanently adhered to at least one of the longer sides (12) of the semi-rigid sheet (1), and it is adhered to the other sides (11) of the second sheet (1) through a removable adhesive.
7. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 6, **characterized in that** it comprises that the second sheet (1) has angular cuts (10) at the corners, going from the innermost fold line (8) to the edge of the second sheet (1), with said cuts being parallel to the edges of the second sheet (1) defining some folding wings of the packaging that comprise at least one additional longitudinal fold line (9) that will define the bonding area (11) of the first sheet (2) to the second sheet (1).
8. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 6, **characterized in that** the second sheet has a beveled cuts (13) from the points of intersection of the innermost fold lines (8) of the second sheet (1) to the corners of the second sheet (1) defining some folding wings that have at least one longitudinal fold line (9) that will define the bonding area (11) of the first sheet (2) to the second sheet (1).
9. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 6, **characterized in that** it comprises having a side wherein both sheets and the remaining sides with removable adhesive strips are permanently fixed.
10. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 9, **characterized in that** the second sheet comprise having a tab on the opposite side that comprise the connection of the first sheet to the second sheet through permanent adhesive, which has an adhesive strip for bonding the tab on the outer face of the first sheet after the first sheet (2) has been stuck to the second sheet (1).
11. **PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to any one of preceding claims, **characterized in that** the removable adhesive strips comprise a pro-

tective paper strip.

- 12. PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the second sheet comprises a set of layers selected from: 5
- a single layer of plastic material;
  - a lower layer of rigid material and an upper layer of plastic material, with the layer of plastic material being in contact with the product to be packaged; and 10
  - a lower layer of rigid material, an intermediate layer of metallic material and an upper layer of plastic material, with the layer of plastic material being in contact with the product to be packaged. 15
- 13. PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 6, **characterized in that** the second sheet comprises at least two tabs on at least two of the sides wherein the connection of the first sheet to the second sheet through removable adhesive has been provided, which have adhesive strips for bonding the tabs on the outer face of the first sheet once the first sheet (2) has been stuck to the second sheet (1). 20
- 25
- 14. PACKAGING FOR FOOD PRODUCTS**, according to claim 13, **characterized in that** it comprises permanent adhesive strips together with the removable adhesive strips so that once the product has been introduced into the packaging, the inviolability of the packaging is ensured. 30

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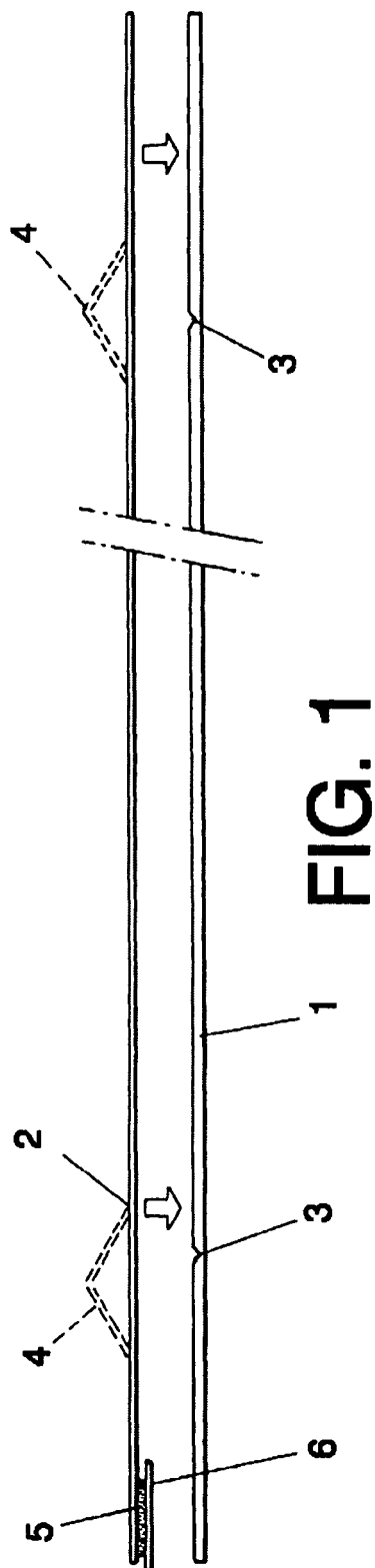


