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(54) **CARRIER FOR PIPETTE TIPS**

TRÄGER FÜR PIPETTENSPIZZEN

SUPPORT POUR EMBOUTS DE PIPETTE

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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention is related to a carrier for pipette tips, for those in automatic machines in particular. Furthermore, the invention relates to a distance piece for holding an upper plate with a plurality of holes for inserting pipette tips spaced from a lower plate with a plurality of holes, pipette tips being inserted into the holes of the upper plate and the lower plate.

[0002] Carriers for pipette tips serve for keeping and providing pipette tips made of plastic material for utilisation. They have an edge with four upwardly projecting side walls and a plate, disposed on the upper edge of the frame and having a plurality of holes in a matrix arrangement. Pipette tips are put into the holes from out the upside, wherein they do not fall through the holes due to a diameter that widens towards the upside, or due to a collar. The frame is adapted to be put onto a support with its lower edge or a bottom. The pipette tips are held at a distance from the support by the carrier. One or plural pipette tips may be taken out of the carrier by means of a pipetting- or metering apparatus, respectively. For this purpose, the metering apparatus is pressed into the upper opening of one or plural pipette tips with one or plural studs. After use, the pipette tips are normally put into a carrier or given off into a container with the aid of a throw-off device of the metering apparatus, in order to be disposed of.

[0003] Carriers for pipette tips are known wherein the frame is covered by a bottom at the downside, and by a detachable cover cap on the upside. In these box-like carriers, the pipette tips are protected against contaminations. Before taking out pipette tips, the cover cap has to be removed.

[0004] From WO 00/51899 A1, a refill package for reusable carriers for pipette tips is known. The refill package comprises a plate with holes in a matrix arrangement, into which pipette tips are inserted, and a flexible cover cap in which the plate is held. When putting the cover cap onto the upper edge of a carrier, the side walls of the cover cap are laterally deflected, so that the plate clamped in there between is released. As a consequence, the plate with the pipette tips falls into a reception piece of the carrier that is surrounded by an enclosure. Refilling the carrier with pipette tips and taking out the plate with pipette tips from the carrier are performed manually.

[0005] In automatic metering machines and automatic laboratory machines ("workstations") that include metering apparatuses, pipette tips made of plastic material are frequently employed. Automatic metering machines and automatic laboratory machines will be designated as "automatic machines" in the following. The known refill package is not well suited for the utilisation in automatic machines. Displacement of the cover cap by an automatic machine in order to separate plate and cover cap would

be problematic due to the cover cap's flexibility. When the plate is disposed in the carrier, the lateral enclosure encumbers the removal by an automatic machine.

[0006] From US 6 221 317 B1, a box for pipette tips is known which features a lower part with a bottom and side walls, which end up in support surfaces at the upside. A plurality of locking elements is asymmetrically disposed on the support surfaces. A plurality of inner walls projecting upward from the bottom is adjacent to a plurality of inner accommodations. A plate portion features a first set of holes, into which the locking elements are inserted. Further, it has a second set of holes for the insertion of pipette tips. The locking elements are realised as locking pins, which engage by frictional fit into the first set of holes of the plate. Thus, plate and lower part are detachably fixed to each other by way of the pins and bores. However, detaching the plate from the lower part is only possible by the expenditure of a force that is greater than the weight force of lower part and plate. The user can choose among plates having 96, 348 and 1536 holes for inserting pipette tips. He can fix the selected plate on the lower part by way of the locking pins and the holes. Thereafter, he may insert the pipette tips into the holes and place a cover cap over the plate.

[0007] The grid-like subdivision of the interior space provides the box with a stiffness sufficient for handling by an automatic machine. Automatic refilling of pipette tips into the box would be a problem. In particular, replacing a plate by a plate equipped with new tips would be hard to perform for an automatic machine. That is to say, this would require a very accurate positioning of the holes above the locking pins that must be pressed in, and an accurate insertion of the pipette tip into the interior space that is subdivided by inner walls. This could not be managed by conventional automatic machines. Thus, it is a disadvantage of such a box that the pipette tips hit the grid-like subdivision when being inserted, and fall out of the plate. From this document, it is also known to stack several pipette tip boxes on top of each other in order to combine a larger number of pipette tips. This arrangement requires much space and material.

[0008] The sales unit with refill packages for nestable pipette tips Tip One® from the company USA Scientific comprises pipette tips, which are arranged in plates stacked on top of each other, wherein the pipette tips are inserted into each other. The lowermost plate is inserted into a box and the uppermost plate is covered with a cover. In order to remove pipette tips by means of a pipette, a plate is removed from the stack and inserted into a box. This system saves space and material. However, it is only suitable for nestable pipette tips. Nestable pipette tips are pipette tips that are nestable due to complementary inner and outer shapes, in particular inner and outer conical shapes with the same opening angle. The system is not suitable for non-nestable pipette tips, in particular for pipette tips with a cylindrical section and for filter pipette tips, because they are only partially nestable and hereby wedge together easily or hit the filter. As

a result, during removal of an upper plate, pipette tips from a lower plate would be taken along or respectively the function of the filter pipette tips would be impaired.

[0009] From US 5 366 088, a carrier for pipette tips is known, which has five racks stacked one above the other. Each rack comprises a plate with a plurality of holes for removing pipette tips. From the edges of each plate, side walls project further downwards than the pipette tips inserted therein. In a stacked arrangement, the lowermost rack is inserted into a box, wherein the side walls engage in a recess in the box and support themselves on the bottom of the box via a base plate. Five racks are stacked one above the other, wherein the lower edges of the side walls of an upper rack support themselves on the upper edge of the side walls of a lower rack. Inserted pipette tips thereby engage with each other in racks stacked one above the other. A hood-like cover element covers the uppermost rack. A plurality of pipette tips is hereby combined in a space-saving manner. For removing pipette tips by means of a pipette, individual racks can be removed from the stack and made available in the box. This carrier is suitable for nestable pipette tips. The stacking of several racks one above the other is difficult, because small displacements of pipette tips can lead to them not engaging correctly with each other. The apron permanently connected with the plate provides a rigid stack pattern and covers the view of the contents. Moreover, the apron largely prevents a sufficient sterilization.

[0010] Non-nestable pipette tips are combined in boxes stacked one above the other as described in US 6 221 317 B1.

[0011] EP 2 210 668 A2 and US 2010/0266457 A1 describe a distance piece comprising an intermediate bottom provided with a plurality of holes and distance piece side walls protruding in an apron-like manner downwards and upwards from the intermediate bottom. The distance piece rests with the lower edges of the side walls on the upper side of a lower plate which rests on a frame. Further, the distance piece rests with the upper edges of the side walls on the bottom side of an upper plate. The upper plate and the lower plate are provided with a plurality of holes. Pipette tips are inserted into the holes, the pipette tips inserted into the holes of the upper plate engaging the pipette tips inserted into the holes of the lower plate.

[0012] In the case of the sales unit with refill packages for non-nestable pipette tips Tip One® from the company USA Scientific, two plates with 96 pipette tips each are each inserted into deep-drawn double shells. Each double shell is closed by a cover. Five double shells are stacked one above the other to form one unit with a total of 960 pipette tips. This arrangement also takes up a lot of space and requires a lot of material.

[0013] US 2006/0045815 A1 describe a pipette tip grid package comprising a base including a bottom and a side wall extending from the bottom, a pipette tip grid supported by the side wall of the base and detachable therefrom and including a plurality of holes for receiving pipette tips,

and a lock mechanism coupled to the pipette tip grid and configured to externally engage with the side walls of the base. A cover is loosely placed onto the grid. The grid can be detached from the base while the cover remains in place.

[0014] US 6,534,015 B1 describes a sub-assembly consisting of a stack of racks fixed to a loader and a cover fixed via catches to the top rack in the stack. The cover serves to protect the cones (pipette tips) of that rack and to hold these cones in their orifices, so that the sub-assembly provided with the cover can be turned in any direction without running the risk of losing any cones.

[0015] The object of the invention is to create a device for the space- and material-saving stacking of non-nestable pipette tips, only partially insertable into each other, in several plates one above the other, protecting the pipette tips inserted into a plate by contamination during transfer from a stack into a box for the discharging of the pipette tips.

[0016] This objective is achieved by a device with the features of claim 1. Advantageous embodiments of the device are specified in the sub-claims.

[0017] The distance piece according to the invention for holding an upper plate with a plurality of holes for inserting pipette tips spaced from a lower plate with a plurality of holes for holding pipette tips is frame-shaped, has an intermediate bottom with a plurality of additional holes for the lateral guiding of pipette tips, can be placed onto the bottom side of the upper plate with its top side outside of the holes and can be placed with its bottom side onto the top side of the lower plate or of pipette tips held in the lower plate.

[0018] The distance piece bridges the distance between an upper and a lower plate, which is required in order to partially insert into each other pipette tips that are inserted into the upper and the lower plate, non-nestable and partially insertable into each other. The distance piece can hereby ensure that the pipette tips are only loosely inserted into each other and do not clamp together or respectively support themselves on the filters so that the upper plate can be easily removed from the distance piece without taking along pipette tips from the lower plate or respectively damaging filters.

[0019] The distance piece can be used to hold plates, which can also be used to hold conical pipette tips. As a result, uniform plates can be used for nestable and for non-nestable pipette tips. Moreover, the frame-shaped distance piece protects the pipette tips from contamination. The intermediate bottom with the additional holes for laterally guiding pipette tips holds the pipette tips in vertical alignment. Thus, the arrangement of the plate and distance piece with inserted pipette tips is easily stackable and transferrable into a box for receiving pipette tips. Since the installation height of the distance piece is dimensioned such that the pipette tips can be partially inserted into each other without clamping in each other or respectively loading a filter, material is saved in comparison with boxes stacked on top of each other and

with racks stacked on top of each other with deeply down-turned side walls. When removing pipette tips, the distance piece does not have to support the plate so that its distance piece side walls can be designed in a particularly thin and material-saving manner.

[0020] The plates stacked on top of each other with the help of the distance pieces are housable in a correspondingly small outer packaging. Further material is hereby saved. The non-nestable pipette tips are housed in one stack in the smallest space.

[0021] According to one embodiment, the distance piece has distance piece side walls opening towards the top so that several same distance pieces are stackable within each other. The stackability is advantageous for the space-saving storage before use of the distance piece and for reducing the volume of waste after discharging the pipette tips from the upper plate.

[0022] The distance piece has locking elements on the upper edge, which are lockable with locking elements on the bottom side of the upper plate. Through the locking, the upper plate is combined with the distance piece to form one unit, which can be easily removed from the stack and can be transferred into a box for the discharging of the pipette tips. The distance piece hereby aligns the pipette tips and protects them from contamination. The locking of the distance piece with the upper plate is preferably releasable so that after discharging the pipette tips the distance piece can be released from the plate. It can subsequently be stacked with further distance pieces in a space-saving manner. Furthermore, this is advantageous for separate disposal of the distance pieces and plate if they are made of different materials.

[0023] According to a further embodiment, the distance piece has locking tabs protruding outwards on the upper edge from at least two opposite distance piece side walls with insertion chamfers for locking behind locking edges on an apron-like downwardly protruding edge area of the upper plate. A simple and secure locking of distance piece and plate is hereby promoted and can also be established by an automatic machine during production.

[0024] According to a further embodiment, stiffening ribs are present between the locking tabs and distance piece side walls. The stiffening ribs protect the locking tabs from damage.

[0025] According to a further embodiment, the intermediate bottom has ribs on the top side between the holes, which extend from a distance piece side wall to the opposite distance piece side wall. The ribs reinforce the distance piece so that it can be produced with a reduced amount of material. Moreover, they facilitate the insertion of pipette tips during production.

[0026] According to a further embodiment, the intermediate bottom bears intersecting ribs. Even stronger rigidity and improved material savings are hereby achieved.

[0027] According to a further embodiment, the distance piece has guiding elements protruding downwards

and/or upwards from the intermediate bottom for lateral guiding on pipette tips, which are held by a lower and/or by an upper plate. The guiding elements stabilize a stack of several plates and at least one distance piece in that they laterally guide the distance piece on the pipette tips.

[0028] According to a further embodiment, the guiding elements comprise lower and/or upper sections of distance piece side walls, which protrude downwards and/or upwards from the intermediate bottom in order to support themselves on the top side and/or the bottom side of a lower and/or upper plate and to be guided on the periphery of pipette tips, which are inserted near the edge into the lower and/or upper plate. The invention includes embodiments, in which sections of distance piece side walls protrude from the intermediate bottom exclusively upwards or exclusively downwards. Furthermore, it includes embodiments, in which sections of distance piece side walls protrude from the intermediate bottom both upwards as well as downwards. The protruding sections of distance piece side walls are laterally supported on the pipette tips, which are inserted near the edge into the plate, on which these sections of the distance piece side walls are supported.

[0029] According to a further embodiment, the intermediate bottom bears protruding guiding elements on the bottom side between the additional holes. The intermediate bottom is supported with the edge of its additional holes on the heads of the pipette tips, which are inserted into the lower plate. The diameter of the additional holes should be dimensioned such that the pipette tips held in the upper plate can freely immerse and the round areas of the additional holes can be supported on the heads of the pipette tips held in the lower plate. The guiding elements protruding between the additional holes support the distance piece laterally on the heads of the pipette tips, which are arranged near the edge or at a further distance from the edge. These guiding elements are designed according to one embodiment as strip-like projections. Other geometries of these guiding elements are possible. For example, each guiding element can extend annularly around a hole in order to laterally support itself on the upper periphery of a pipette tip head. Guiding elements protruding between the holes make it possible to do without guiding elements protruding downward in an apron-like manner. In this embodiment, the intermediate bottom is connected with the lower edge of the side walls. Further material can hereby be saved. Furthermore, this design promotes the view of the pipette tips from the side in the stack and sterilization of the tips.

[0030] The distance piece is preferably made of plastic. It is preferably injection-molded. It is preferably made of one piece. It is preferably made of polypropylene (PP).

[0031] Furthermore, the invention comprises a carrier for pipette tips with

- a frame or box having four side walls,
- several plates with a plurality of holes for inserting

- pipette tips,
- pipette tips inserted into the holes of the plates,
- means for releasably connecting the frame or the box with a plate,
- a lower plate, which is connected via the means for releasably connecting with the frame or the box,
- a distance piece placed with the bottom side on the lower plate or on the pipette tips in the plate according to one of embodiments 1 to 10 and
- an upper plate, which is supported with the bottom side on the top side of the distance piece.

[0032] The carrier enables a space- and material-saving housing of at least two plates equipped with pipette tips. After transfer of the upper plate into a box, the pipette tips inserted into it can be discharged by means of a pipette.

[0033] According to a preferred embodiment, several arrangements of distance piece and plate are stacked on top of each other.

[0034] According to a further embodiment, the upper plates have, on an apron-like, downwardly protruding edge area, inwardly protruding locking tabs and the locking elements of the distance piece are locked with the locking tabs of the upper plate. The locking is easily established by bending the apron-like, downwardly protruding edge of the upper plates outward and is releasable by expanding this edge. The apron-like, downwardly protruding edge also stabilizes the plate.

[0035] According to a further embodiment, a hood-like cover covering the pipette tips on the top and on the side is placed on the top on the uppermost plate. The pipette tips in the uppermost plate are hereby also protected from contamination.

[0036] According to a further embodiment, the plates have an outwardly protruding, circumferential step and the cover is placed on the top side of the step of the uppermost plate. The cover is hereby advantageously guided on the uppermost plate.

[0037] According to a further embodiment, the diameter of the additional holes of the intermediate bottom is the same size or smaller than the diameter of the holes of the plate and smaller than the outer diameter of the heads of the pipette tips.

[0038] According to a further embodiment, the carrier comprises several same plates and/or several same distance pieces. The carrier can thus be assembled from uniform components.

[0039] The plates are preferably made of plastic. They are preferably injection-molded. They are preferably made of one piece. They are preferably made of polypropylene (PP).

