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(54) **A pouch for containing a fibrous material and a method for making a pouch for containing a fibrous material**

(57) The present invention provides a pouch for containing a fibrous material, comprising a wall defining a cavity and extending in an axial direction of the pouch, a top portion, a bottom portion, and a dispensing aperture for dispensing fibrous material from the pouch in use.

The dispensing aperture is smaller than a largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction such that the dispensing aperture allows the user to dispense any fibrous material contained within the pouch in a substantially rod-like shape.

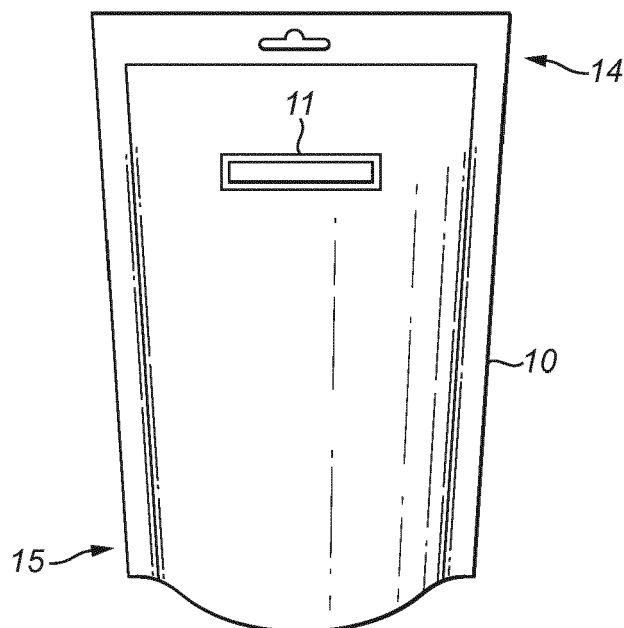


FIG. 1A

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a pouch for containing a fibrous material and, in particular, to a pouch for containing tobacco that provides better ease of use as well as better retention of moisture.

[0002] Tobacco for Roll-Your-Own (RYO) or Make-Your-Own (MYO) smoking articles is traditionally held and stored in pouches made of leather or sealskin. More recently, as consumers move towards preferences for disposable products, tobacco has often been provided in large plastic pouches that may be used to store the tobacco before it is transferred, for example, to a smaller tobacco pouch, or employed in direct use for rolling cigarettes or other smoking articles, and/or for use with a tubing machine.

[0003] One problem that exists with current tobacco pouches is the tendency for tobacco to spill out of the pouch and be wasted, for example, during the transfer of said tobacco to another pouch or as it is being used to fill a smoking article.

[0004] It is therefore desirable to provide a pouch for storing fibrous material, such as tobacco, that has better moisture retention for its contents over time. It is also desirable to provide such a pouch that can be manufactured easily in a reliable and cost-effective manner.

[0005] According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a pouch for containing a fibrous material, comprising: a wall defining a cavity and extending in an axial direction of the pouch; a top portion; a bottom portion; and a dispensing aperture for dispensing fibrous material from the pouch in use, wherein the dispensing aperture is smaller than a largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction, such that the dispensing aperture allows the user to dispense any fibrous material contained within the pouch in a substantially rod-like shape.

[0006] Advantageously, the pouch of the present invention allows moisture to be retained in the contents of the pouch much more effectively than previous pouches. This is due to the size of the dispensing aperture being smaller than a largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction of the pouch; hence, less ambient air reaches the contents of the pouch once the dispensing aperture has been created in use. The relatively small size of the dispensing aperture also provides the advantage of easier dispensing of any fibrous material contained within the pouch in a substantially rod-like shape, for example, when dispensing the fibrous material into a tubing machine or directly into filter paper of a RYO or MYO cigarette. The configuration of the dispensing aperture of the present invention further reduces spillage and wastage of fibrous material contained within the pouch as the user is provided with a more controlled mechanism for dispensing said fibrous material.

[0007] Preferably, the pouch may further comprise the fibrous material contained within the cavity and/or the

fibrous material may be tobacco.

[0008] Preferably, the dispensing location may be less than 80% of the largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction, and more preferably less than 50% of the largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction, and yet more preferably less than 30% of the largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction. These particular dispensing aperture sizes provide the advantages of small aperture sizes as described above.

