

(19)



(11)

EP 3 972 914 B1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the grant of the patent:

13.11.2024 Bulletin 2024/46

(51) International Patent Classification (IPC):

B65D 85/60 ^(2006.01) **B65D 77/00** ^(2006.01)
B65B 25/00 ^(2006.01)

(21) Application number: **20720866.1**

(52) Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC):

B65D 5/3635; B65D 77/003; B65D 85/60

(22) Date of filing: **22.04.2020**

(86) International application number:

PCT/IB2020/053804

(87) International publication number:

WO 2020/234663 (26.11.2020 Gazette 2020/48)

(54) **PACKAGE FOR FOODSTUFF PRODUCTS**

VERPACKUNG FÜR LEBENSMITTELPRODUKTE

EMBALLAGE POUR PRODUITS ALIMENTAIRES

(84) Designated Contracting States:

**AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB
GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO
PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR**

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(30) Priority: **23.05.2019 LU 101233**

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(43) Date of publication of application:

30.03.2022 Bulletin 2022/13

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a package for a foodstuff product, for example a confectionery product, comprising:

- an outer wrapper that envelops said product completely so as to define a closed chamber containing said product; and
- a support, set on which is said product, which is housed within said closed chamber together with said product.

[0002] Packages of the above type are commonly used in the sector of packaging of confectionery products. Usually, the outer wrapper is constituted by a single wrapping sheet wrapped around the product and sealed according to packaging modalities of a flowpack type.

[0003] According to the prior art, the support referred to generally performs the function of providing for the consumer a gripping portion, via which the consumer can hold the product without touching it directly.

[0004] Up to the present day various arrangements of the above support have already been proposed.

[0005] For instance, according to a variant that is commercially very widespread, this support is constituted by a sheet of cardboard folded so as to form a base and two sides that set themselves in positions opposed to one another with respect to the product.

[0006] According to this solution, the consumer can take the product out of the package by gripping the two sides of the support referred to above, and can consume the product continuing to hold it by the aforesaid sides.

[0007] On the other hand, the open configuration, at the front and at the rear, of the support enables relative sliding between the latter and the product in a direction parallel to the aforesaid sides so that the consumer can pull out of the support new portions of the product, as this is consumed.

[0008] According to another solution, the support in question is instead constituted by small trays for single products, made of paper, cardboard, etc.

[0009] A solution of this type is, for example, described in the U.S. patent No. US5452564. JP3153729 and EP0881167 disclose certain prior art solutions of possible interest as technical background.

[0010] In particular, in the solution described in the above document, the sheet that constitutes the tray is kept in its folded condition by the flowpack that envelops it in such a way that, as soon as the outer package is removed, the sheet opens, rendering the product immediately accessible.

[0011] In this context, the present applicant has found that in the sector of packages of the type in question the technical problem of providing a specific protection for the product contained in the package has not yet been solved.

[0012] Today, the above need is particularly felt, con-

sidering that there is an increasingly widespread use of modalities of display and sale of many foodstuff products in a single format, these products being proposed to the consumer for immediate consumption as snack.

[0013] The above products are without outer containers so that they run a greater risk of damage.

[0014] The object of the present invention is to solve the aforesaid technical problem.

[0015] This object is achieved through a package that presents the characteristics specified in Claim 1. The present invention also regards a system for display or sale according to Claim 8.

[0016] The claims form an integral part of the technical teaching provided herein in relation to the invention.

[0017] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will emerge clearly from the ensuing description, with reference to the annexed drawings, which are provided purely by way of non-limiting example and in which:

- Figure 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of the package described herein, according to an axonometric view;
- Figure 2 illustrates the package of Figure 1 in a condition in which the inner support and the product have been taken out of the outer wrapper;
- Figure 3 illustrates the support of the package of Figure 1 in an open condition; and
- Figure 4 is a schematic illustration of an example of mode of display of the package described herein.

[0018] In the ensuing description, various specific details are illustrated aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of the embodiments.

[0019] As anticipated above, the package described herein - designated as a whole by the reference number 10 in the figures - comprises an outer wrapper 2 containing a product P (illustrated in Figure 2 with a dashed line), and a support 4, set on which is the product P and which is contained together with the latter inside the wrapper 2.