[0040] According to a further embodiment, the carrier is surrounded by a strap and/or shrink-wrapped with a film. A stable sales unit protected from contamination is hereby provided. The outer packaging is alternatively a folding box. The band and/or the film and/or the folding box are preferably made of plastic, preferably of polypro-

pylene or another plastic, which permits autoclaving.

[0041] Finally, the invention relates to an arrangement made up of several carriers according to one of the embodiments 11 to 16, each of which are surrounded with an edge and shrink-wrapped altogether with a film. A stable sales unit protected from contamination with a particularly large number of pipette tips is hereby provided.

[0042] According to a further embodiment, the carrier comprises a frame-shaped distance piece, which is adapted to be put onto the upper side of a plate with its lower edge outside of the holes, and with its upper edge onto the lower side of a plate outside of the holes. The distance piece permits to stack several plates filled with pipette tips onto one single frame. In this, the lowermost plate filled with pipette tips is arranged directly on the frame. A distance piece is arranged on this lowermost plate, and on the distance piece in turn a plate filled with pipette tips. If need be, further distance pieces and plates are alternately disposed on this. The distance piece prevents that pipette tips arranged in different plates are pressed into each other, and that the pipette tips of a plate disposed below are lifted along when a plate is lifted.

[0043] The distance piece has an intermediate bottom with further holes. When a plate with inserted pipette tips is put onto the distance piece, the pipette tips are guided by the further holes, so that they are safely guided into the upper openings of pipette tips that are inserted into a plate that is disposed below. Preferably, these further holes are dimensioned such that they prevent pipette tips of a plate disposed below from being lifted along when a plate with inserted pipette tips is lifted. The pipette tips of the deeper disposed plate are held on the holes and fall back into the deeper disposed plate. The stack is positioned by the partly intermeshed pipette tips in plates that are disposed one above the other. A cover cap may be slackly positioned on the uppermost plate.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0044] The present invention is explained in the following, by means of the attached drawings of an example of its realisation. In the drawings show:

Fig. 1 a frame of the carrier provided with a bottom, in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side;

Fig. 2 a plate of the carrier, in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side;

Fig. 3 the same plate, in a perspective view at slant angle from the downside and from the side;

Fig. 4 the plate when put onto the frame, in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side;

Fig. 5 the frame with plate being put up and cover

cap being put up, in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side;

Fig. 6 the same arrangement, in a perspective view at slant angle from the downside and from the side; 5

Fig. 7 a distance piece of the carrier, in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side;

Fig. 8 the distance piece put onto an arrangement of a frame and a plate put up thereon, in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side; 10

Fig. 9 a frame with several plates and distance pieces being put up thereon, in a perspective view from the side; 15

Fig. 10 a frame with several plates and distance pieces being put up, wherein the plate is filled with tips and a cover cap lays on the uppermost plate, in a sectional perspective view from the side; 20

Fig. 11 the same arrangement as Fig. 5 and 6 in a vertical section;

Fig. 12 the same arrangement with swung and wedged cover cap in a vertical section;

Fig. 13 an enlarged detail of Fig. 12;

Fig. 14 arrangements according to Fig. 5 and 6, stacked one above the other in a side view. 30

Fig. 15 a distance piece with distance piece side walls protruding from the intermediate wall on both sides in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side; 35

Fig. 16 the same distance piece in a perspective view at slant angle from the downside and from the side; 40

Fig. 17 a plate locked with the same distance piece in a vertical section through the locking elements;

Fig. 18 the locking of plate and distance piece in an enlarged detail section; 45

Fig. 19 a sales unit comprising two stacks in each case with a box, distance pieces, plates and pipette tips and a strap surrounding both stacks in a sectional perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side; 50

Fig. 20 a plate with a pipette tip and a distance piece locked therewith inserted into a work box in a sectional perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side; 55

Fig. 21 another distance piece with the intermediate bottom on the lower side in a perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side;

Fig. 22 the same distance piece in a perspective view at slant angle from the downside and from the side;

Fig. 23 a sales unit comprising two stacks in each case with a box, distance pieces according to Fig. 21 and 22, plates and pipette tips and a strap surrounding both stacks in a sectional perspective view at slant angle from the upside and from the side.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0045] In the present application, the designations "up" and "down", as well as "vertical" and "horizontal" are related to an arrangement of the carrier in which the same is put onto a ground with a downside edge or a bottom of the frame, and pipette tips inserted into a plate that is put onto the frame are kept in a distance from the ground.

[0046] The examples of figures 1 to 14 are not presented as embodiments of the invention, but as examples useful for understanding of the invention.

[0047] According to Fig. 1, a frame 1 has four side walls 2, 3, 4, 5. From these, two opposing side walls 2, 4 are longer than two other opposing side walls 3, 5. The side walls 2 to 5 stand up from a bottom 6. The bottom 6 has an approximately rectangular shape. At the outside, it projects somewhat over the side walls 2 to 5. Its length and width correspond to the dimensions of the ground area according to the SBS standard.

[0048] On its upper edge 7, the frame 1 has a flat contact surface 8, which circulates along the side walls 2 to 5, parallel to the bottom 6 or horizontally, respectively. The contact surface 8 is somewhat widened at the corners between the side walls 2 to 5. In each corner, a column 9 projects vertically from the contact surface 8, which has conical base section 10, a cylindrical centre section 11 and a conical end section 12.

[0049] At the outside, a step 14 circulates on the upper edge 7 on the topside of an upper projection 13, which is also formed flat and parallel to the bottom 6. The upper projection 13 is arranged somewhat below the contact surface 8. At the outside, the step 14 is limited by a circumferential, vertically aligned edge surface 15 of the upper projection 13. Between the upper projection 13 and the contact surface 8, positioning noses 16 project from the frame 1 towards the outside.

[0050] The upper projection 13 and the bottom 6 projecting at the downside limit a circumferential waistline 17 of the frame 1. On the inner sides, the side walls 2 to 5 feature ribs 18. These extend from the bottom 6 up to the upper edge 7.

[0051] The bottom 6 is a hollow bottom with a circumferential downwardly projecting enclosure 19, whose underside is flat and forms a standing surface. Further, ribs 20 running in parallel to its transversal side edges project

from the underside of the bottom 6 (compare Fig. 6).

[0052] The frame 1 can be made from plural parts. Preferably it is made in one single piece. Further preferably, it is made of plastic material. It is preferably injection moulded. In order to create the waistline 17, the frame 1 has to be injection moulded by means of a slider tool.

[0053] As materials, polypropylene (PP), polycarbonate (PC), acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene-copolymer (ABS), polystyrene (PS) or a metal (aluminium for instance, if need be anodized) are contemplated in particular. Polypropylene is particularly cost-saving. Polycarbonate and metal have the advantage to be treatable in an autoclave, and thus to be re-usable. The frame is preferably made of polypropylene. Unfilled or filled (with glass fibres for instance) polypropylene may be used. Filled polypropylene has a higher tenacity than unfilled polypropylene.

[0054] According to Fig. 2 and 3, a plate 21 has a substantially board-shaped base body 22 with a plurality of holes 23, which extend from the underside 24 to the upside 25 of the base body 22.

[0055] The holes 23 are arranged regularly in rows and columns of a matrix. In the example there are 96.

[0056] The plate 21 has two short edges 26, 27 and two long edges 28, 29. At each of the long edges 28, 29 it has one board-shaped gripping edge 30, 31 that projects over the upper side 25.

[0057] On the downside 24, the board shaped base body 22 has a further flat contact surface 32 that circulates on the edge. The further contact surface 32 is arranged somewhat above the lower openings of the holes 23. In the corners of the board-shaped base body 22, it has widenings in which through bores 33 are arranged.

[0058] Each bore 33 has a conical section 34 at the downside, and adjoining to this a cylindrical section 35. The dimensions of the bores 33 are selected such that the columns 9 are insertable with a clearance. The conical sections 34 form insertion slopes which facilitate the insertion of the columns 9 into the bores 33. Moreover, the conical end sections 12 of the columns 9 facilitate the insertion into the bores 33.

[0059] In the example, the plate-shaped base body 22 is realised as a quiver plate. In the same, the holes 23 are formed in quiver- or sleeve shaped structures, which are laterally connected by bridges and on the upper edge by a plate, and are enclosed by a circumferential edge. Instead, the plate 21 may also be formed as a bridge plate, wherein a thin plate with a plurality of holes 23 features bridges that enclose the holes at its downside. Realisations as a quiver- or bridge plate are material saving and stable and laterally support the pipette tips that are inserted into the holes. Instead, the plate can also be realised massively, i.e. without cavities outside of the holes 23 and bores 33.

[0060] The plate 21 is preferably made in one single piece. Further preferably it is made of plastic material. It is preferably injection moulded. The plastic materials polypropylene (PP), polycarbonate (PC), acrylonitrile-

butadiene-styrene-copolymer (ABS) and polystyrene (PS) can be used in particular. The frame 1 and the plate 21 can be made of the same or of different materials. For instance, the frame 1 can be made in a cost-saving way of polypropylene, and the plate 21 of polycarbonate, so that the plate is particularly stable. A further example is a frame 1 of polycarbonate adapted for autoclave treatment, and a cost-saving plate 21 of polypropylene, wherein a sufficient stability can be made sure by the structure of the plate 21. Polypropylene is preferably used for the plate 21.

[0061] According to Fig. 4 and 11, the plate 21 is put onto the upper edge 7 of the frame 1. The further contact surface 32 (see Fig. 2) rests on the contact surface 8 (see Fig. 1), and the columns 9 grasp into the bores 33. For the sake of illustration, in Fig. 4 a pipette tip 36 is set into a hole 23 of the plate 21 from out the upside. The pipette tip 36 has a widening 37 at its upper side, which prevents it from falling through the hole 23.

[0062] When the lugs of a metering tool are pressed into the upper openings of eight pipette tips, the plate 21 is loaded with a force of about 100 to 400 Newton, preferably 200 to 300 Newton, about 240 Newton in particular. Even when made of polypropylene, the plate 21 resists these loads due to its structure and its support via circumferential contact surfaces 32 without disadvantageous bending. The frame 1, even when made of polypropylene, is also not overburdened in this.

[0063] When the plate 21 is lifted through pipette tips 36 that hook itself up in the removal of pipette tips 36, the plate 21 gets tilt or is inclined, respectively. This is due to the asymmetrical weight distribution of the plate 21 with respect to the hooked-up pipette tips 36. As a consequence, the columns 9 wedge themselves in the bores 33 (compare Fig. 12 and 13). Through this, the plate 21 is stripped off by the lifted pipette tips 36 and falls back into the starting position.

[0064] The shape of the columns 9 and the bores 33 as well as the clearance between them facilitate to put the plate 21 onto the frame 1. However, the plate 21 is safely held on the frame 1. A safe transportation can be performed by a gripping tool of an automatic machine. The gripping tool may enclose the frame 1 on the outer sides of opposing side walls 2, 4 or 3, 5 on the waistline 17. The outwardly projecting projection 13 and the bottom 6 prevent the gripping tool from slipping through.

[0065] The edges 26 to 29 of the plate 21 can be accessed from the outside and may be easily grasped by a gripping tool. The gripping tool catches preferably on the longer edges 28, 29, which are provided with the upside-projecting gripping edge 30, 31. A gripping edge may have other elements in addition, like piercings, deepenings, elevations and so on, which permit gripping with positive fit, by gripping arms in particular.

[0066] Further, the plate 21 can be grasped manually, in particular on the edges 28, 29 provided with the projecting gripping edge 30, 31. The gripping edge 30, 31 projecting beyond the upper side of the pipette tips 36

prevents contaminations of inserted pipette tips when this is done.

[0067] According to Fig. 5 and 6, a cover cap 38 has a flat cover cap bottom 39 and cover cap side walls 40 to 43 that laterally project downward from it. The opposing short cover cap side walls 41, 42 each have a deepening 44, 45. The cover cap side walls 40 to 43 sit on the step 14 with their lower edge 46. They are guided on the positioning noses 16 at their inner sides. The cover cap 38 covers up a plate 21 with inserted pipette tips 36 that is put onto the frame 1. The outer sides of the cover cap side walls 40 to 43 and the edge surface 15 are aligned with each other and can be used for attaching an adhesive tape, which sealingly connects the cover cap 38 with the frame 1.

[0068] A gripping tool can grasp into the deepenings 44, 45, in order to pull off the cover cap 38 automatically from the frame 1. Further, on a narrow side 26, 27 of the plate 21, a tag can be read through the deepenings from the outside. The cover cap 38 is preferably made of a transparent material for this purpose.

[0069] On the upper side of its bottom 39, the cover cap 38 has upwardly projecting ribs 39.1 to 39.4 on its corner region. Further, it has recesses 41.1, 43.1 on the upper edges of its cover cap side walls 41, 43. A frame 1 can be put onto the upper side of a top lid 38 with its bottom 6. At the inside, the enclosure 19 of the bottom 6 is guided on the ribs 39.1 to 39.4. Blade-shaped separation tools 43.2 can be inserted into the recesses 41.1, 43.1, in order to separate frames 1 and cover caps 38 that are arranged one above the other in a stack (compare Fig. 14).

[0070] The cover cap 38 is preferably made in one single piece. Plastic materials are used preferably. It is preferably injection moulded. For instance, the plastic materials polycarbonate (PC), polystyrene (PS), polypropylene (PP) or acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene-copolymer (ABS) can be used. Preferably used is polycarbonate or polystyrene, because these materials permit the production of a cover cap 38 that is as clear as glass.

[0071] According to Fig. 7, the carrier features a frame-shaped distance piece 47. The same has four vertical distance piece side walls 48 to 51, which are connected to each other on the corners. Further, the distance piece has an intermediate bottom 52 with 24, 48, 96, 383 or 1.536 further through holes 53, which are in a matrix arrangement corresponding to the holes 23 of the plate 21.

[0072] The distance piece 47 is preferably made in one single piece. Plastic materials are used preferably. It is preferably injection moulded. But it may also be produced as a deep-drawn piece. For instance, the plastic materials polypropylene (PP), polystyrene (PS), polycarbonate (PC), or acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene-copolymer (ABS) can be used. Preferably used is polystyrene, because it is particularly cost-saving.

[0073] According to Fig. 8, the distance piece 47 is put with its lower edge 54 onto the upper side of a plate 21 which is put onto a frame 1.

[0074] According to Fig. 9, a further plate 21 is put onto the upper edge 55 of the distance piece 47, and onto this plate a further distance piece 47 and so on.

[0075] Pipette tips 36 that are inserted into the plate 21 are laterally guided by the further holes 33 of distance pieces 47 which are arranged in the intermediate bottoms below. Through this, erroneous alignments of pipette tips 36 in the automatic or manual stacking of filled plates 21 are avoided. When the plate 21 is lifted, the intermediate bottom 52 prevents pipette tips 36 from being taken along by plate 21 which disposed below. In order to cover up the arrangement, a cover cap 38 may be slackly put onto the uppermost plate 21 (compare Fig. 10).

[0076] According to Fig. 15 and 16, another distance piece 56 according to the invention has four distance piece side walls 57, 58, 59, 60 arranged in a frame-like manner. They are inter-connected at the corners and open towards the top.

[0077] Furthermore, the distance piece 56 has an intermediate bottom 61, which has a plurality of additional holes 62, which are arranged in rows and columns. There are preferably a total of 96 additional holes in 8 rows and 12 columns. The intermediate bottom is connected on its outer edge as one piece with the side walls 57, 58, 59, 60. The base area of the intermediate bottom 61 preferably corresponds to the base area of a microtiter plate according to the SBS standard.

[0078] The intermediate bottom 61 is arranged at a distance both from the lower edge 63 as well as from the upper edge 64 of the side walls 57 to 60.

[0079] The intermediate bottom 61 bears a grid of intersecting ribs 65, 66, each of which extend from a side wall 57, 58 to the opposite side wall 59, 60.