FIG. 1

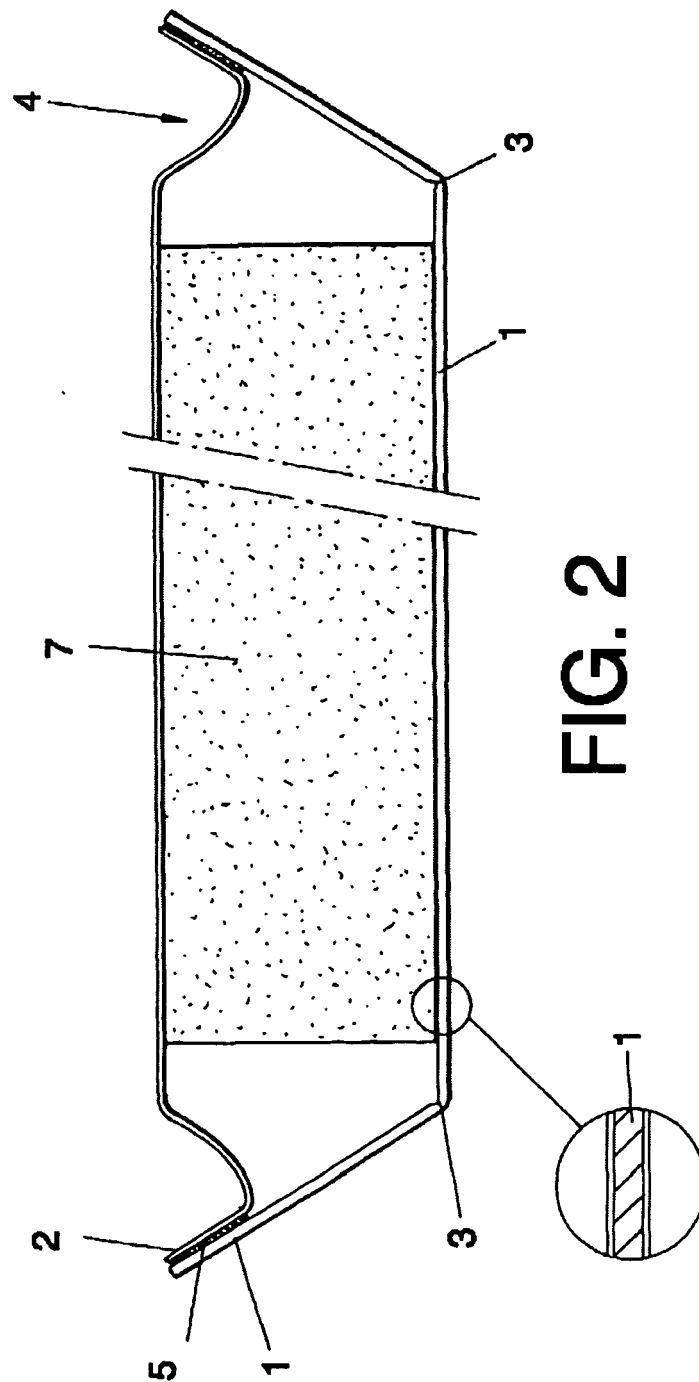


FIG. 2

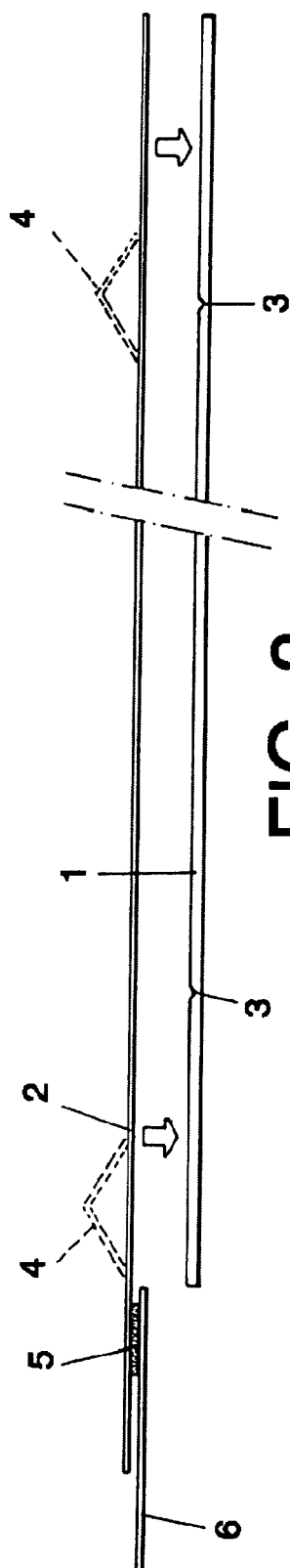


FIG. 3