[0009] Preferably, the dispensing aperture of the pouch may be elongate. More preferably, the dispensing aperture may be configured to be substantially the same shape as the receiving element of, for example, a tubing machine or the filter paper of a RYO or MYO cigarette. This configuration is advantageous in that spillage of the fibrous material can be minimized.

[0010] In some embodiments, the dispensing aperture may be located at the bottom portion of the pouch, and in other embodiments, the dispensing aperture may be located at the top portion of the pouch.

[0011] Preferably, a largest dimension of the top portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction may be smaller than that at the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction. This may provide the advantage of creating an interesting shape of pouch.

[0012] Preferably, a shape of the pouch may taper from the bottom portion to the top portion to form an apex, thus providing a distinctive shape. In this case, the dispensing opening may be formed within the apex, and so controlled dispensing of fibrous material held within the pouch may be optimized. The dispensing opening may also therefore be configured to be created across the entire top portion of the pouch in this case, thus making it easier for the user to create the dispensing opening in use.

[0013] Preferably, the pouch may be substantially triangular, trapezoidal, pyramidal or funnel shaped.

[0014] Preferably, the pouch may be formed from at least one sheet of material that is folded in use. The walls of the pouch may be formed, in this embodiment, by using a sealing material to seal together the edges of the single sheet of material. This provides the advantage that the pouch is simple to manufacture and a single roll of material may be sized as appropriate to create individual pouches that may be further processed and shaped. Alternatively, the pouch may be formed from at least two sheets of material that are adhered together, perhaps using a sealing material, during manufacture of the pouch.

[0015] Preferably, the pouch may be made of material comprising oriented polypropylene (OPP), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), metallised polyethylene terephthalate (MPET) or polyethylene (PE), or any combination thereof.

[0016] Preferably, the pouch may further comprise a second aperture for dispensing fibrous material from the pouch in use. This allows the possibility of dispensing

the fibrous material from the pouch through an alternative outlet, for example, should it be desired to bulk transfer the fibrous material away from the pouch. Preferably, the second aperture may be formed at a distal portion of the pouch to the dispensing aperture.

[0017] Preferably, the dispensing aperture and/or the second aperture may be configured to be re-sealable using sealing means. This further enhances the moisture retention qualities of the pouch of the present invention. The sealing means could be defined by the dispensing aperture and/or the second aperture, for example, a zip lock, a hook and loop fastener, or it could be separate sealing means such as a sticky label, or a gripper, or any combination thereof.

[0018] Preferably, the pouch may further comprise one or more indicators defining the dispensing aperture and/or the second aperture. In one embodiment, the one or more indicators could comprise, say, the zip lock or the hook and loop fastener that also act as the sealing means. In another embodiment, the one or more indicators could comprise, for example, markers or perforations that indicate visually to the user where the dispensing aperture should be made in the pouch.

[0019] The indicator on the pouch may define where the pouch should ultimately be opened and preferably the extent/size of such an opening. This may be achieved by providing a sealed aperture, such as a zip lock, as the indicator, and/or by providing a marker, such as a printed line, or perforation as the indicator, along which the user may cut/tear. Thus, a user of the pouch may be guided by the indicator towards ensuring that the size of the dispensing aperture is smaller than a largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction of the pouch, for example, due to a physical indicator on the pouch, e.g. a zip lock, such that the indicator comprises the dispensing aperture. When the indicator comprises the dispensing aperture, for example, when the dispensing aperture is a zip lock, advantages that arise from the reduction in dispensing aperture size that is created at the location defined by the indicator, as compared with previous pouch arrangements, include reduced materials and therefore reduced material costs, and a more attractive appearance to consumers. In other cases, the user may be guided via an indicator formed by a marker such as dotted lines or perforations along which the dispensing aperture is intended to be made in the pouch.

[0020] According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for making a pouch for containing a fibrous material, comprising: providing at least one sheet of material for forming the pouch; folding the sheet to form the walls of the pouch; providing a dispensing aperture on the pouch at which fibrous material may be dispensed from the pouch in use; and depositing a sealing material to seal the walls of the pouch and to define an inner space for holding fibrous material.