[0080] Parallel to the rows with additional holes 62, a single rib 65 runs in the middle over the intermediate bottom 61 between the additional holes 62. Parallel to the columns with additional holes 62, three ribs 66 run at even distances between the additional holes 62 over the intermediate bottom.

[0081] Next to the upper edge of the ribs 65, 66, the distance piece side walls 57 to 60 have an expansion 67 on the top. A step 68 runs there on the inside. A same distance piece 56 with the lower edge area of its distance piece side walls 57 to 60 is insertable into the expansion 67.

[0082] The distance piece 56 has respectively two outwardly protruding locking tabs 69, 70, 71, 72 on the upper edge 64 on the long side walls 57, 59. These locking tabs have a trapezoidal contour in the horizontal plane, wherein they taper outwards. On the top side, the locking tabs bear insertion chamfers 73, each of which tilt upwards and towards the center of the distance piece. Stiffening ribs 74 are located on the bottom side between the locking tabs and the long side walls.

[0083] The two short side walls 58, 60 have outwardly protruding pockets 75, 76 on the upper edge 64 in the area of the expansion 67.

[0084] According to Fig. 17 and 18, a plate 77 has a

substantially plate-shaped base body 78 with a plurality of holes 79, which extend from the bottom side 80 to the top side 81 of the base body 78.

[0085] The holes 79 are also arranged regularly in rows and columns. In the example, there are 96 holes in eight rows and twelve columns. The base area of the plate 77 corresponds to the base area of a microtiter plate according to the SBS standard.

[0086] A circumferential edge area 82 protrudes from the lower edge of the plate-shaped base body 78 in an apron-like manner to the side and downwards. Starting from the lower edge, the edge area 82 first extends horizontally to the side and then subsequently vertically upwards. The top side of the edge area 82 forms a step 83 onto which a hood-like cover is placeable from above.

[0087] Additional locking tabs 84 protrude inwardly from the inside of the downwardly protruding part of the edge area 82. The additional locking tabs 84 are located for production reasons below or respectively next to breakouts 85 in the connection area of the horizontal and vertical section of the edge area 82.

[0088] The additional locking tabs 84 are lockable with the locking tabs 69, 70, 71, 72 of the distance piece 56. For this, the additional locking tabs are pressed onto the insertion chamfers 73 of the locking tabs 69 to 72 until they snap over the outer edge of the locking tabs 69 to 72 and engage below them. In this position, the upper edge 64 of the side walls 57 to 60 lies on the bottom side 80 of the plate-shaped base body 78 and is supported on it. The locking connection is easily releasable outwardly in a targeted manner by bending the edge area 82.

[0089] Pipette tips can be inserted into the locked unit made up of plate 77 and distance piece 56, wherein each pipette tip 86 is supported on the top with a head 87 on the edge of the hole 79 of the plate 77 and is guided on the bottom on the periphery in an additional whole 62 of the distance piece 56 arranged below it.

[0090] Fig. 19 shows an Arrangement of two stacks with a total of 960 pipette tips, wherein only a few pipette tips 86 are shown as an example due to overview reasons. Each pipette tip 86 has cylindrical and conical sections. As a result, only a short, lower section of a pipette tip 86 can be pushed into a short, upper section of a same pipette tip 86.

[0091] Each stack 88.1, 88.2 has a crate or box 89 with a bottom wall 90 and four side walls 91 on the bottom. On the upper edge, each box 89 has a circumferential resting edge 92. A plate 77 is placed with the edge area 82 on the resting edge 92 so that it overlaps the resting edge 92 and the outsides.

[0092] A locked arrangement made up of plate 77 and distance piece 56 according to Fig. 17 and 18 is placed on the lower plate 77, wherein the distance piece 56 with the lower edges 63 of its side walls 57 to 60 is supported on the top side 81 of the lower plate 77. The insides of the side walls 57 to 60 of the distance piece 56 are guided laterally on the heads 87 of the outer pipette tips 86. The pipette tips 86 held in the upper plate 77 engage with

their lower ends in the upper ends of the pipette tips 86 held in the lower plate 77.

[0093] Additional arrangements made up of interlocking plates 77 and distance pieces 56 are placed on the previously described arrangement, wherein respectively the lower edge 63 of the distance piece 56 is supported on the top side 81 of the lower plate 77 and is guided on the inside on the heads 87 of the pipette tips 86 in the lower plate 77. A hood-like cover 93 is placed on the uppermost plate 77 of each stack 88.1, 88.2. It is supported with the lower edges of its circumferential side walls on the step 83 of the uppermost plate 77. Two stacks 88.1, 88.2 are placed next to each other and enclosed by a strap 94 in order to hold this arrangement together. In the example, the two boxes 89 are originally separate. But it is also possible to provide two boxes 89 interconnected as one piece in order to further stabilize the arrangement.

[0094] Furthermore, the entire arrangement is enclosed in a shrink-wrap film, which further reinforces and protects the arrangement from contamination.

[0095] This packaging unit 95 is opened for the discharging of pipette tips. An individual refill package consisting of plate 77, interlocked distance piece 56 and pipette tips 86 is removed from above and transferred to a work box 96. This is shown in Fig. 20.

[0096] The work box 96 also has a bottom wall 97 and four upwards projecting side walls 98. On the inner periphery of the side walls, a resting edge 100 runs at a short distance from the upper opening of a receiver 99 of the work box 96. The plate 77 is supported with the lower edge area 82 on the resting edge 100. The distance piece 56 protrudes into the receiver 99 of the work box 96.

[0097] The work box 96 also has a bottom wall 97 and four upwards projecting side walls 98. On the inner periphery of the side walls, a resting edge 100 runs at a short distance from the upper opening of a receiver 99 of the work box 96. The plate 77 is supported with the lower edge area 82 on the resting edge 100. The distance piece 56 protrudes into the receiver 99 of the work box 96.

[0098] The pipette tips 86 are removable from this arrangement individually or in groups by means of a pipette. For this, the pipette with at least one conical or cylindrical nose is pressed into the upper opening of at least one pipette tip 86 and the pressed on pipette tip 86 is raised by means of the pipette. After all pipette tips 86 have been used up, plate 77 and distance piece 56 can be removed from the work box 96 and can be disposed of separately from each other.

[0099] Compared to the distance piece 56 described above, the distance piece 101 in Fig. 21 and 22 has an intermediate bottom 61, which is connected with the lower edge 63 of the side walls 57 to 60. As a result, the side walls 57 to 60 do not protrude downwards from the intermediate bottom 61.

[0100] The top side of the intermediate bottom 61 is in turn provided with ribs 65, 66 for stiffening. An expansion 67 above the upper edge of the rib 66 only has the short

side walls 58, 60.

[0101] The intermediate bottom 61 has downwardly protruding guiding elements 102 in the form of strip-like projections on the bottom side between the additional holes 62. They extend respectively starting from the edge of the intermediate bottom 61 along three additional neighboring holes 62. An extension along a greater or smaller number of additional holes 62 is also possible. Two guiding elements 102 emanate from each side. They serve to guide on the edge the heads 87 of pipette tips 86, which are provided in a plate 77 below the distance piece 56.

[0102] Fig. 23 shows a packaging unit with two stacks 88.1, 88.2. Each stack 88.1, 88.2 comprises a box 89, onto which a plate 77 with the edge area 82 is placed. Pipette tips 86, which engage in the receiver of the box 89, are held in the plate 77. Several arrangements made up of the distance piece 101 according to Fig. 21 and 22 and an interlocked plate 77 is placed on this arrangement. The distance piece 101 is supported respectively with the lower edge of its additional holes 62 on the top side of one of the heads 87 of pipette tips 86, which are held on a lower plate 77. Respectively, pipette tips 86, which partially engage in the pipette tips 86, which are held in the lower plate 77, are held in the upper plate 77. Each stack 88.1, 88.2 comprises distance piece 56 and five plates 77. A hood-like cover 93, which is supported on the step 83 of the uppermost plate, is placed on the uppermost plate 77.

[0103] Both stacks 88.1, 88.2 are held together and stabilized by a strap 94. The lowermost boxes 89 can in turn be separated boxes or boxes that are combined together as one piece. The entire arrangement is surrounded by shrink-wrap film.

[0104] After opening the packaging and removing the cover 93, individual arrangements can in turn be removed from above from plate 77 and distance piece 56 and inserted into a work box 96. Individual pipette tips 86 are removed from the work box 96. After a plate 77 has been used up, it can in turn be separated from distance piece 56 and the two parts can be disposed of separately from each other.

Claims

1. A distance piece holding an upper plate (77) spaced from a lower plate (77), the upper plate (77) comprising a plurality of holes (79), pipette tips (86) being inserted into said holes (79), the lower plate (77) comprising a plurality of holes (79), pipette tips (86) being inserted into said holes (79), wherein the distance piece (56, 101) is frame-shaped, has an intermediate bottom (61) with a plurality of additional holes (62) for the lateral guiding of pipette tips (86) inserted into the holes (79) of the upper plate (77), wherein the distance piece is placed onto the bottom side (80) of the upper plate (77) with the top side (64)

of the distance piece (56, 101) outside of the holes (79) in the upper plate (77), **characterized in that** the distance piece has locking elements (69 to 72) on the upper edge, which are lockable with locking elements (84) on the bottom side of the upper plate (77), and the distance piece (56, 101) is placed with its bottom side onto the top side of the lower plate (77) or onto pipette tips (86) held in the lower plate (77), respectively.

2. The distance piece according to claim 1, which has distance piece side walls (57 to 60) opening towards the top such that several same distance pieces (56) are stackable into each other.
3. The distance piece according to claim 1 or 2, which has on the upper edge (64) locking tabs (69 to 72) with insertion chamfers (73) protruding outward from at least two opposite distance piece side walls (57, 59) for locking behind locking edges on an apron-like downwardly protruding edge area (82) of the upper plate (77).
4. The distance piece according to claim 3, in which stiffening ribs (74) are arranged between the locking tabs (69 to 72) and distance piece side walls (57 to 60).
5. The distance piece according to any of claims 1 to 4, in which the intermediate bottom (61) bears ribs (65, 66) on the top side between the holes, which extend from a distance piece side wall (57 through 60) to the opposite distance piece side wall (57 to 60).
6. The distance piece according to any of claims 1 to 5, in which the intermediate bottom (61) bears intersecting ribs (65, 66).
7. The distance piece according to any of claims 1 to 5, which has guiding elements (57 to 60; 102) protruding downwards and/or upwards from the intermediate bottom (61) for the lateral guiding on pipette tips (86), which are held in a lower and/or upper plate (77).
8. The distance piece according claim 7, in which the guiding elements comprise lower sections of distance piece side walls (57 through 60), which protrude in an apron-like manner upwards from the intermediate bottom (61) in order to support themselves on the bottom side (80) of an upper plate (77) and to be guided on the inside on the periphery of pipette tips (86), which are inserted near the edge into the upper plate (77).
9. The distance piece according to any of claims 1 to 8, in which the intermediate bottom (61) bears guiding elements (102) protruding on the bottom side be-

tween the holes (62).

10. The distance piece according to claim 9, in which the guiding elements (102) are strip-like projections.

11. A carrier for pipette tips with

- a frame or box (89) having four side walls,
- several plates (77) with a plurality of holes (79) for inserting pipette tips (86),
- pipette tips (86) inserted into the holes (79) of the plates (77),
- means for releasably connecting (82, 92) the frame or box (89) with a plate (77),
- a lower plate (77), which is connected via the means for releasably connecting with the frame or the box (89), and
- a distance piece (56, 101) according to any of claims 1 to 10, and
- an upper plate (77) which is supported with a bottom side on the top side of the distance piece (56, 101).

12. The carrier according to claim 11, in which several arrangements made up of distance piece (56) and plate (77) are stacked on top of each other.

13. The carrier according to claim 11 or 12, in which the upper plates (77) have on an apron-like, downwardly protruding edge area (82) inwardly protruding additional locking tabs (84) and the locking tabs (69 to 72) of the distance piece (56) are locked with the additional locking tabs (84).

14. The carrier according to any of claims 11 to 13, in which a hood-like cover (93) covering the pipette tips on the top and on the side is placed on the top on the uppermost plate (77).

15. The carrier according to any of claims 11 to 14, in which the plates (77) have an outwardly protruding, circumferential step (83) and the cover (93) is placed on the top side of the step (83) of the uppermost plate (77).

16. The carrier according to any of claims 11 to 15, which is surrounded by a strap (94) and/or is shrink-wrapped with a film.

Patentansprüche

1. Abstandshalter, der eine obere Platte (77) auf Abstand von einer unteren Platte (77) hält, wobei die obere Platte (77) eine Vielzahl von Löchern (79) umfasst, wobei Pipettenspitzen (86) in die Löcher (79) eingesetzt sind, die untere Platte (77) eine Vielzahl von Löchern (79) umfasst, wobei Pipettenspitzen

(86) in die Löcher (79) eingesetzt sind, wobei der Abstandshalter (56, 101) rahmenförmig ist, einen Zwischenboden (61) mit einer Vielzahl von weiteren Löchern (62) zur seitlichen Führung von Pipettenspitzen (86) aufweist, die in die Löcher (79) der oberen Platte (77) eingesetzt sind, wobei der Abstandshalter auf der Unterseite (80) der oberen Platte (77) mit der Oberseite (64) des Abstandshalters (56, 101) außerhalb der Löcher (79) in der oberen Platte (77) platziert ist, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** der Abstandshalter Verriegelungselemente (69 bis 72) auf dem oberen Rand aufweist, die mit Verriegelungselementen (84) auf der Unterseite der oberen Platte (77) verriegelt werden können, und der Abstandshalter (56, 101) mit seiner Unterseite auf der Oberseite der unteren Platte (77) bzw. auf Pipettenspitzen (86), die in der unteren Platte (77) gehalten werden, platziert ist.

2. Abstandshalter nach Anspruch 1, der Abstandshalter-Seitenwände (57 bis 60) aufweist, die sich nach oben hin derart öffnen, dass mehrere gleiche Abstandshalter (56) ineinander stapelbar sind.

3. Abstandshalter nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, der am oberen Rand (64) Verriegelungslaschen (69 bis 72) mit Einführungsfasen (73) aufweist, die von mindestens zwei gegenüberliegenden Abstandshalter-Seitenwänden (57, 59) aus zum Verriegeln hinter den Verriegelungskanten auf einer schürzenartigen nach unten hervorspringenden Randbereich (82) der oberen Platte (77) nach außen hervorspringen.

4. Abstandshalter nach Anspruch 3, in dem Verstärkungsrippen (74) zwischen den Verriegelungslaschen (69 bis 72) und Abstandshalter-Seitenwänden (57 bis 60) angeordnet sind.

5. Abstandshalter nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, in dem der Zwischenboden (61) Rippen (65, 66) auf der Oberseite zwischen den Löchern trägt, die sich von einer Abstandshalter-Seitenwand (57 bis 60) bis zur gegenüberliegenden Abstandshalter-Seitenwand (57 bis 60) erstrecken.

6. Abstandshalter nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, in dem der Zwischenboden (61) sich schneidende Rippen (65, 66) trägt.

7. Abstandshalter nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, der Führungselemente (57 bis 60; 102) aufweist, die vom Zwischenboden (61) aus für die seitliche Führung an Pipettenspitzen (86) nach unten und/oder nach oben hervorspringen, die in einer unteren und/oder oberen Platte (77) gehalten werden.