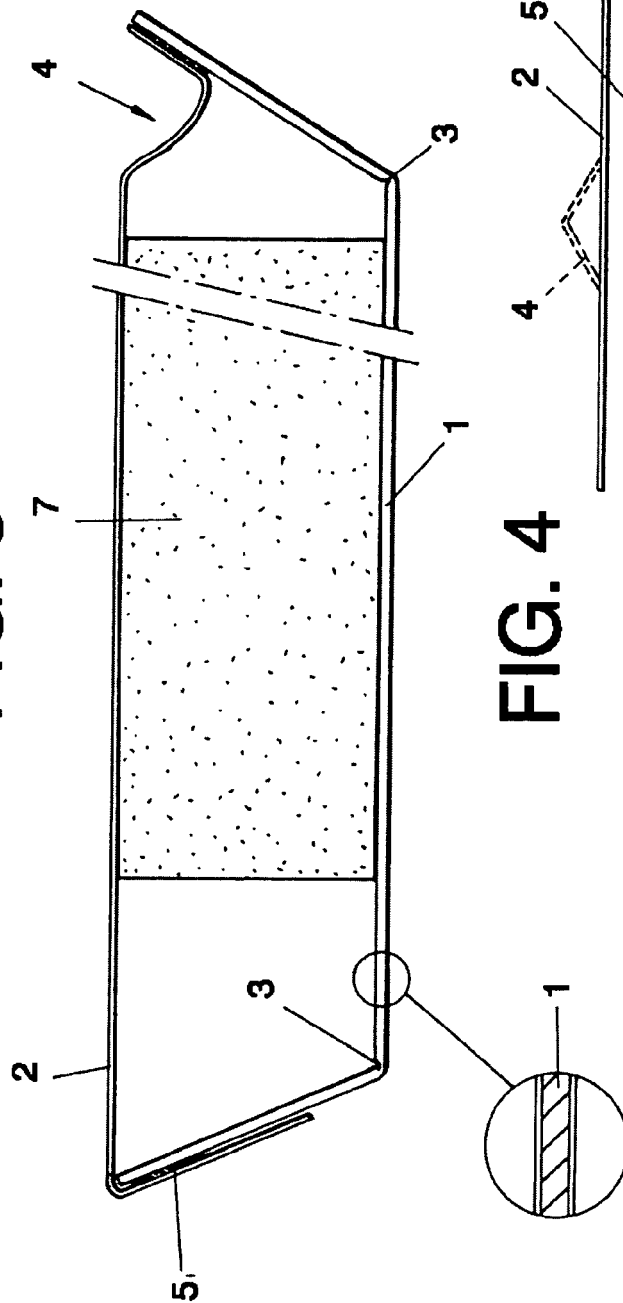


FIG. 4

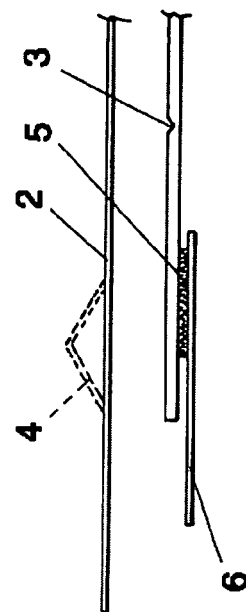
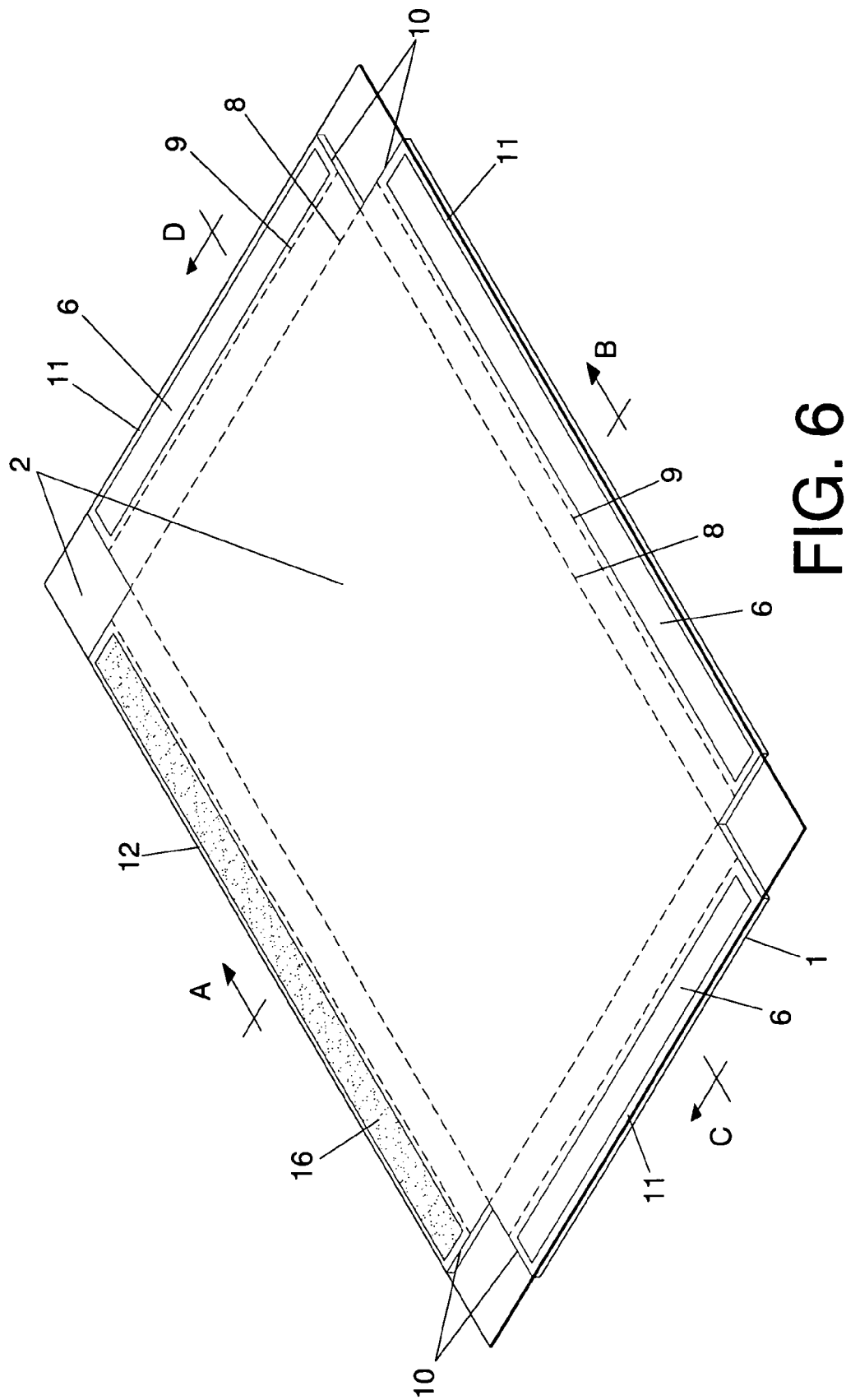