[0021] Preferably, the method further comprises reducing the inner space towards the top portion of the

pouch to leave some sacrificial pouch material; and punching out a section of the sheet to eliminate the sacrificial pouch material. Preferably, the method further comprises filling fibrous material into the pouch.

[0022] Certain preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figures 1A to 1C illustrate examples of pouches according to the present invention;

Figures 2A and 2B illustrate another example of a pouch according to the present invention; and

Figure 3 illustrates an example of the method of manufacture of a pouch according to the present invention.

[0023] In Figures 1A to 1C, pouch 10 comprising a top portion 14 and a bottom portion 15 are shown. Each pouch 10 is provided with a dispensing aperture 11, 12, 13 for dispensing fibrous material from the pouch in use

[0024] In Figure 1A, the dispensing aperture 11 is shown to be formed in the center of the top portion 14. In Figure 1B, the dispensing aperture 12 is shown to be formed in center of the bottom portion 15. In both Figures 1A and 1B, the dispensing opening 11, 12, is shown to be elongate. In Figure 1C, the dispensing aperture 13 is shown to be formed towards the corner of the top portion 14. In each of these examples, the dispensing aperture is smaller than a largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction of the pouch, such that a dispensing aperture formed at the dispensing aperture location allows the user to dispense any fibrous material contained within the pouch in a substantially rod-like shape. This provides benefits such as improved moisture retention, more controlled dispensing and less spillage/wastage of fibrous content during dispensing from the pouch. In these examples, the fibrous material is tobacco, although the fibrous material may equally be any other fibrous material.

[0025] In Figure 2A and 2B, pouch 20 comprises a top portion 24 and a bottom portion 25. In this example, the pouch 20 has a largest dimension of its top portion 24 in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction being smaller than that at the bottom portion 25 in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction. The pouch 20 has a shape that tapers from the bottom portion 25 to the top portion 24 to form an apex, where the dispensing opening 21 is located. The shape of the pouch 20 may be described as substantially funnel-shaped. An advantage of such a configuration is that the shape of the pouch 20 is very attractive to the user, and it provides them with better control over dispensing of tobacco contained within the pouch 20.

[0026] Figure 3 shows an example method of manufacturing a pouch 30 of the present invention, where a single sheet of material is folded out from a roll 31 in order

to form the walls of a plurality of pouches 32. A sealing material may be deposited along the edges of the material in order to seal the walls and to define an inner space for holding fibrous material. Then, each individual pouch is cut out of the single sheet of material, and any redundant sacrificial material may be punched out after the inner space towards the top portion of the pouch is reduced, resulting in a substantially funnel-shaped pouch 30. At this stage, the pouch 30 may have an open end 33 where fibrous material such as tobacco may be used to fill the pouch 30 (not shown in Figure 3). The dispensing opening may also be formed at the distal end to the open end 33 (not shown in Figure 3).

Claims

1. A pouch for containing a fibrous material, comprising:

a wall defining a cavity and extending in an axial direction of the pouch;
a top portion;
a bottom portion; and
a dispensing aperture for dispensing fibrous material from the pouch in use,
wherein the dispensing aperture is smaller than a largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction, such that the dispensing aperture allows the user to dispense any fibrous material contained within the pouch in a substantially rod-like shape.

2. A pouch according to claim 1, wherein the pouch further comprises the fibrous material contained within the cavity and/or the fibrous material is tobacco.

3. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the dispensing aperture is less than 80% of the largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction, and more preferably less than 50% of the largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction, and yet more preferably less than 30% of the largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction.

4. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the dispensing aperture is elongate.

5. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the dispensing aperture is located at the bottom portion of the pouch or at the top portion of the pouch.

6. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein a largest dimension of the top portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction is smaller than that at

the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction.

7. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein a shape of the pouch tapers from the bottom portion to the top portion to form an apex.

8. A pouch according to claim 7, wherein the dispensing opening is formed within the apex.

9. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the pouch is formed from at least one sheet of material that is folded in use.

10. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the pouch is made of material comprising oriented polypropylene (OPP), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), metallised polyethylene terephthalate (MPET) or polyethylene (PE), or any combination thereof.

11. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the pouch further comprises a second aperture for dispensing fibrous material from the pouch in use.

12. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the dispensing aperture and/or the second aperture is configured to be re-sealable, and wherein optionally, the means for re-sealing the pouch comprises a zip lock.