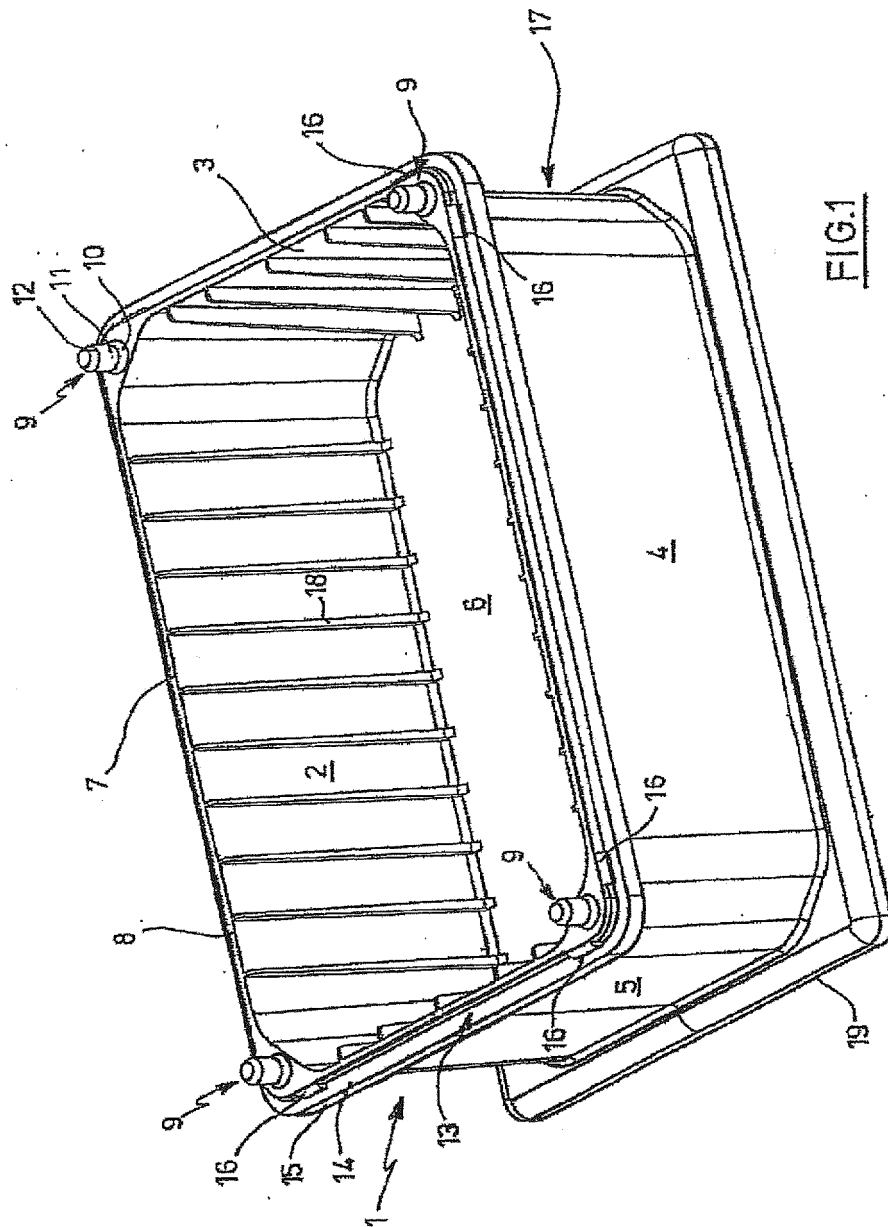
8. Abstandshalter nach Anspruch 7, in dem die Führungselemente untere Abschnitte von Abstandshal-

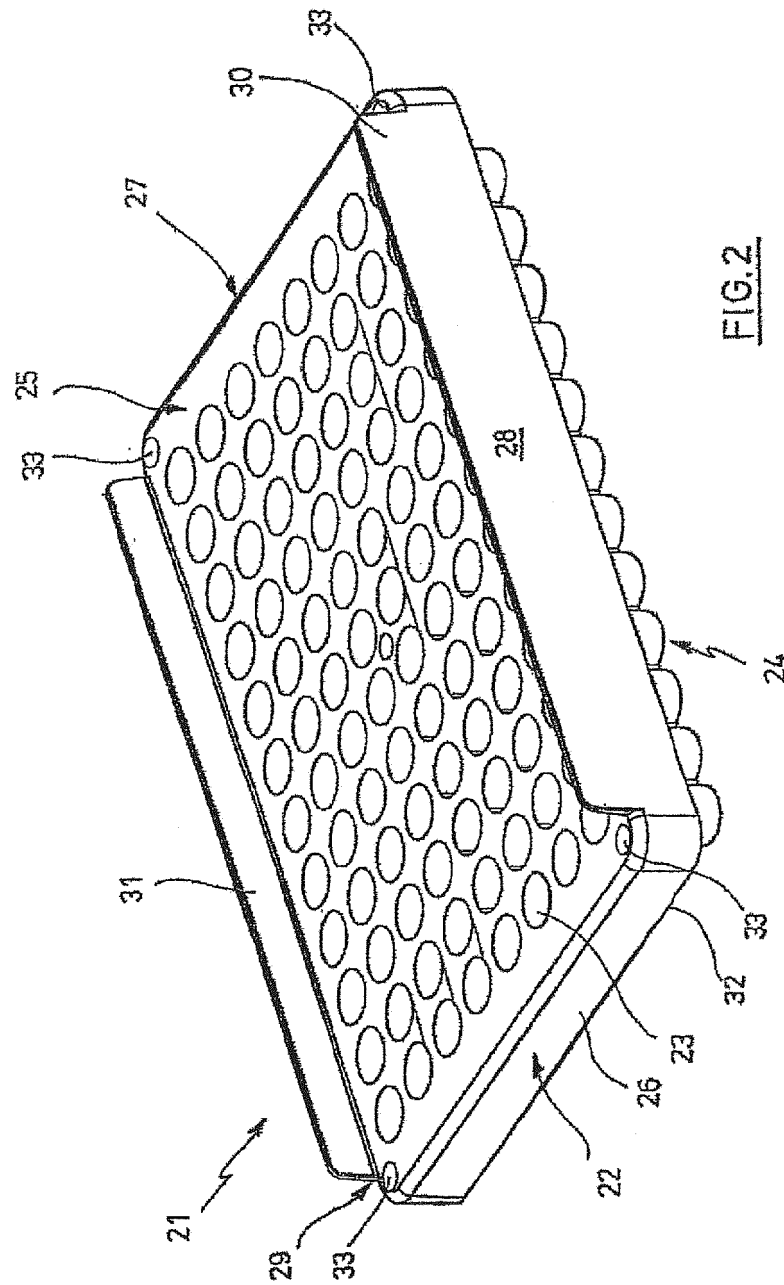
- ter-Seitenwänden (57 bis 60) umfassen, die in einer schürzenartigen Weise vom Zwischenboden (61) nach oben hervorspringen, um sich auf der Bodenseite (80) einer oberen Platte (77) abzustützen und an der Innenseite am Umfang der Pipettenspitzen (86) geführt zu werden, die in der Nähe des Randes in die obere Platte (77) eingesetzt sind.
9. Abstandshalter nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 8, in dem der Zwischenboden (61) Führungselemente (102) abstützt, die auf der Bodenseite zwischen den Löchern (62) hervorspringen.
10. Abstandshalter nach Anspruch 9, in dem die Führungselemente (102) streifenförmige Vorsprünge sind.
11. Träger für Pipettenspitzen mit
- einem Rahmen oder Kasten (89), der vier Seitenwände aufweist,
 - mehreren Platten (77) mit einer Vielzahl von Löchern (79) zum Einsetzen von Pipettenspitzen (86),
 - Pipettenspitzen (86), die in die Löcher (79) der Platten (77) eingesetzt sind,
 - Mittel zum lösbaren Verbinden (82, 92) des Rahmens oder Kastens (89) mit einer Platte (77),
 - einer unteren Platte (77), die über die Mittel zur lösbaren Verbindung mit dem Rahmen oder dem Kasten (89) verbunden ist,
 - einem Abstandshalter (56, 101) nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 10, und
 - einer oberen Platte (77), die mit einer Bodenseite auf der Oberseite des Abstandshalters (56, 101) abgestützt ist.
12. Träger nach Anspruch 11, wobei mehrere Anordnungen, die aus dem Abstandshalter (56) und der Platte (77) gebildet werden, aufeinander gestapelt sind.
13. Träger nach Anspruch 11 oder 12, in dem die oberen Platten (77) auf einem schürzenartigen, nach unten hervorspringenden Randbereich (82) nach innen hervorspringende zusätzliche Verriegelungslaschen (84) aufweisen und die Verriegelungslaschen (69 bis 72) des Abstandshalters (56) mit den zusätzlichen Verriegelungslaschen (84) verriegelt sind.
14. Träger nach einem der Ansprüche 11 bis 13, in dem eine haubenartige Abdeckung (93), die die Pipettenspitzen oben und auf der Seite abdeckt, auf der Oberseite der obersten Platte (77) platziert ist.
15. Träger nach einem der Ansprüche 11 bis 14, wobei die Platten (77) eine nach außen hervorspringende umlaufende Stufe (83) haben, und die Abdeckung (93) auf der Oberseite der Stufe (83) der obersten Platte (77) platziert ist.
16. Träger nach einem der Ansprüche 11 bis 15, der von einem Gurt (94) umgeben und/oder in Schrumpffolie verpackt ist.

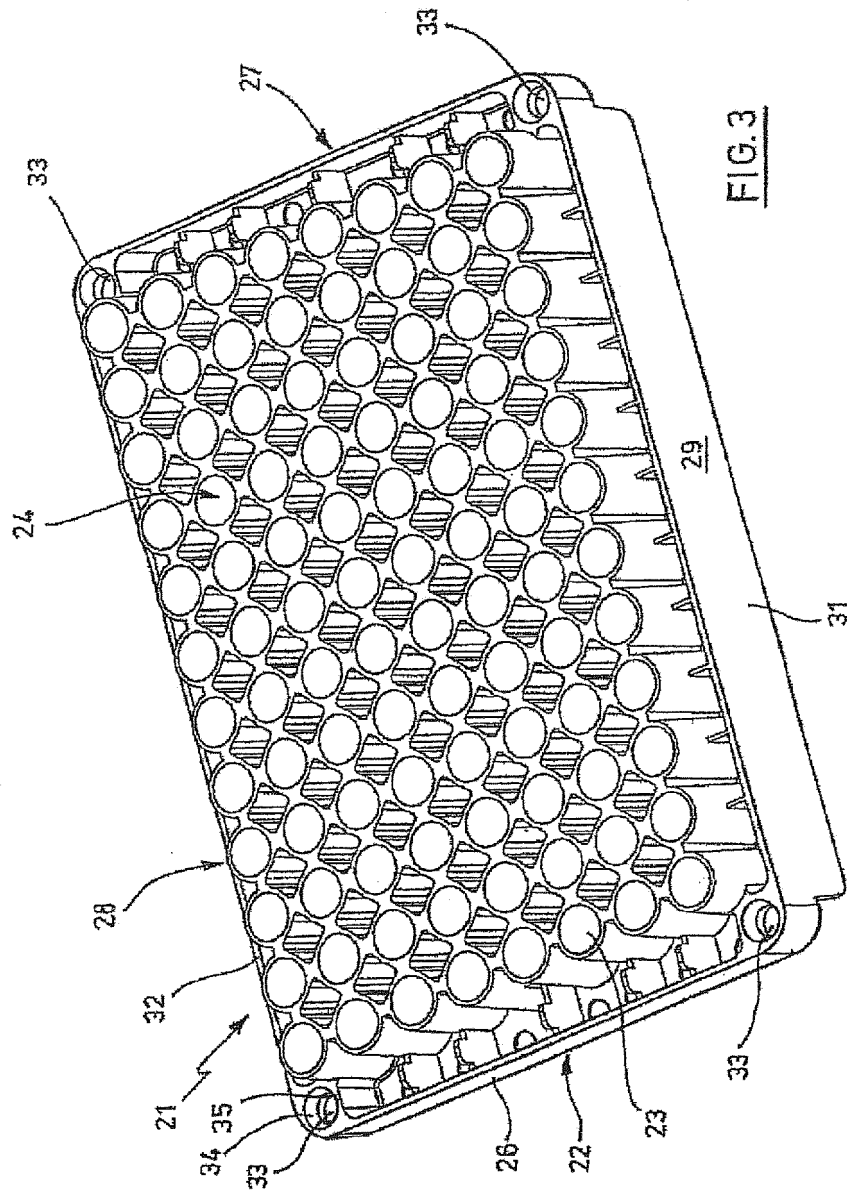
10 Revendications

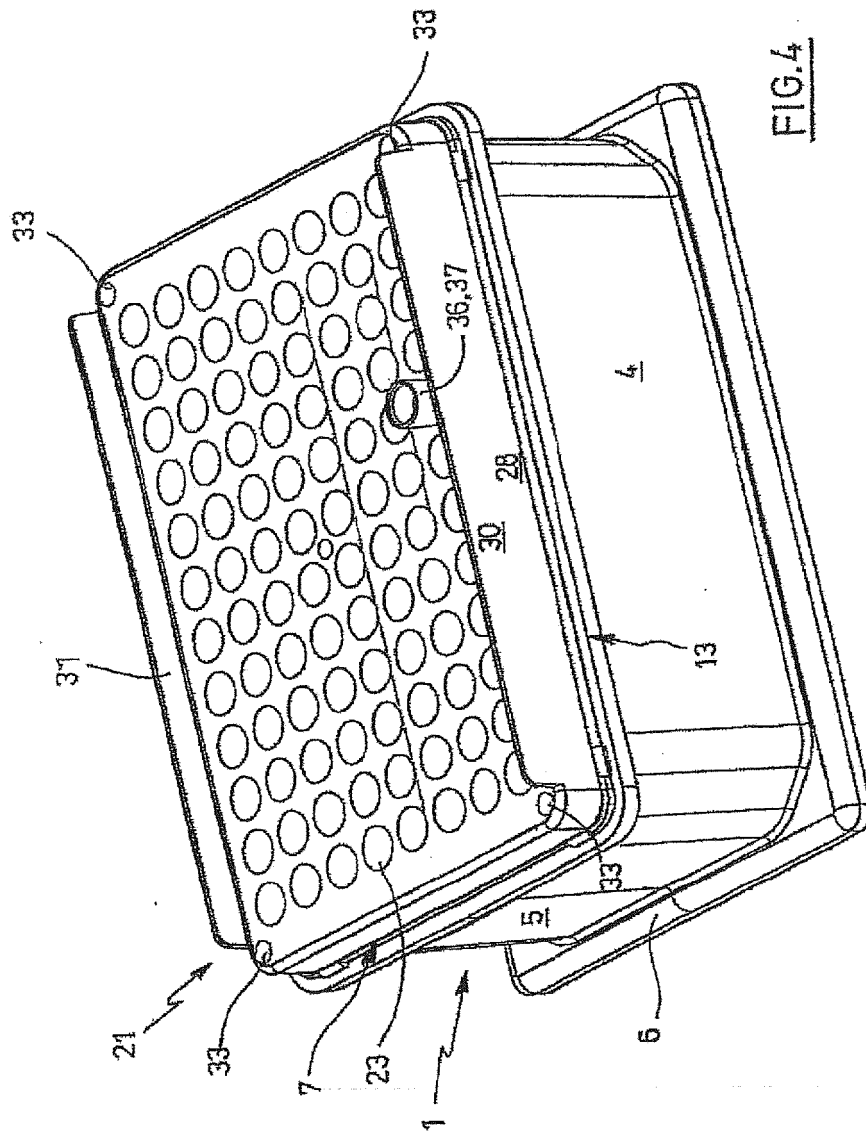
1. Pièce d'écartement maintenant une plaque supérieure (77) espacée d'une plaque inférieure (77), la plaque supérieure (77) comportant une pluralité de trous (79), des embouts de pipette (86) étant insérés dans lesdits trous (79), la plaque inférieure (77) comportant une pluralité de trous (79), des embouts de pipette (86) étant insérés dans lesdits trous (79), dans laquelle la pièce d'écartement (56, 101) est en forme de cadre, a un fond intermédiaire (61) avec une pluralité de trous (62) supplémentaires pour le guidage latéral d'embouts de pipette (86) insérés dans les trous (79) de la plaque supérieure (77), dans laquelle la pièce d'écartement est placée sur le côté de fond (80) de la plaque supérieure (77), le côté de dessus (64) de la pièce d'écartement (56, 101) étant à l'extérieur des trous (79) dans la plaque supérieure (77), **caractérisée en ce que** la pièce d'écartement a des éléments de verrouillage (69 à 72) sur le bord supérieur, qui sont verrouillables avec des éléments de verrouillage (84) sur le côté de fond de la plaque supérieure (77), et la pièce d'écartement (56, 101) est respectivement placée avec son côté de fond sur le côté de dessus de la plaque inférieure (77) ou sur des embouts de pipette (86) maintenus dans la plaque inférieure (77).
2. Pièce d'écartement selon la revendication 1, laquelle a des parois latérales (57 à 60) de pièce d'écartement s'ouvrant vers le dessus, de sorte que plusieurs pièces d'écartement (56) identiques soient empilables les unes sur les autres.
3. Pièce d'écartement selon la revendication 1 ou 2, laquelle a, sur le bord supérieur (64), des languettes de verrouillage (69 à 72) avec des chanfreins d'insertion (73) faisant saillie vers l'extérieur à partir d'au moins deux parois latérales (57, 59) de pièce d'écartement opposées pour un verrouillage derrière des bords de verrouillage sur une zone de bord (82) en forme de tablier faisant saillie vers le bas de la plaque supérieure (77).
4. Pièce d'écartement selon la revendication 3, dans laquelle des nervures de raidissement (74) sont agencées entre les languettes de verrouillage (69 à 72) et des parois latérales (57 à 60) de pièce d'écartement.