FIG. 5



**Fig. 6**

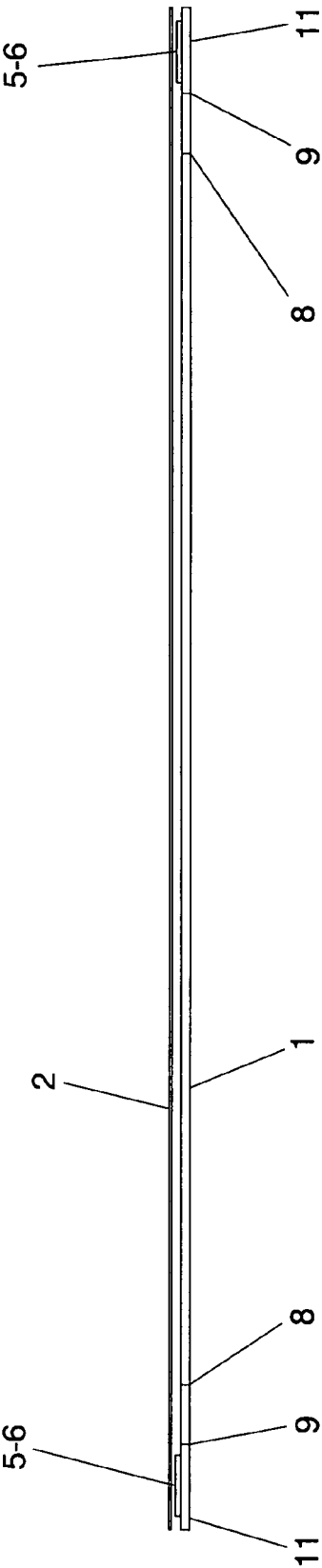


FIG. 7  
C-D

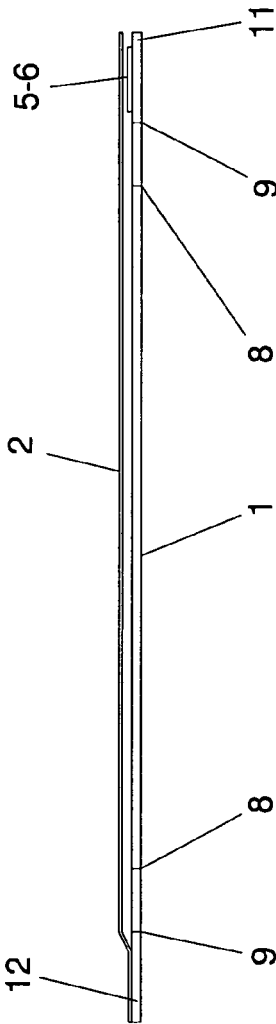


FIG. 8  