13. A pouch according to any preceding claim, wherein the pouch further comprises one or more indicators defining the dispensing aperture and/or the second aperture, and wherein optionally, the one or more indicators comprise markers or perforations.

14. A method for making a pouch for containing a fibrous material, comprising:

providing at least one sheet of material for forming the pouch;
folding the sheet to form the walls of the pouch;
providing a dispensing aperture on the pouch at which fibrous material may be dispensed from the pouch in use; and
depositing a sealing material to seal the walls of the pouch and to define an inner space for holding fibrous material.

15. A method according to claim 14, further comprising:

reducing the inner space towards the top portion of the pouch to leave some sacrificial pouch material; and
punching out a section of the sheet to eliminate the sacrificial pouch material.

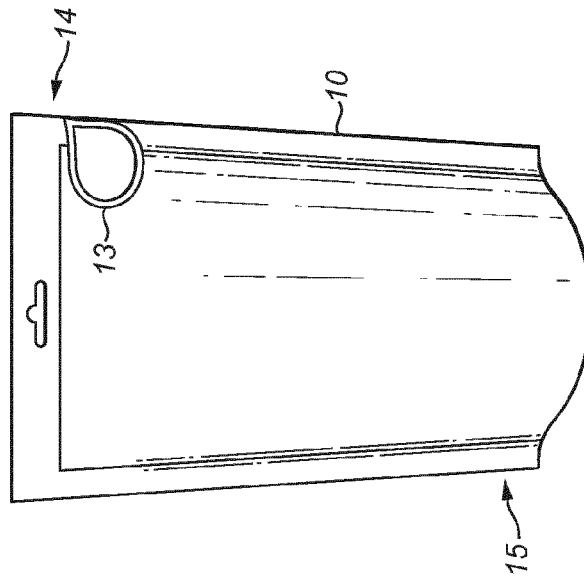


FIG. 1C

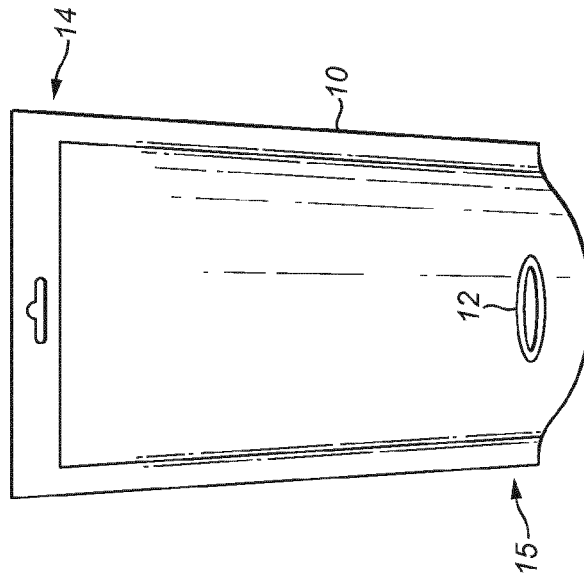


FIG. 1B

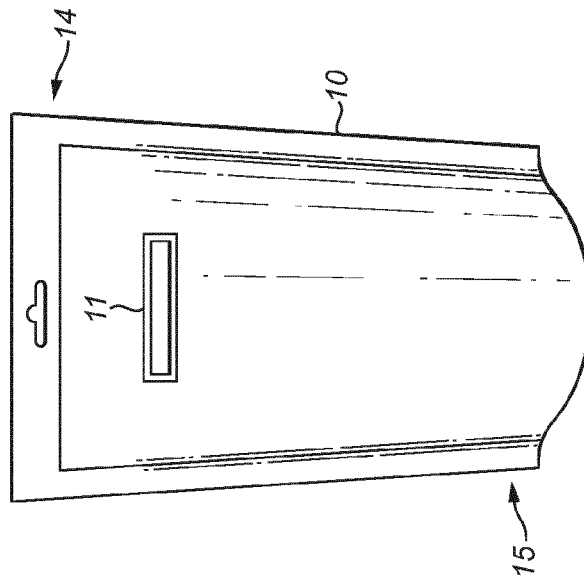


FIG. 1A

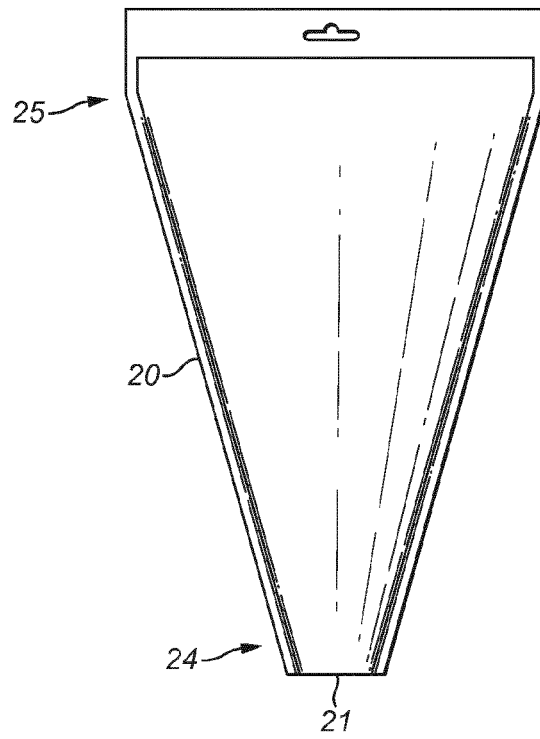


FIG. 2A

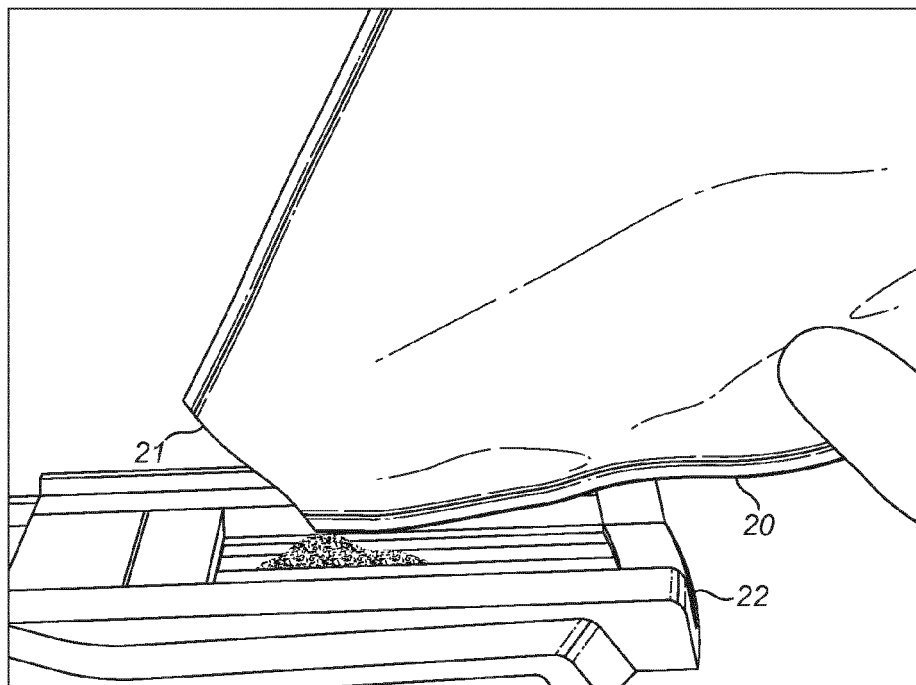


FIG. 2B

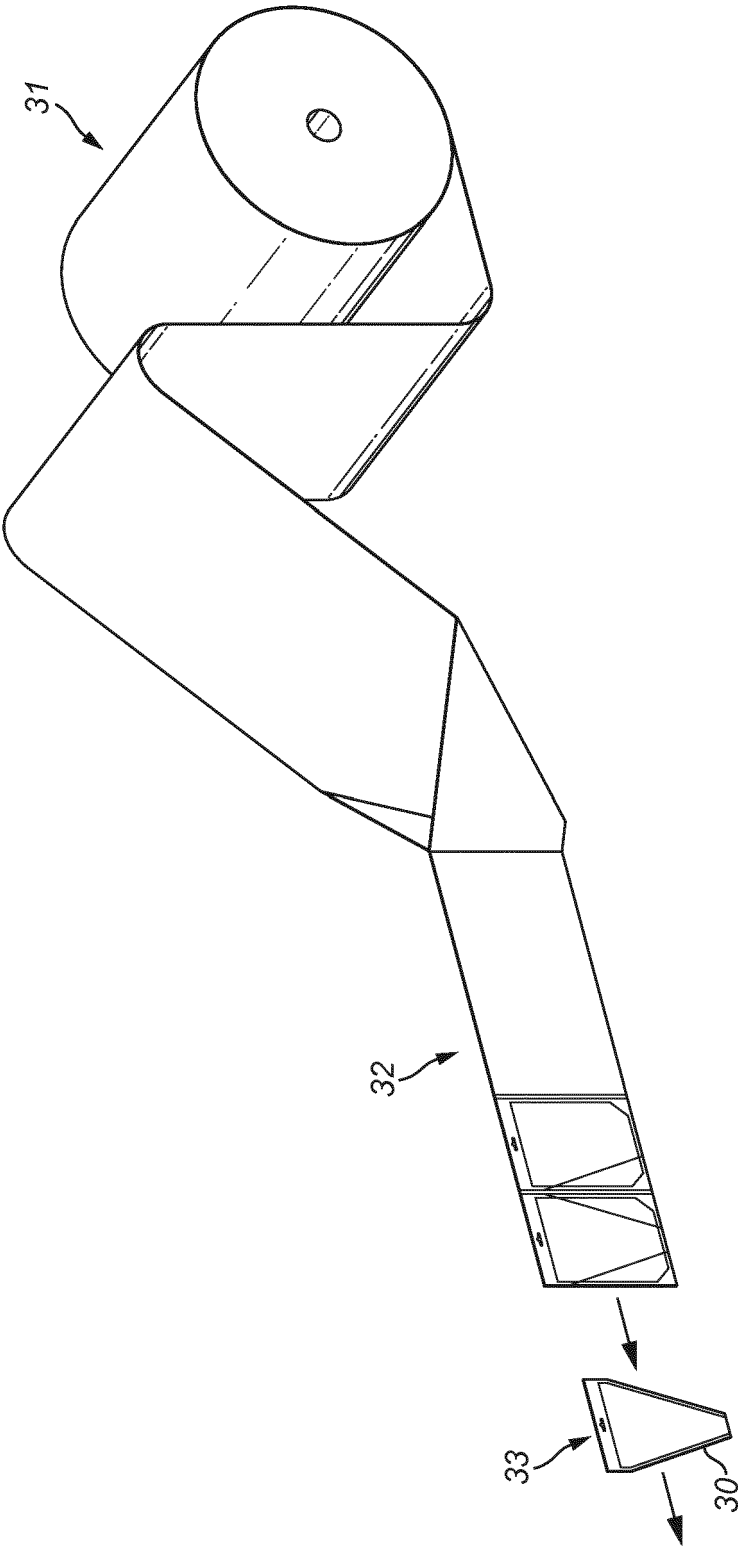