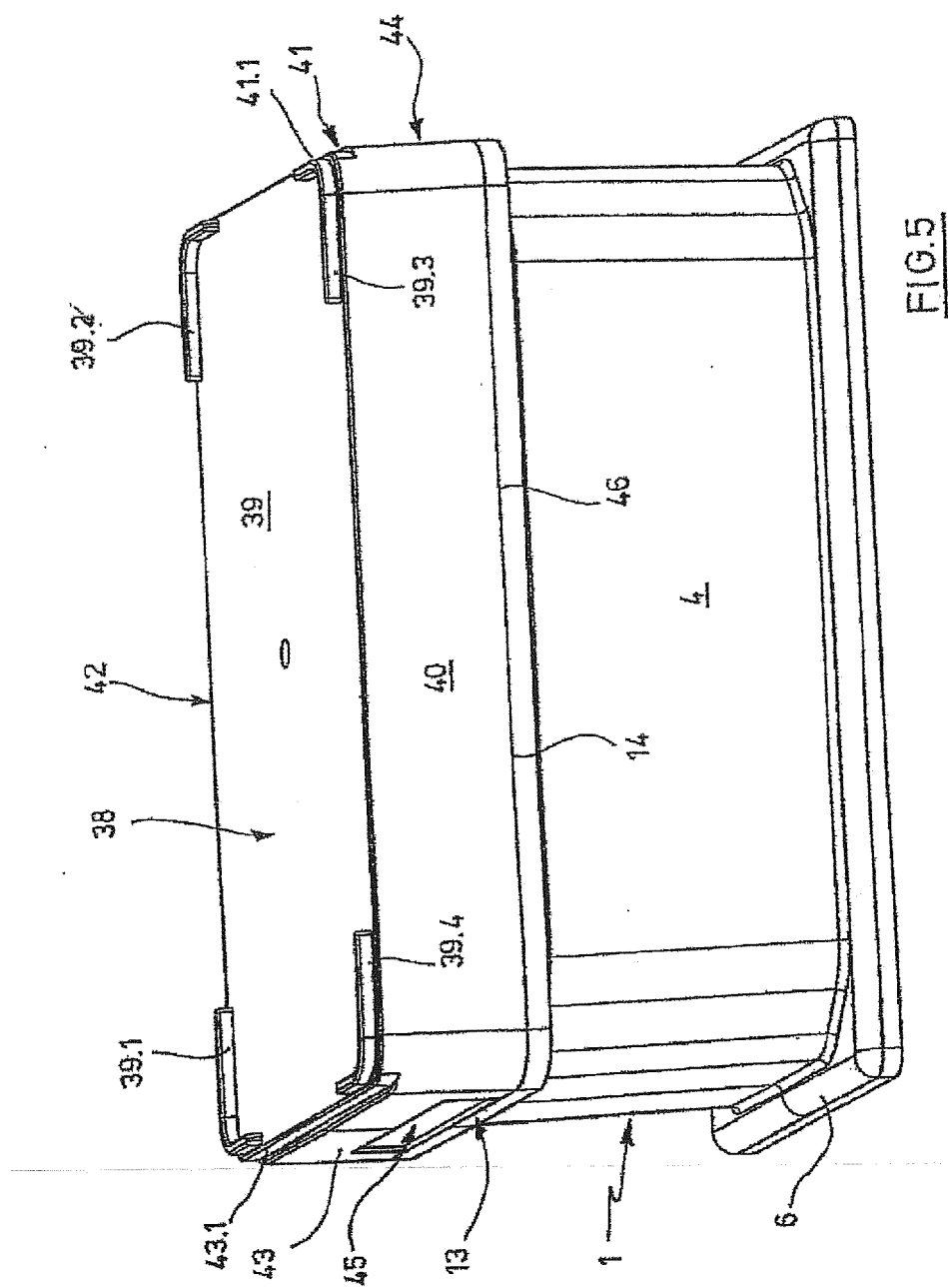
5. Pièce d'écartement selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans laquelle le fond intermédiaire (61) porte des nervures (65, 66) sur le côté de dessus entre les trous, qui s'étendent d'une paroi latérale (57 à 60) de pièce d'écartement jusqu'à la paroi latérale (57 à 60) de pièce d'écartement opposée. 5
6. Pièce d'écartement selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, dans laquelle le fond intermédiaire (61) porte des nervures qui se croisent (65, 66). 10
7. Pièce d'écartement selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, laquelle a des éléments de guidage (57 à 60 ; 102) faisant saillie vers le bas et/ou vers le haut à partir du fond intermédiaire (61) pour le guidage latéral sur des embouts de pipette (86) qui sont maintenus dans une plaque inférieure et/ou supérieure (77). 15
8. Pièce d'écartement selon la revendication 7, dans laquelle les éléments de guidage comportent des sections inférieures de parois latérales (57 à 60) de pièces d'écartement qui font saillie sous forme de tablier vers le haut à partir du fond intermédiaire (61) afin de se soutenir elles-mêmes sur le côté de fond (80) d'une plaque supérieure (77) et d'être guidées sur l'intérieur sur la périphérie d'embouts de pipette (86) qui sont insérés près du bord dans la plaque supérieure (77). 20
9. Pièce d'écartement selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 8, dans laquelle le fond intermédiaire (61) porte des éléments de guidage (102) faisant saillie sur le côté de fond entre les trous (62). 25
10. Pièce d'écartement selon la revendication 9, dans laquelle les éléments de guidage (102) sont des saillies en forme de ruban. 30
11. Support pour embouts de pipette avec 35
- un cadre ou une boîte (89) ayant quatre parois de côté,
 - plusieurs plaques (77) avec une pluralité de trous (79) pour insérer des embouts de pipette (86), 45
 - des embouts de pipette (86) insérés dans les trous (79) des plaques (77),
 - un moyen pour relier de manière libérable (82, 92) le cadre ou la boîte (89) à une plaque (77), 50
 - une plaque inférieure (77) qui est reliée via le moyen pour se lier de manière libérable avec le cadre ou la boîte (89) et
 - une pièce d'écartement (56, 101) selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 10 et 55
 - une plaque supérieure (77) qui est soutenue avec un côté de fond sur le côté de dessus de
- la pièce d'écartement (56, 101).
12. Support selon la revendication 11, dans lequel plusieurs agencements constitués d'une pièce d'écartement (56) et d'une plaque (77) sont empilés les uns sur les autres.
13. Support selon la revendication 11 ou 12, dans lequel les plaques supérieures (77) ont sur une zone de bord (82) en forme de tablier faisant saillie vers le bas d'autres languettes de verrouillage (84) faisant saillie vers l'intérieur et les languettes de verrouillage (69 à 72) de la pièce d'écartement (56) sont verrouillées avec les languettes de verrouillage (84) supplémentaires.
14. Support selon l'une quelconque des revendications 11 à 13, dans lequel un couvercle en forme de capot (93) recouvrant les embouts de pipette sur le dessus et sur le côté est placé sur le dessus sur la plaque la plus supérieure (77).
15. Support selon l'une quelconque des revendications 11 à 14, dans lequel les plaques (77) ont une marche (83) circonférentielle faisant saillie vers l'extérieur et le couvercle (93) est placé sur le côté de dessus de la marche (83) de la plaque la plus supérieure (77).
16. Support selon l'une quelconque des revendications 11 à 15, qui est entouré par une sangle (94) et/ou emballé de manière rétractable avec un film.

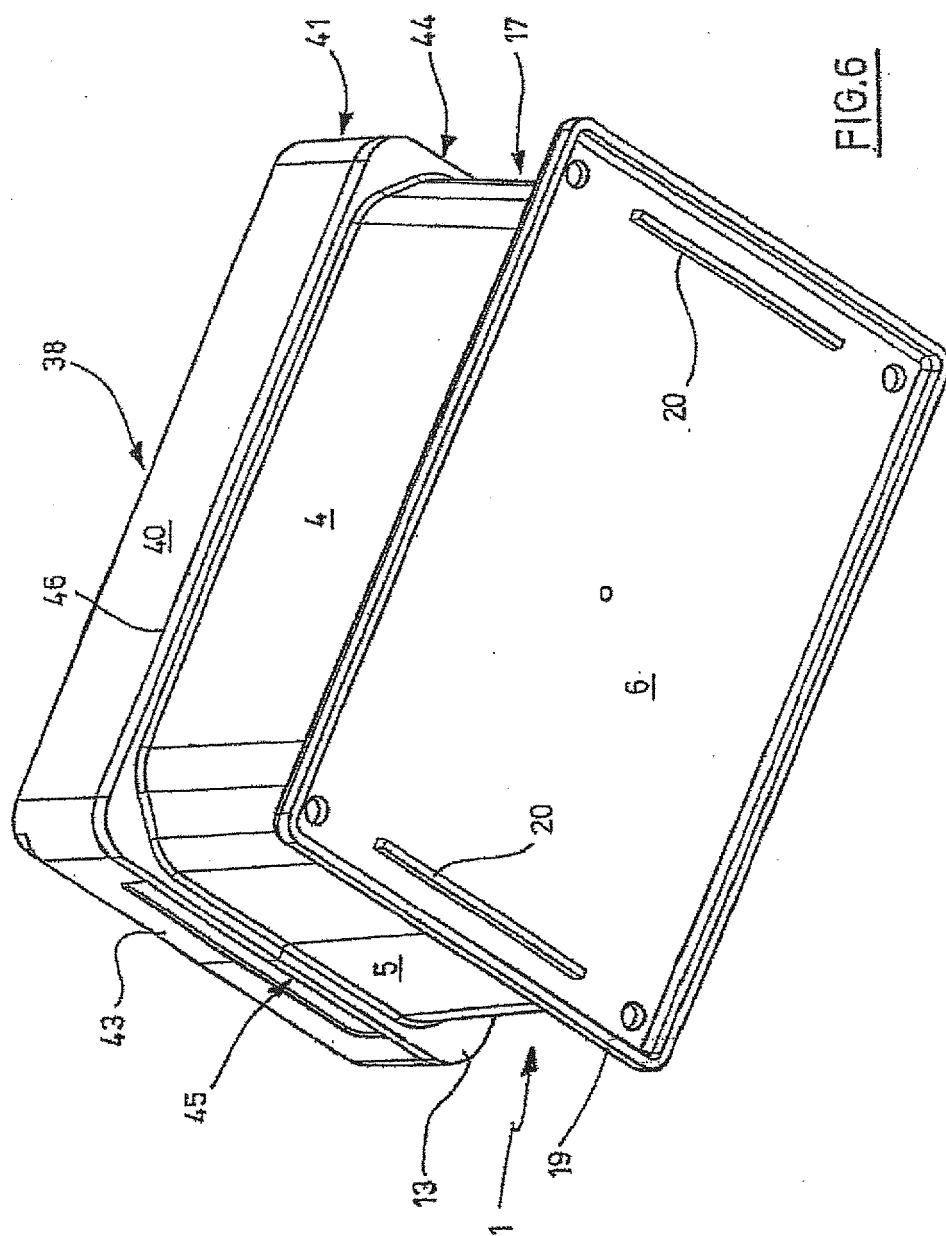












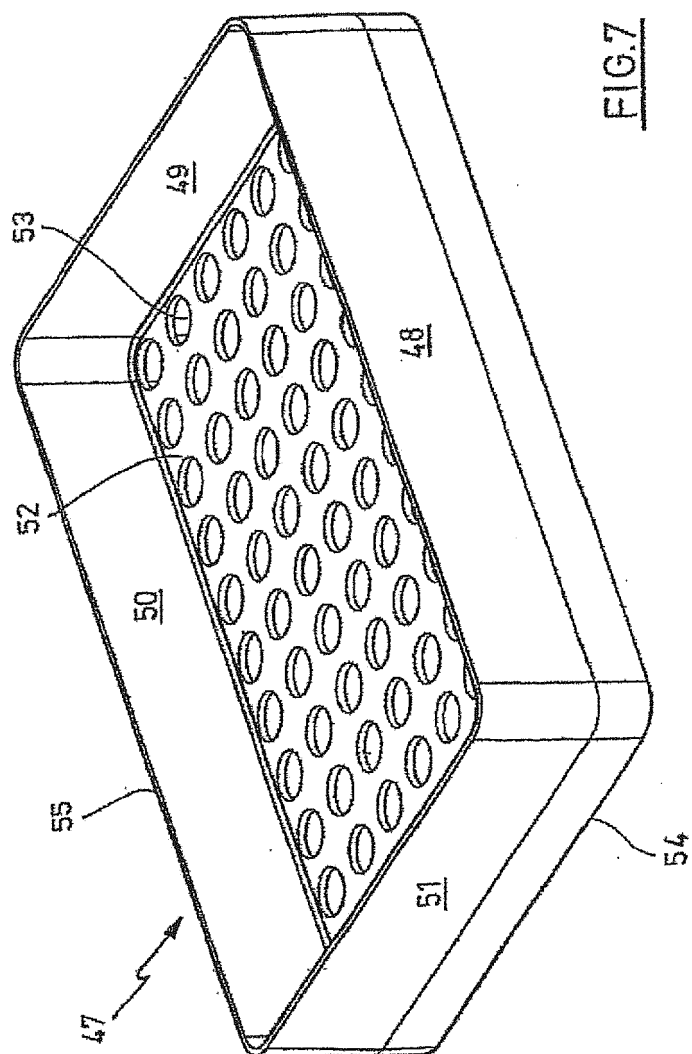
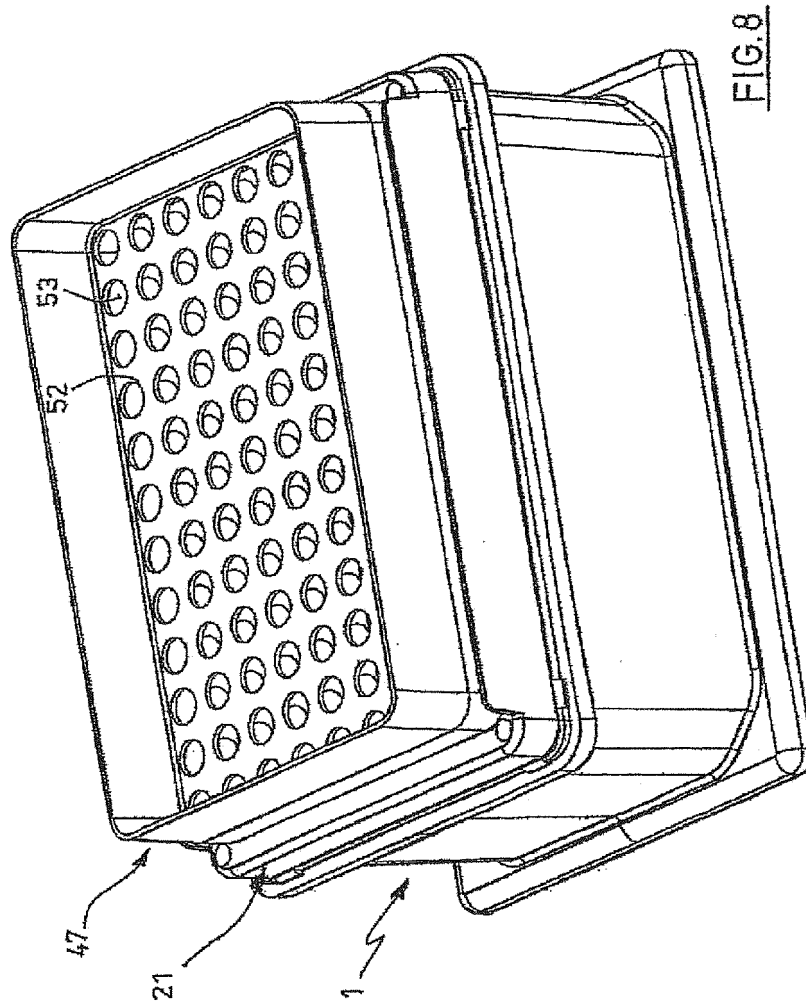