A-B

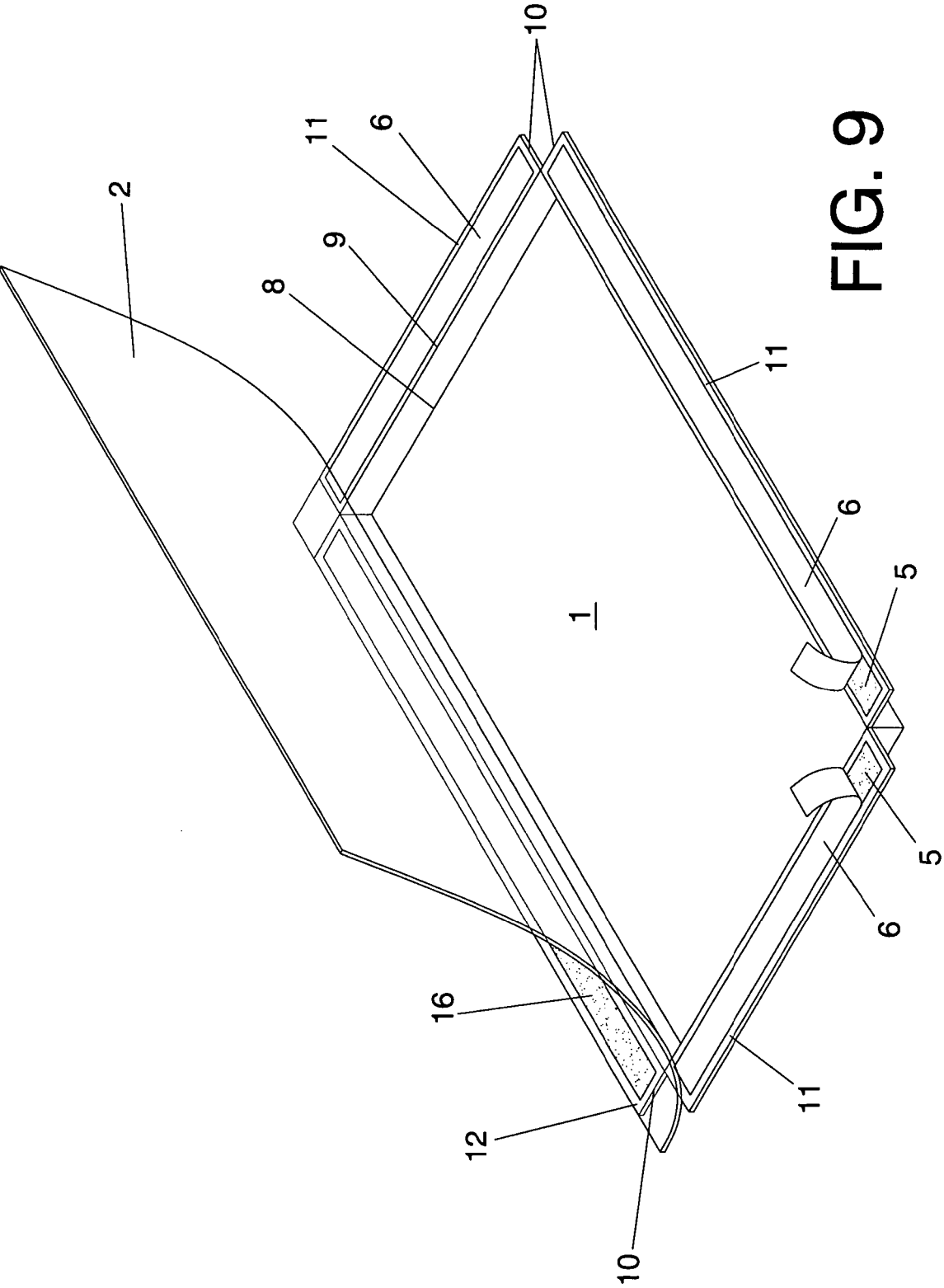


FIG. 9

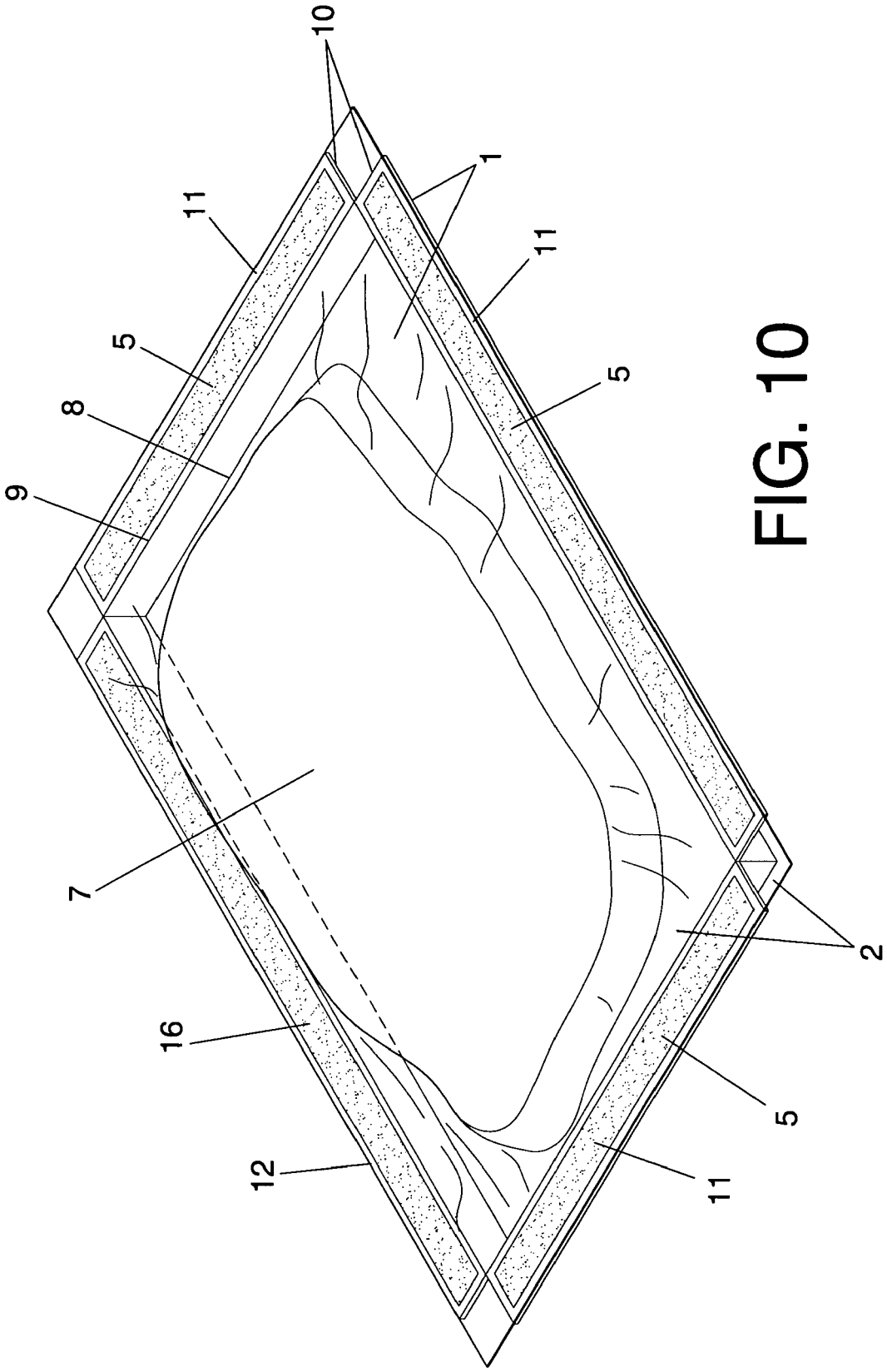


FIG. 10

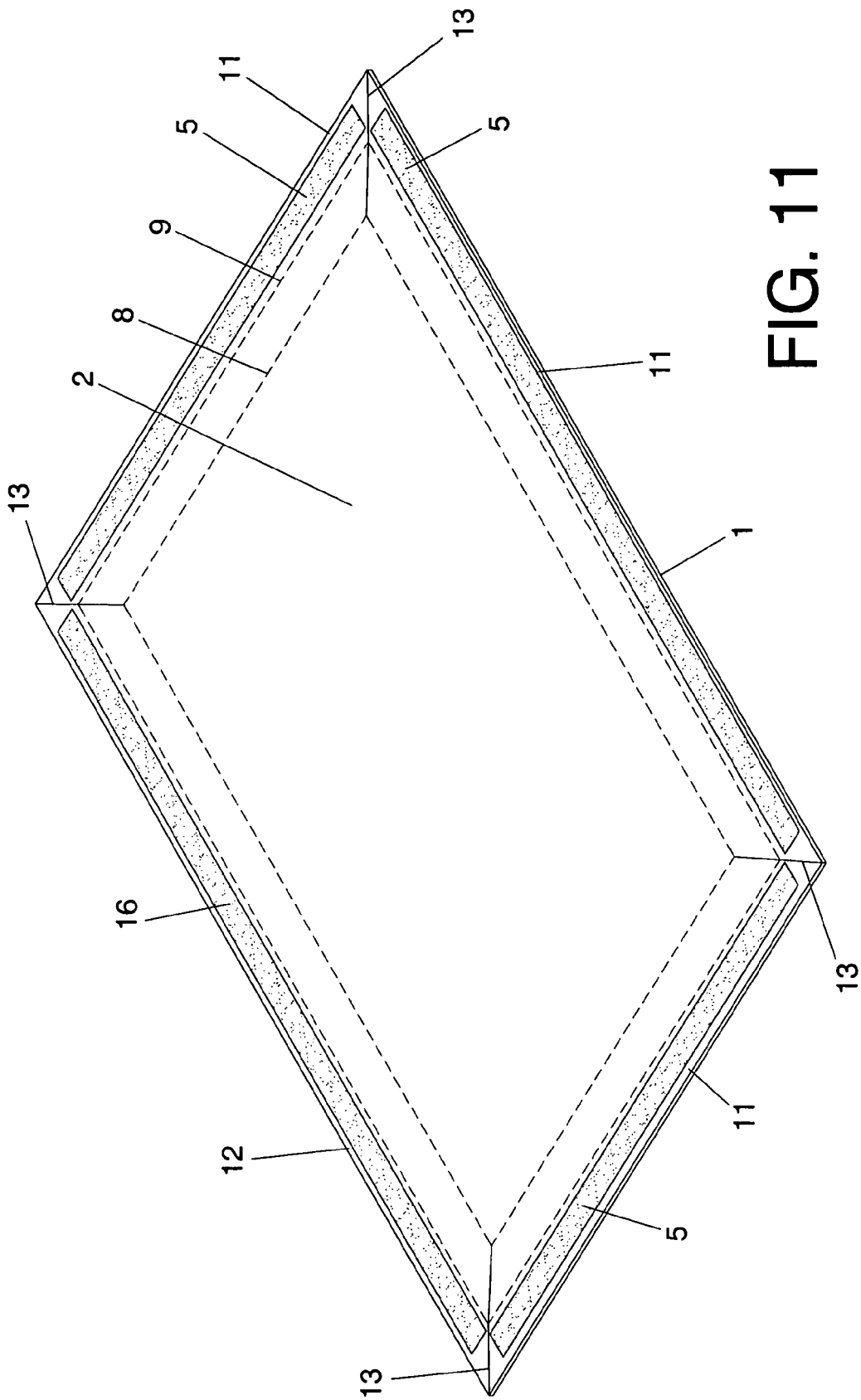