FIG. 3



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 14 18 3072

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<p>1 The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</p>			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich		20 February 2015	Koob, Michael
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)



Application Number

EP 14 18 3072

CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing claims for which payment was due.

☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those claims for which no payment was due and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):

☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those claims for which no payment was due.

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet B

☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.

☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.

☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:

☒ None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:

1-13

☐ The present supplementary European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims (Rule 164 (1) EPC).

**LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B**

Application Number

EP 14 18 3072

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. claims: 1-13

A pouch for containing a fibrous material, comprising a wall defining a cavity and extending in an axial direction of the pouch, a top portion, a bottom portion and a dispensing aperture for dispensing fibrous material from the pouch in use, wherein the dispensing aperture is smaller than a largest dimension of the bottom portion in a plane orthogonal to the axial direction, such that the dispensing aperture allows the user to dispense any fibrous material contained within the pouch in a substantially rod-like shape.

2. claims: 14, 15

A method for making a pouch for containing a fibrous material, comprising, providing at least one sheet of material for forming the pouch, folding the sheet to form the walls of the pouch, providing a dispensing aperture on the pouch at which fibrous material may be dispensed from the pouch in use and depositing a sealing material to seal the walls of the pouch and to define an inner space for holding fibrous material.

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 14 18 3072

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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82