FIG. 7



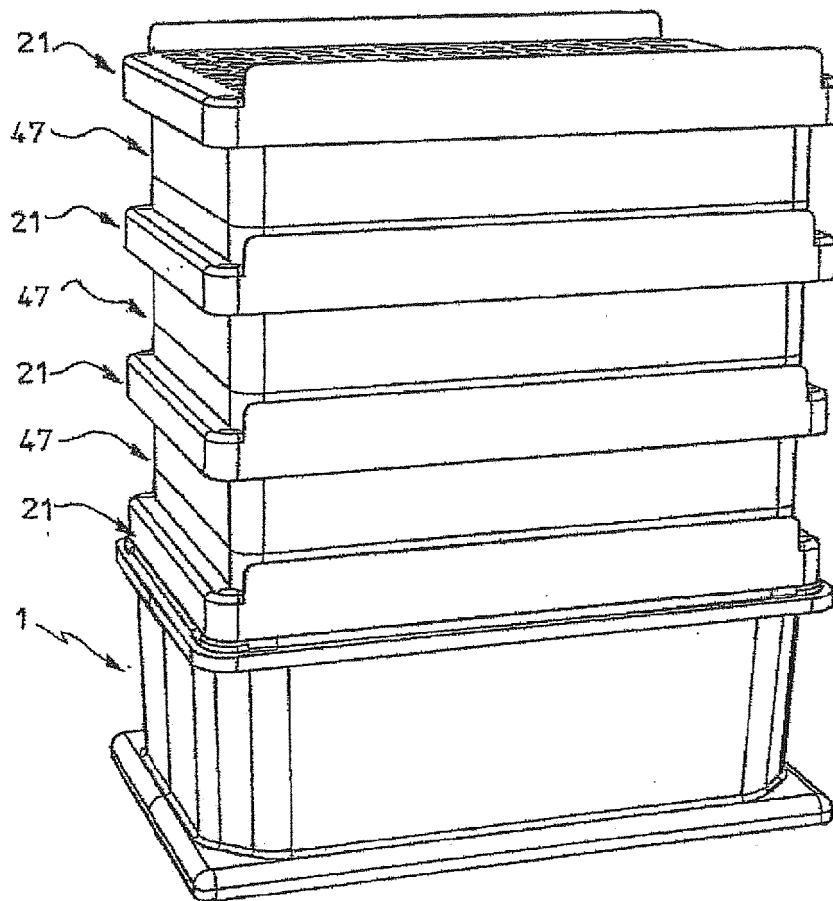


FIG. 9

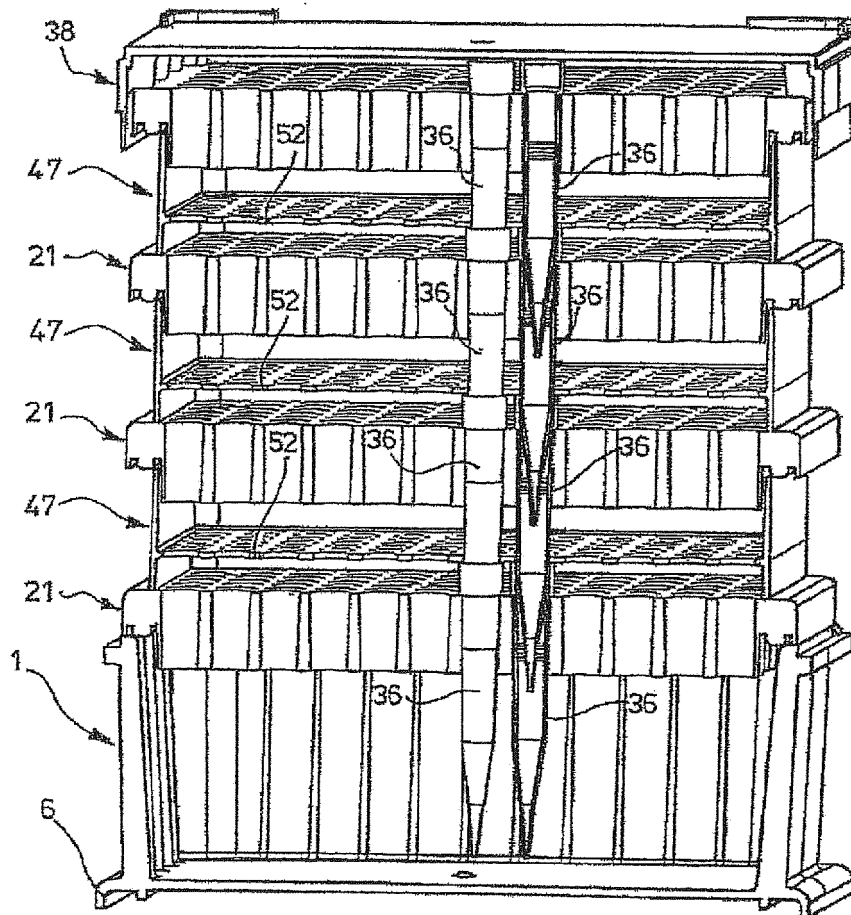


FIG.10

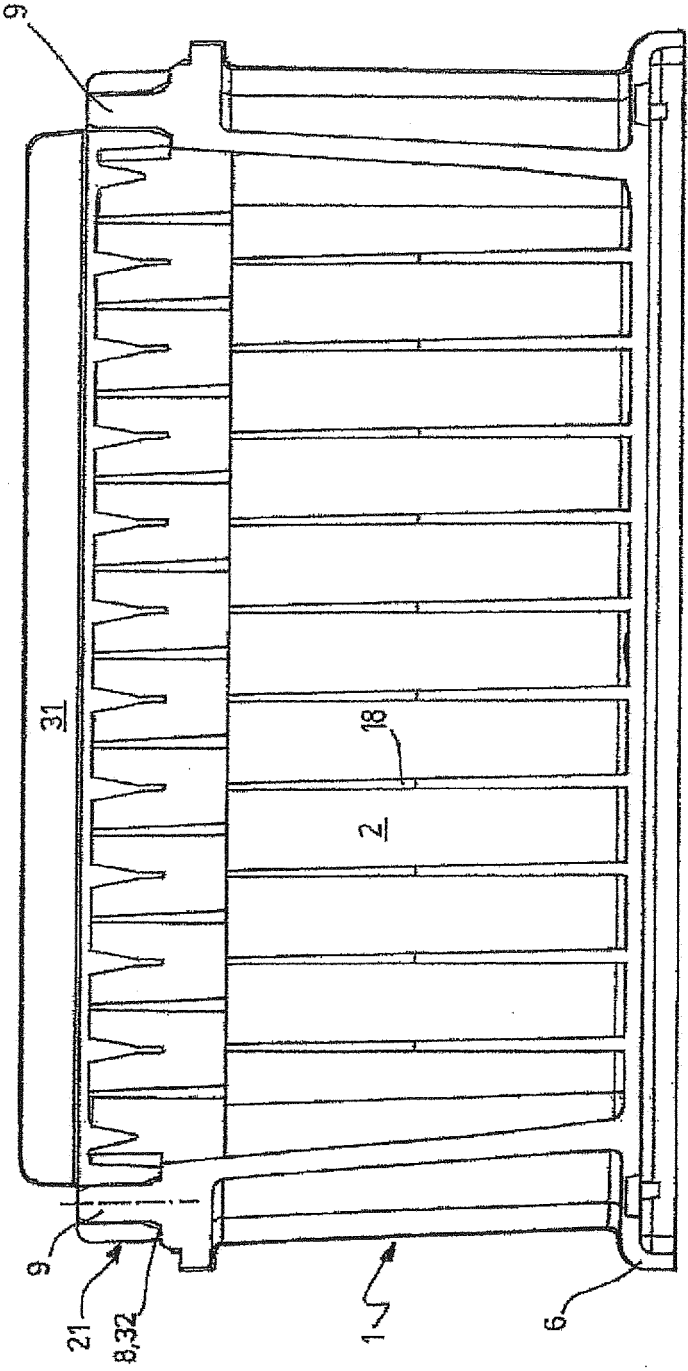
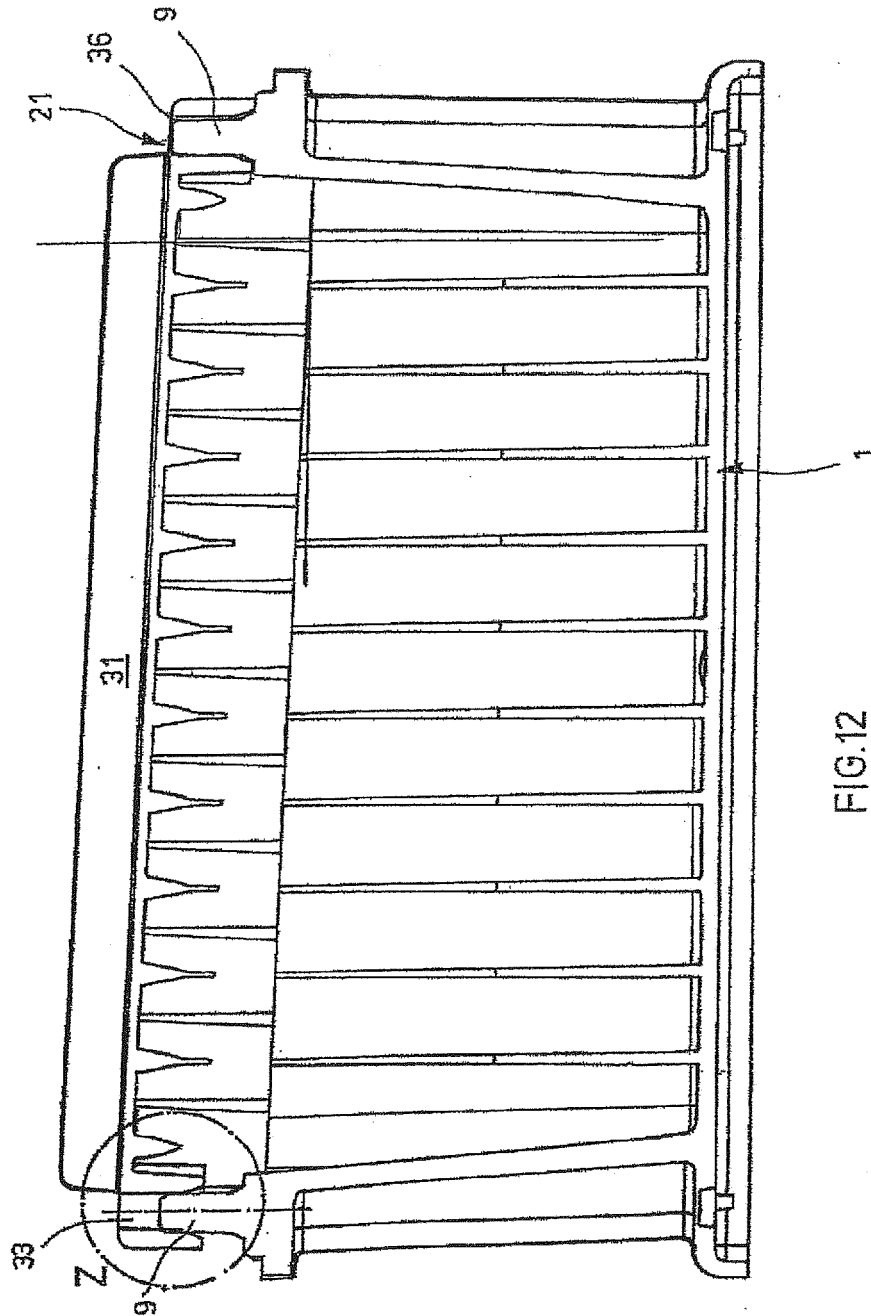


FIG.11



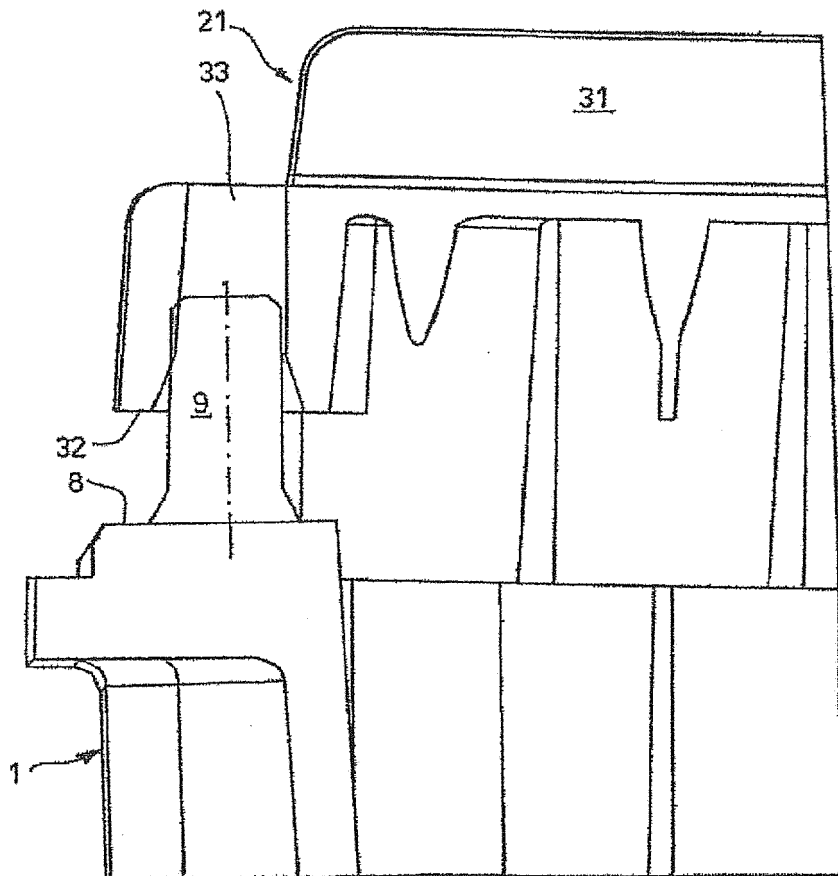


FIG.13
Detail "Z"