FIG. 11

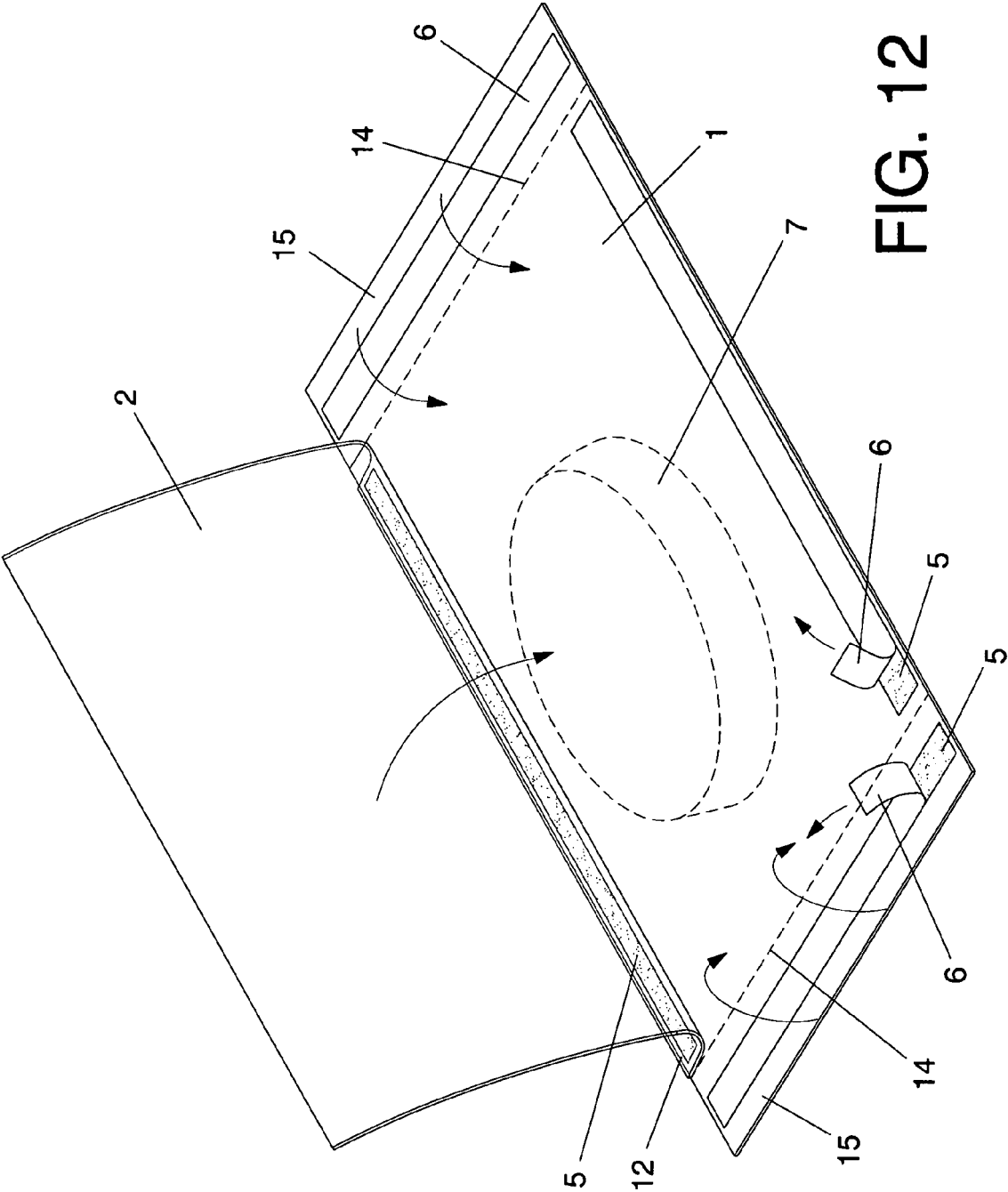


FIG. 12

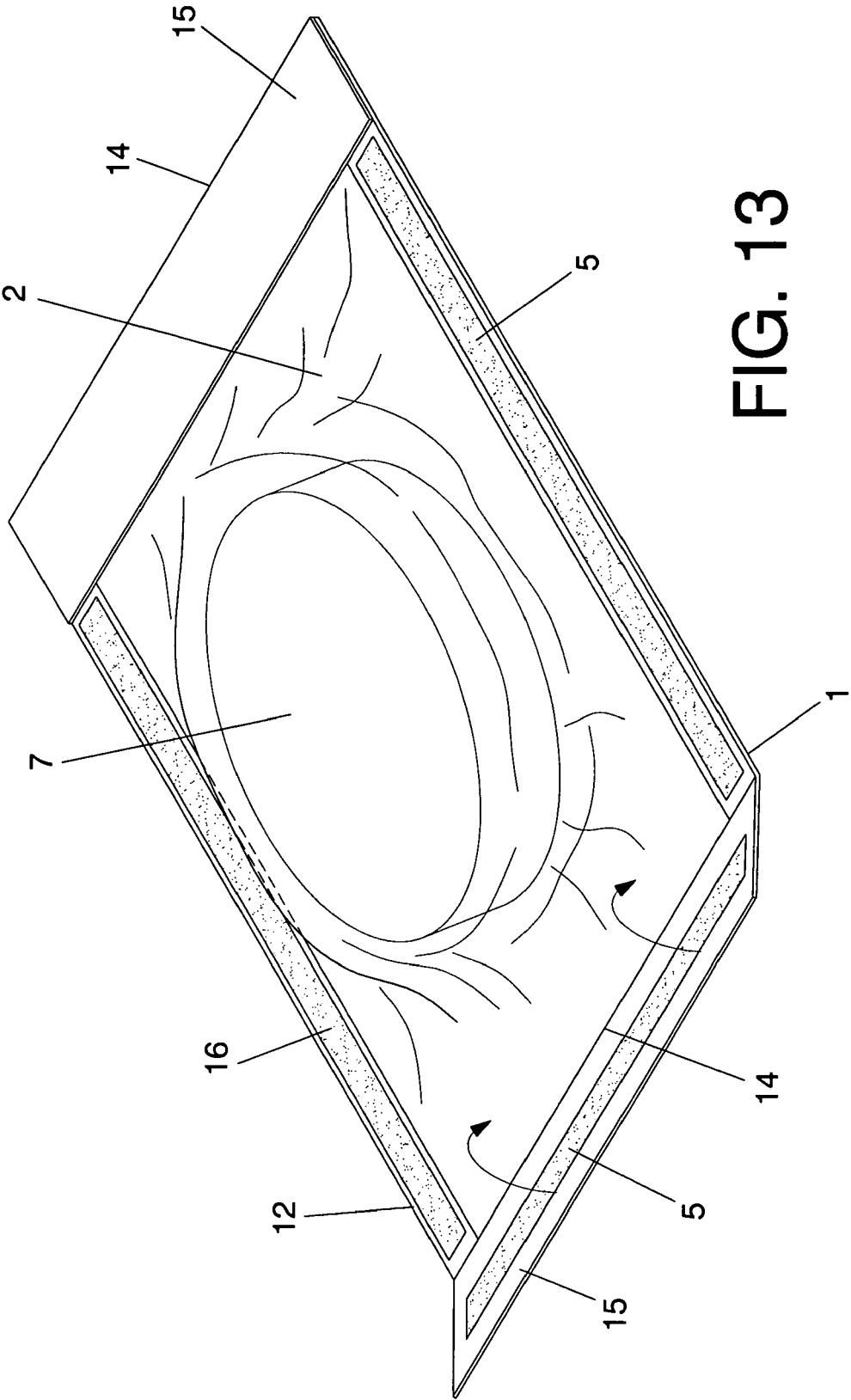


FIG. 13