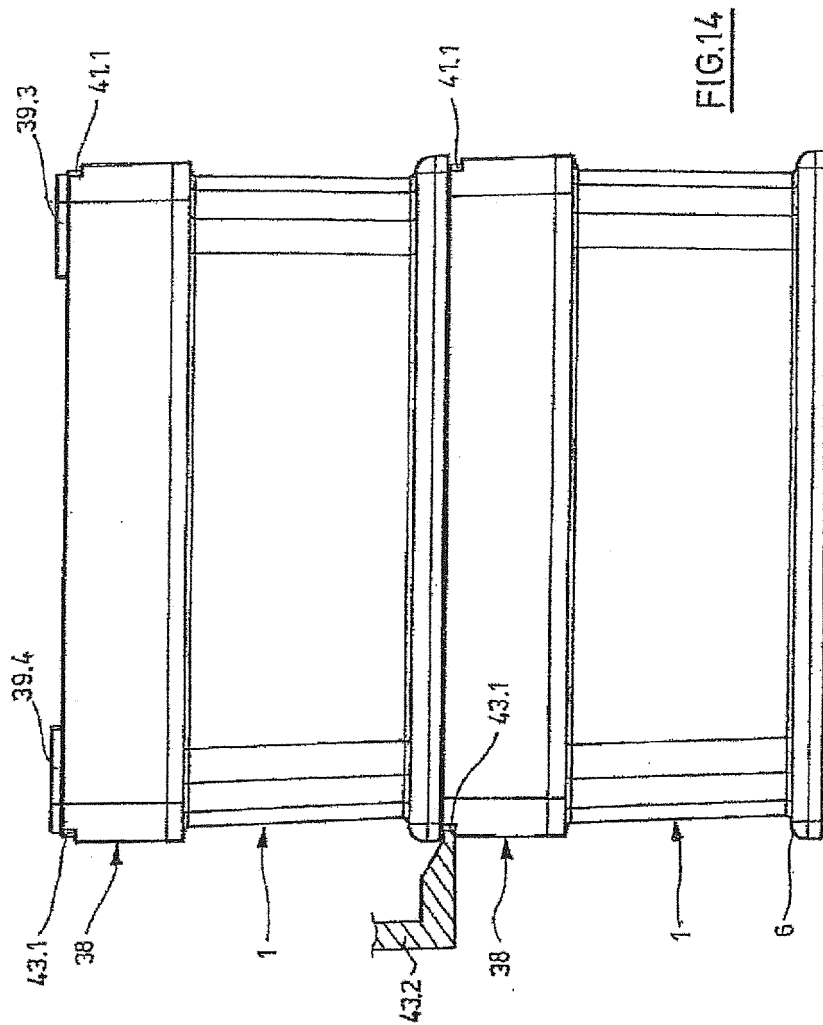


Fig. 15

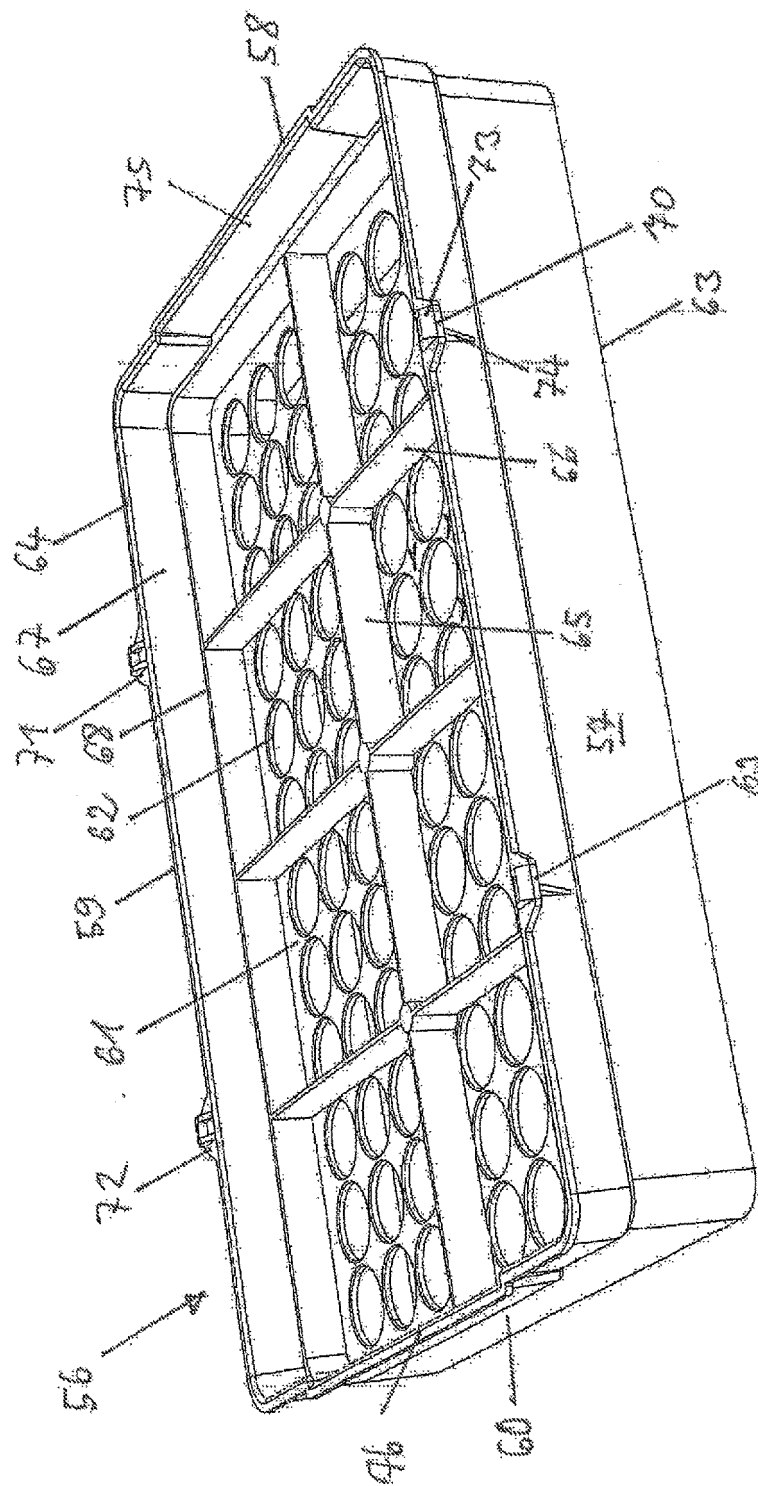


Fig. 16

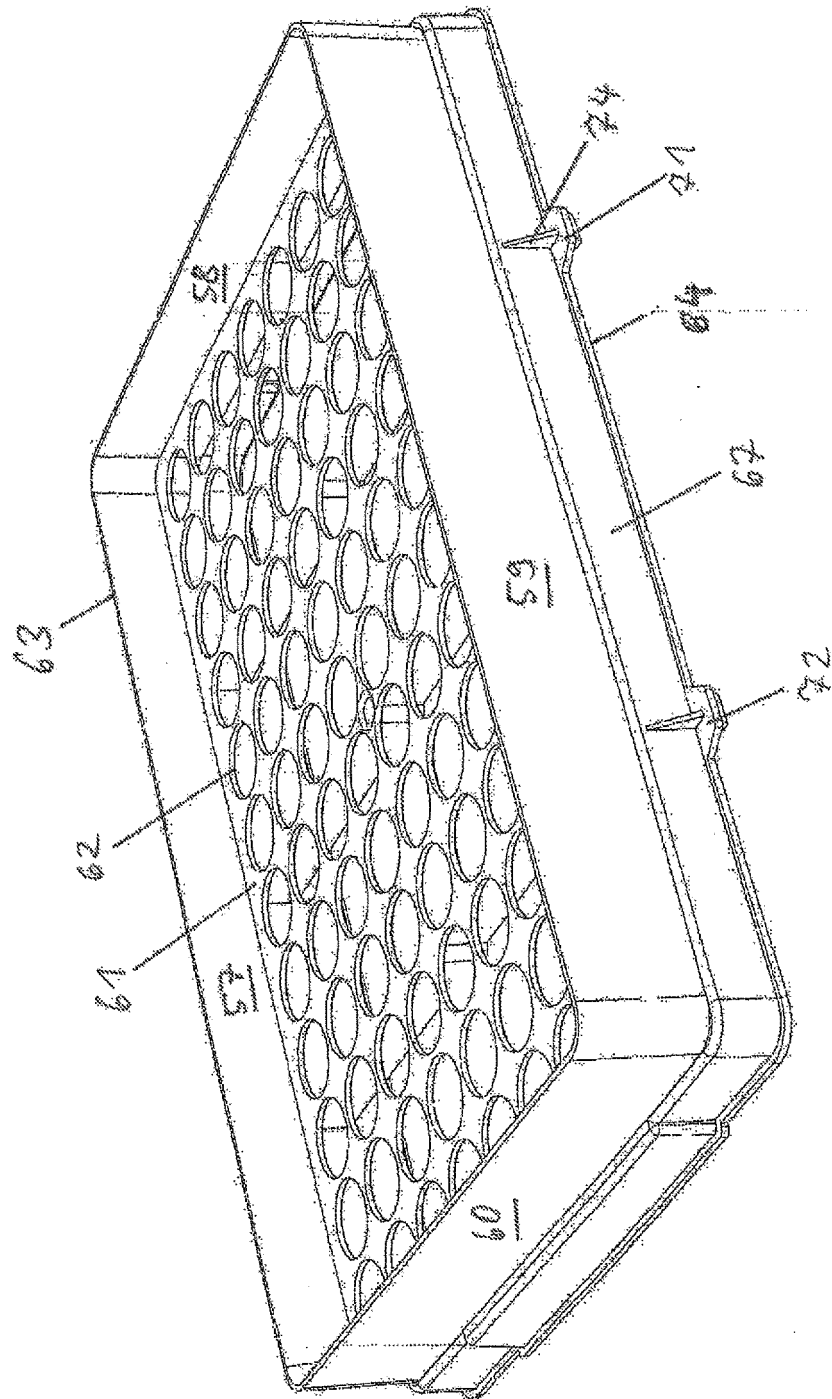
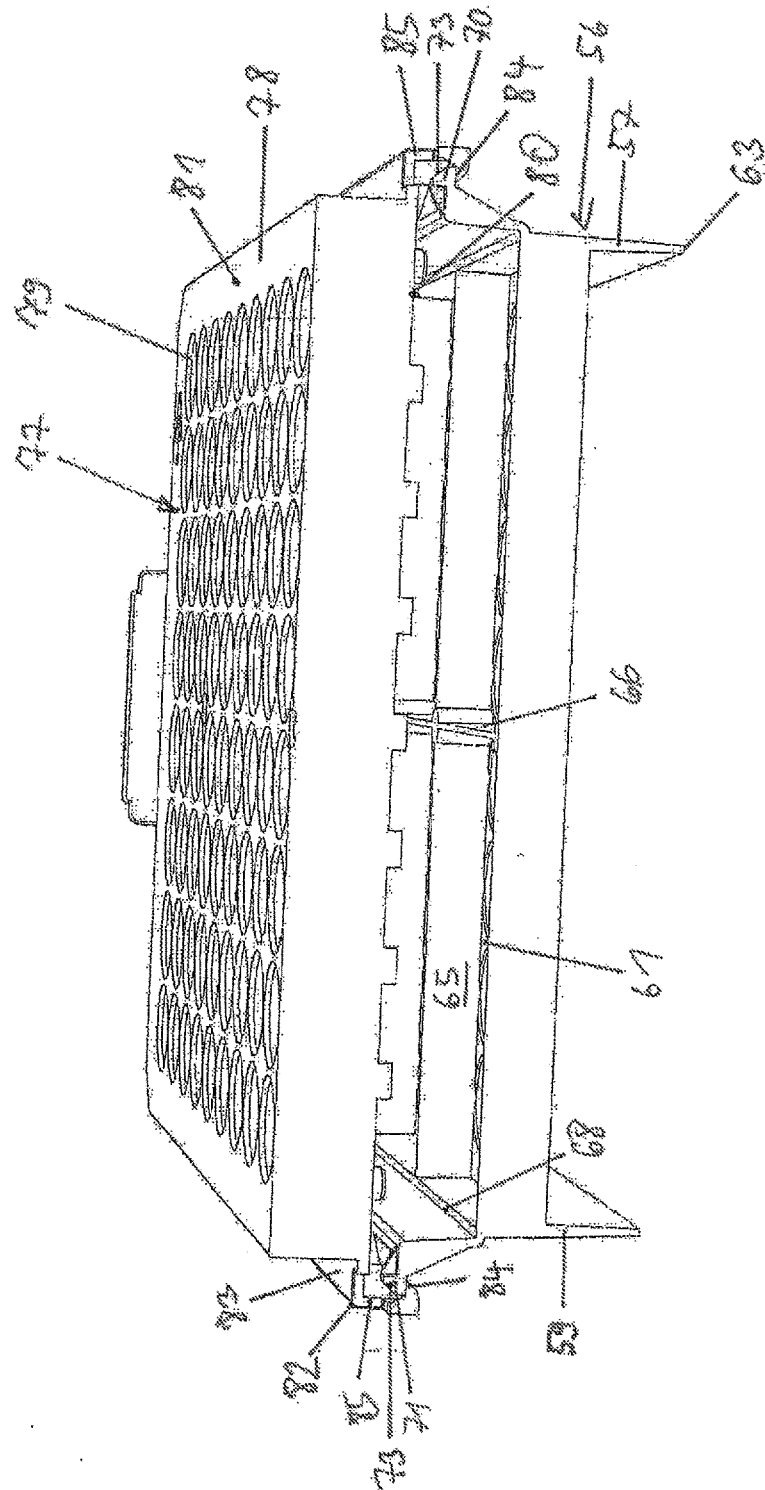