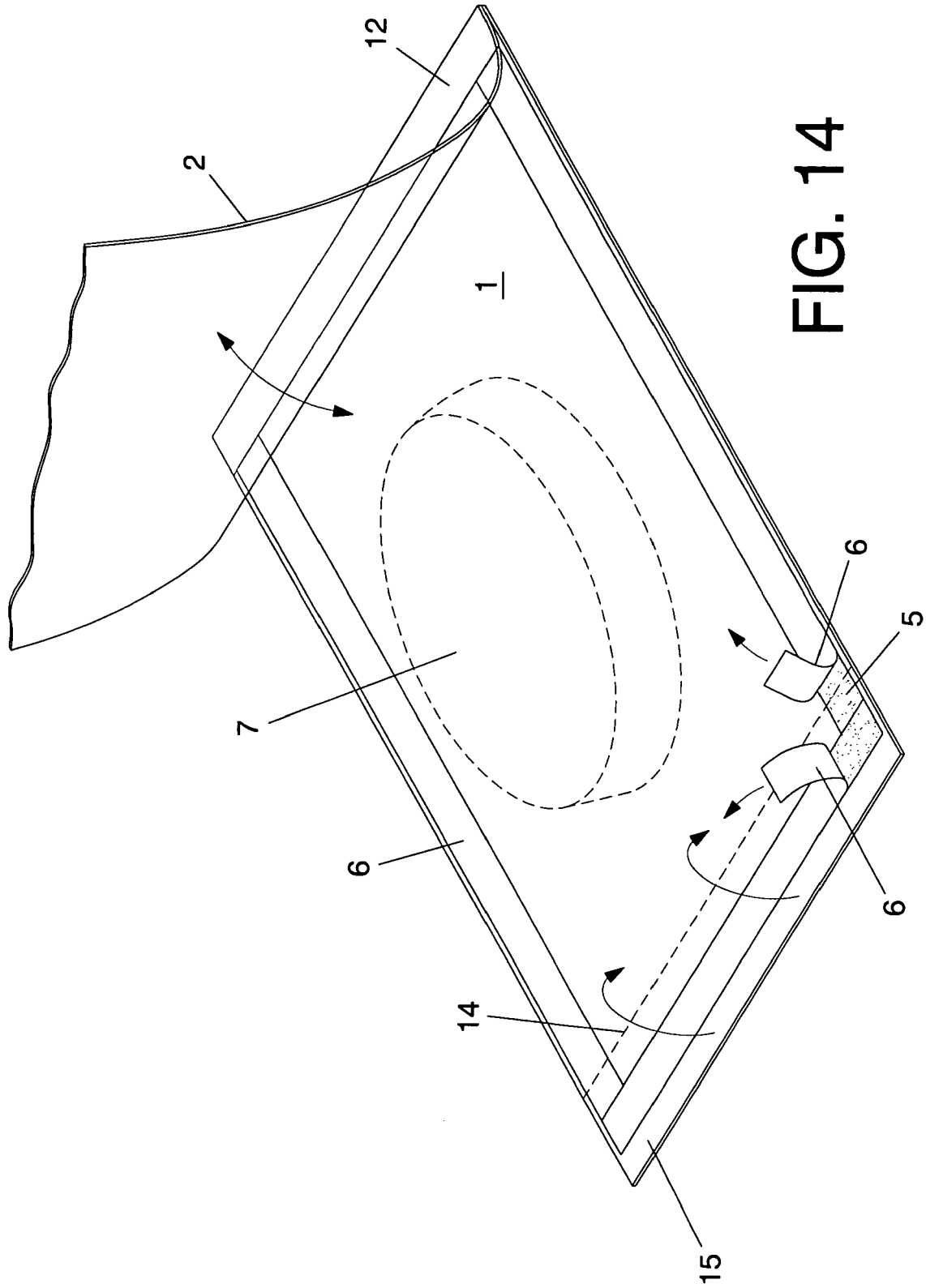


FIG. 14

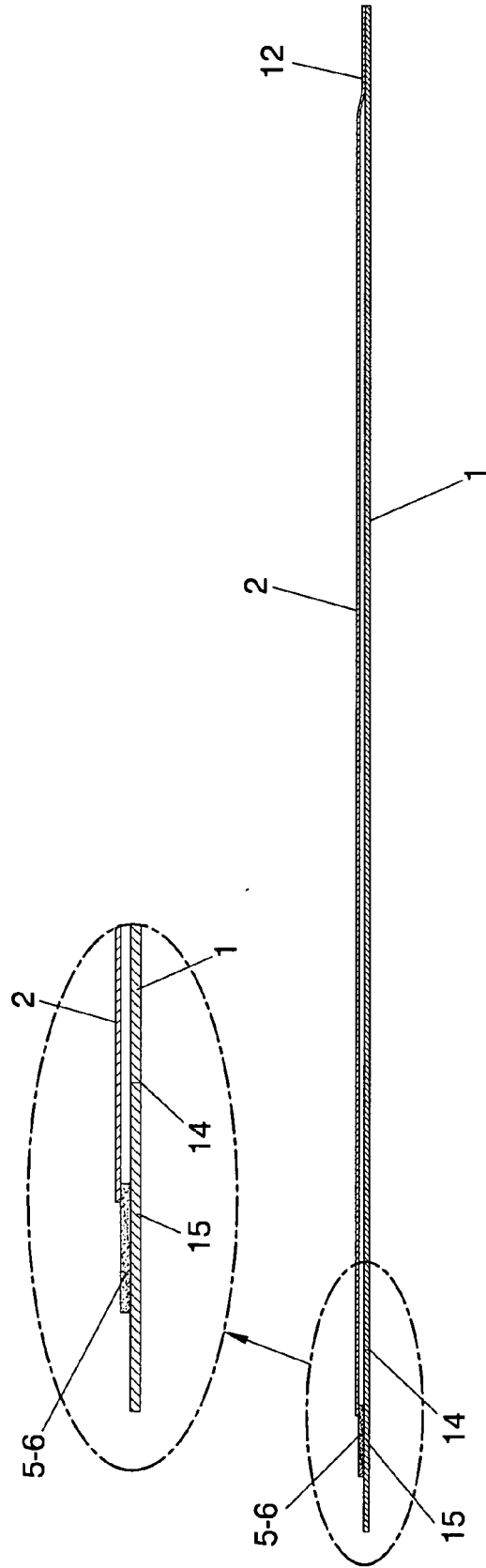


FIG. 15

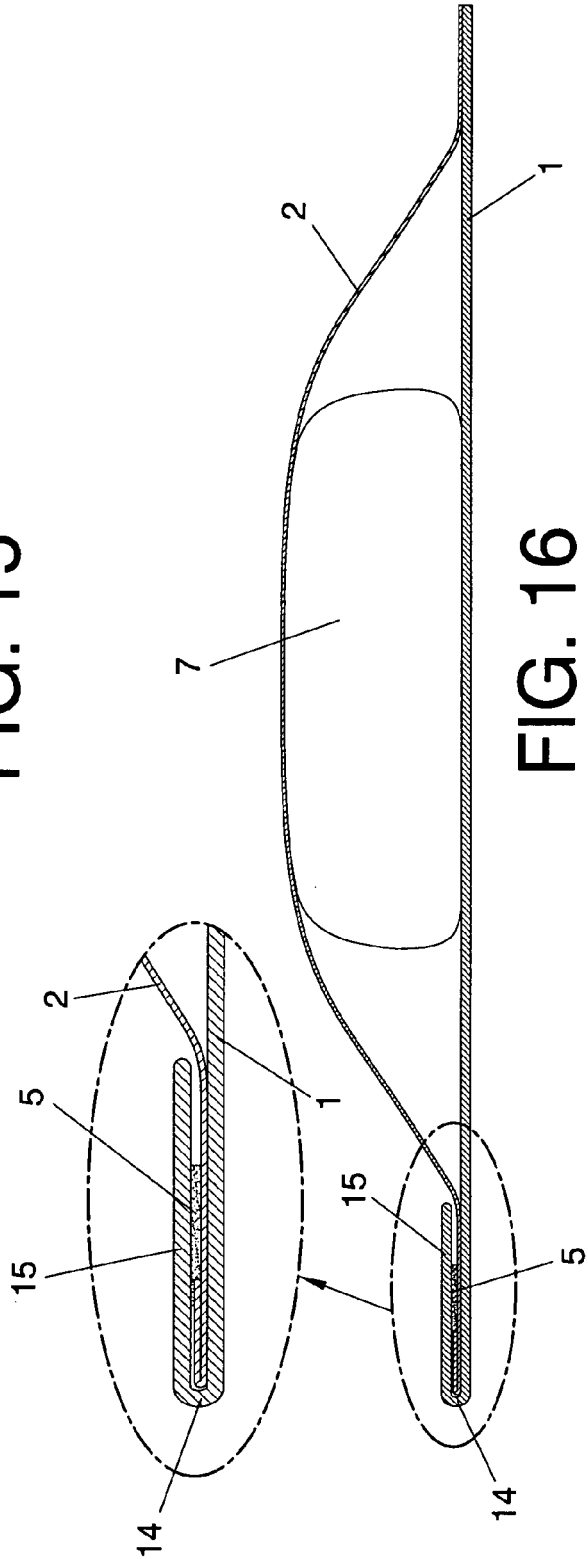


FIG. 16



## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
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