Fig. 17



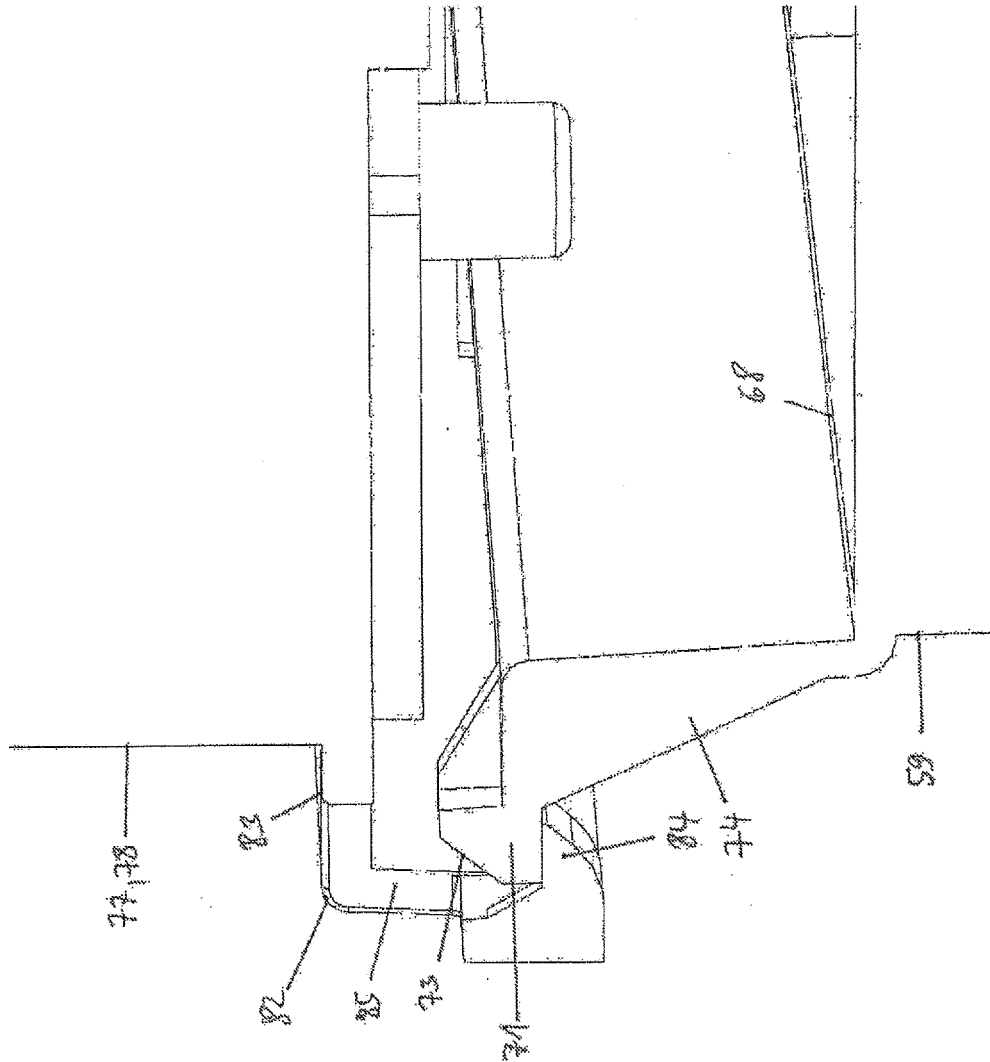


Fig. 18

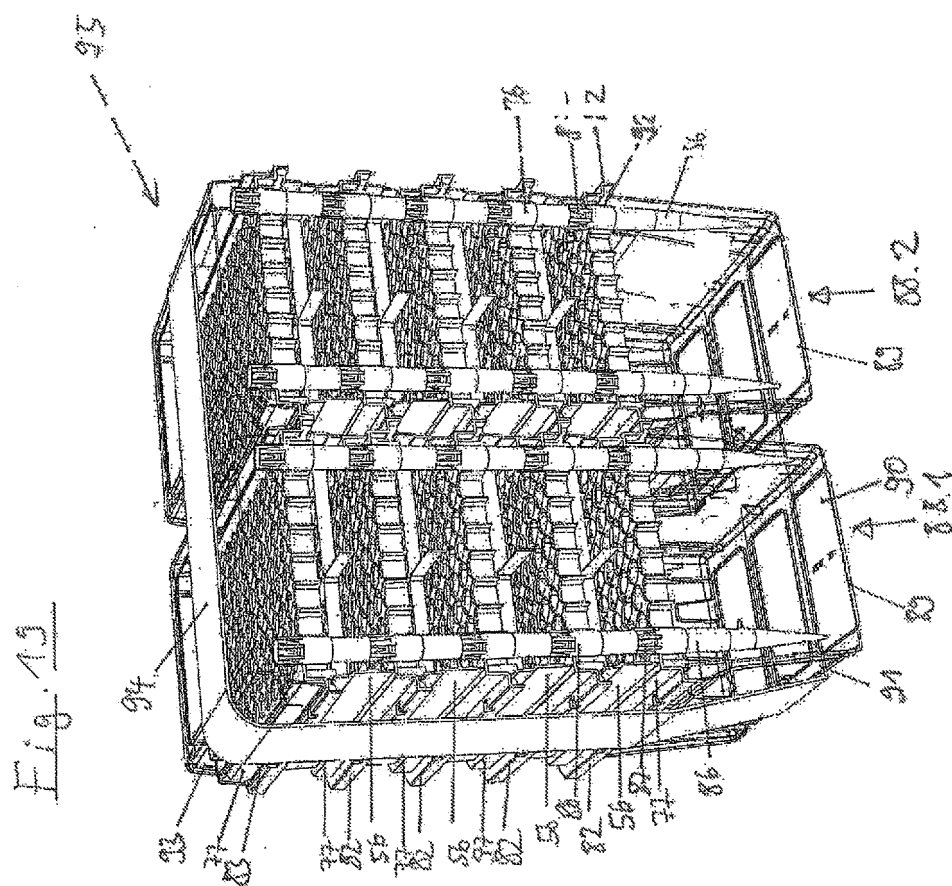


Fig. 20

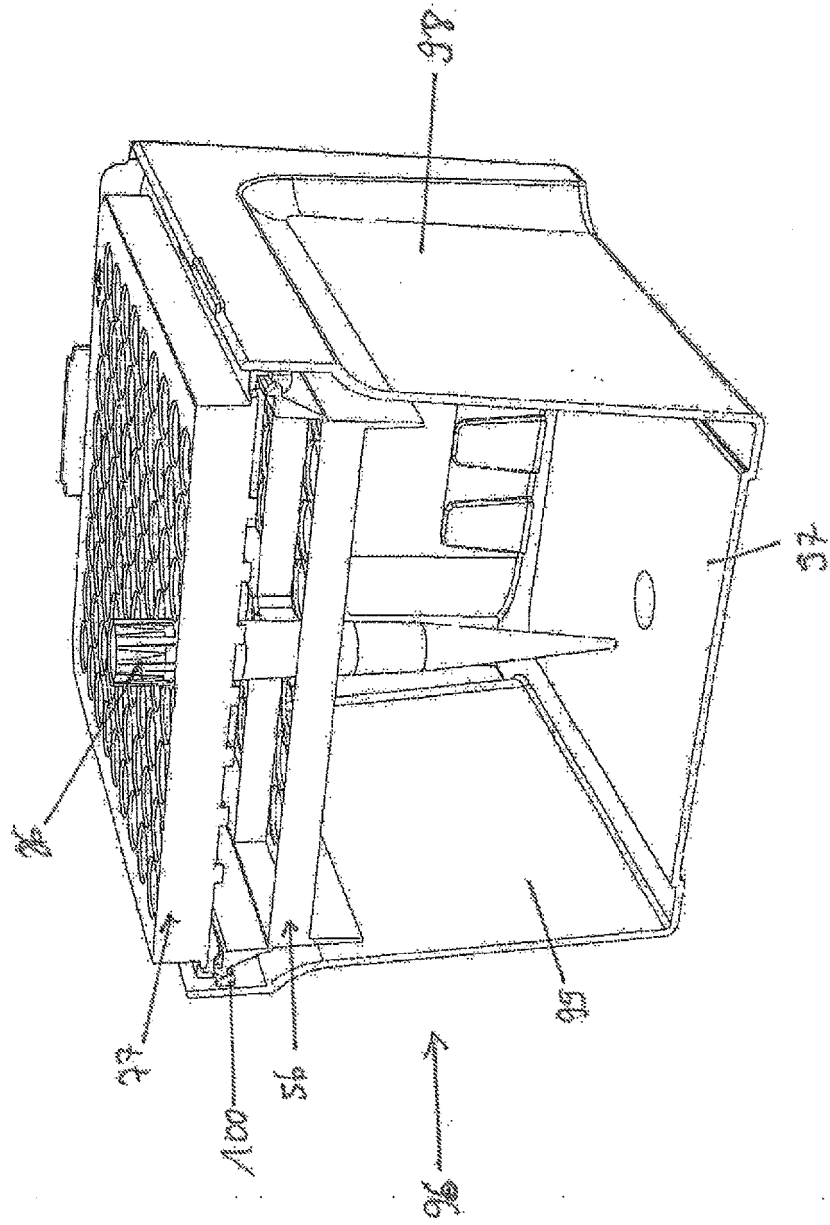


Fig. 21

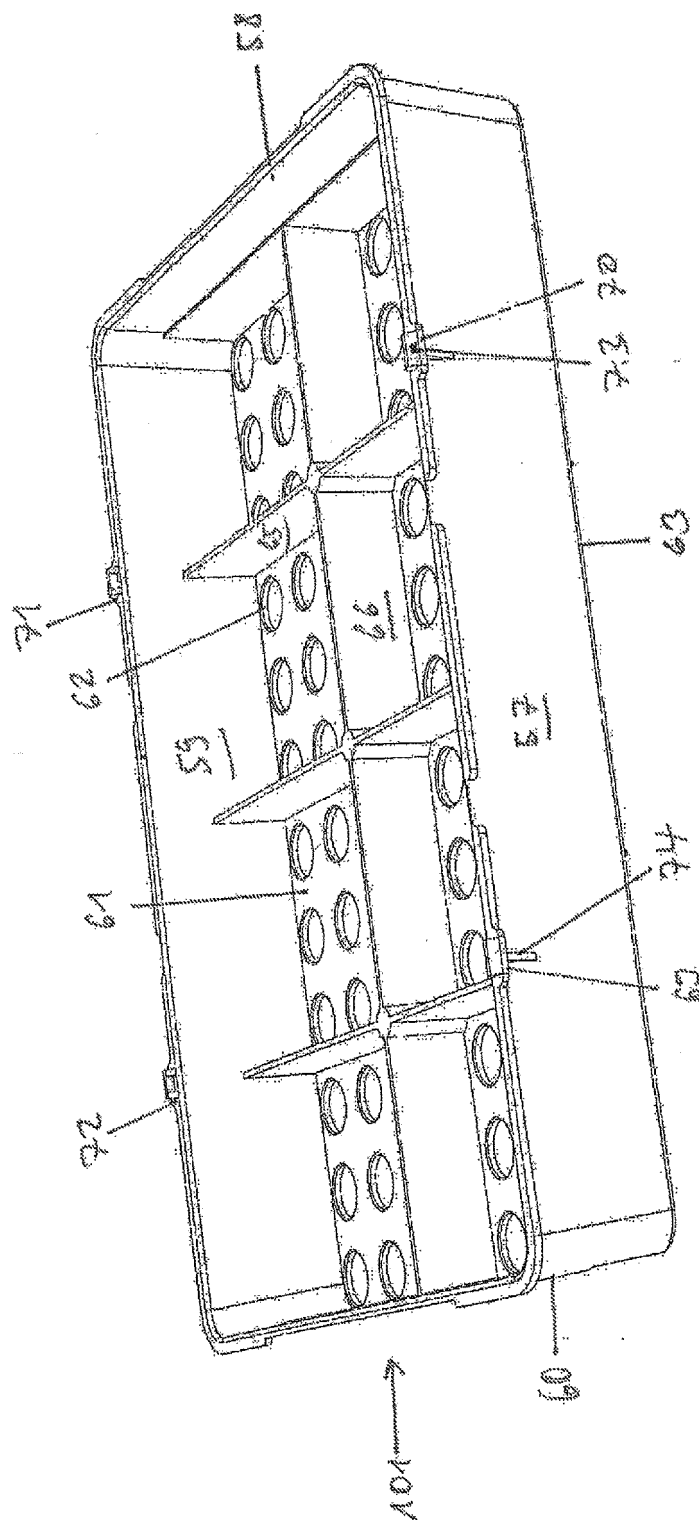


Fig. 22

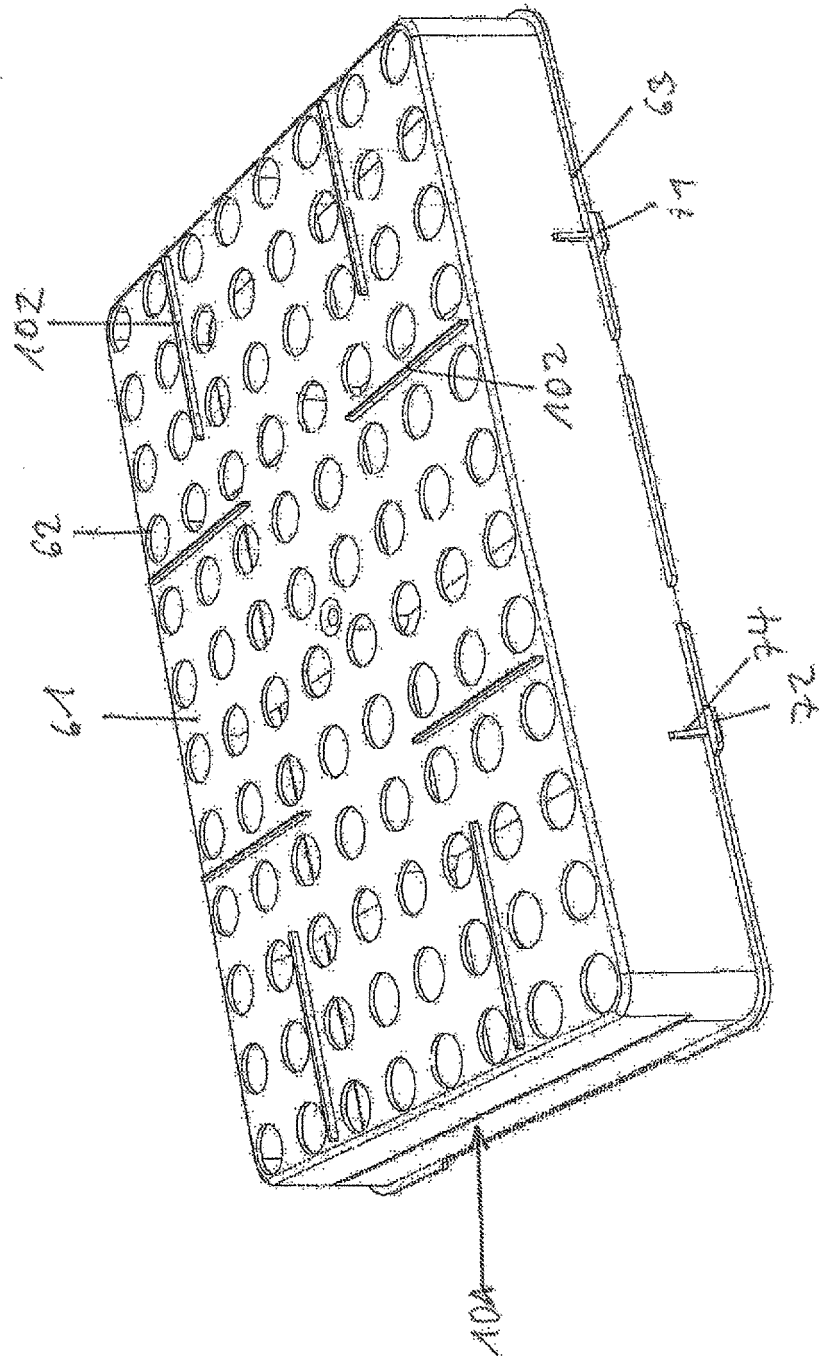
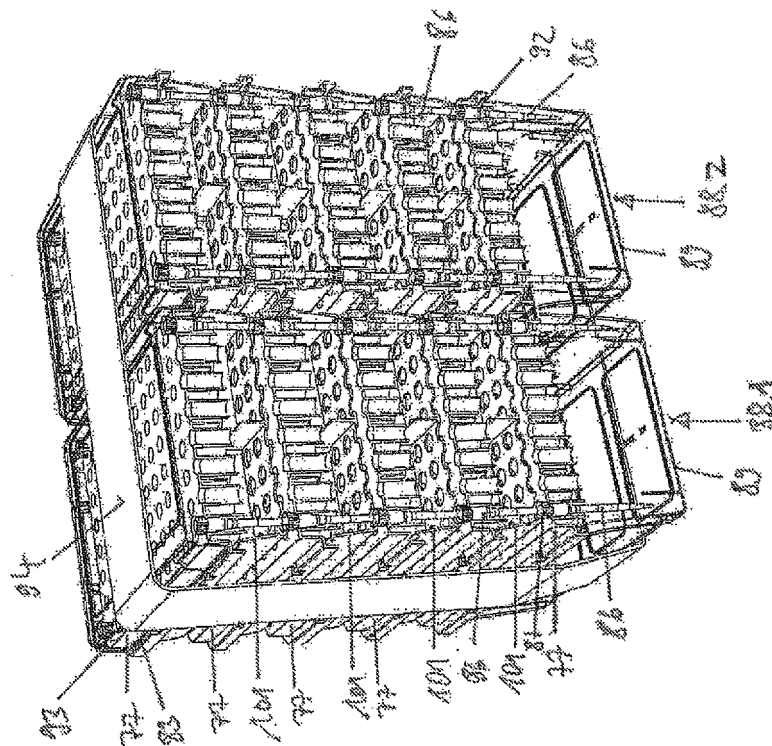


Fig. 23



REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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