[0020] Preferably, the outer wrapper 2 is constituted by a wrapping sheet wrapped around the product and sealed according to packaging modalities of a flowpack type.

[0021] In particular, as represented in the figures, the outer wrapper 2 has a tubular portion 2A, which is closed at the opposite ends by two transverse sealing strips 2B, and, along the axis of the portion 2A itself, by a longitudinal sealing strip (not visible). The aforesaid tubular portion 2A defines inside a closed chamber C, which contains the product P and the support 4.

[0022] Incidentally, it should be noted that in this context the terms "transverse" and "longitudinal" refer to the orientations of the aforesaid strips within the flow-pack packaging line, and not to a prevalent dimension of the product or of the package.

[0023] Moreover, as will emerge clearly in what follows, the package described herein can be used for products

of any shape and/or size so that the elongated shape of the product illustrated in the figures is to be considered merely as provided by way of example.

[0024] The support 4 is constituted by a dinked sheet, folded according to a generic tray-like conformation.

[0025] In particular, the sheet in question is folded so as to define a base 4I, and lateral walls 4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V that are set around the base 4I and are connected together. As will be seen in what follows, preferably the lateral walls in question are prearranged for a mutual slotting or engagement. This solution is preferable to the use of glue in so far as it avoids risks of contamination of the packaged product and hence enables better conservation of the quality of the product.

[0026] The tray 4 is configured for housing inside it the product P, preferably according to a configuration such that the lateral walls 4II, 4III, 4IV and 4V are located up against the corresponding parts of the product.

[0027] For this purpose, the base 4I has a contour that strictly circumscribes the contour in plan view of the product P.

[0028] According to an important characteristic of the package described herein, at least two lateral walls of the tray 4 that are positioned opposed to one another with respect to the product P have a height such as to project above the product P set on the base 4I.

[0029] In the example illustrated, the two walls in question are the lateral walls 4II and 4IV, which lie at the opposite ends of the product P.

[0030] The two walls in question define, through the respective top edges, two resting points for a further package that will be positioned directly above the package 10, and to all effects perform a function of support of this further package.

[0031] The above function of support afforded by the tray 4 has been envisaged for any mode of display or sale of the products in which the products are arranged in a number of layers or levels within one and the same container, display stand, or showcase. In this connection, this mode of display is exemplified in Figure 4.

[0032] As is known, the products are arranged on a number of layers on account of a need to reduce the overall dimensions of the packaging, but this can evidently damage the products, above all in the case of products that have a particularly soft or brittle consistency.

[0033] In the light of what has been seen above, according to the solution described herein, the package 10 may, instead, support any possible package set thereon thanks to the lateral walls referred to above, preventing the weight of the overlying package from weighing on the product.

[0034] With reference to the example illustrated in the figures, the top edges 42 of the two walls 4II and 4IV are set at a distance apart that is less than the dimension of the base 4I in the corresponding direction (along which this distance is measured).

[0035] In this way, with reference to two packages 10 set on top of one another (Figure 4), the top package

may stably rest, with the base 4I of its tray 4, on the top edges of the two walls 4II and 4IV of the tray 4 of the bottom package.

[0036] Apart from the function referred to above in the case of the mode of display described, the lateral walls 4II, 4IV perform, more in general, a function of protection of the product in regard to any weight that may come to press against their top edges.

[0037] For instance, the product is also protected from being squashed in the cases where the consumer carries it along with himself, inside a back pack or a bag, as snack to be consumed during the day.

[0038] In various preferred embodiments, as in the one represented, the other two lateral walls of the tray - in the example illustrated the walls 4III and 4V - have a height such that their respective top edges 43 are positioned lower down than the top edges 42 and, possibly, the top surface of the product.

[0039] At the same time, preferably, the two walls 4III and 4V are adherent to the parts of the product P corresponding thereto.

[0040] Thanks to the configuration referred to, the aesthetic appearance of the wrapped product is not substantially modified by the presence of the tray 4.

[0041] Moreover, once again according to a preferred embodiment, the top edges 43 of these two walls are curved partially over the product P so that they are able to withhold the product within the tray.

[0042] Figure 3 represents an example of sheet for forming the tray 4, in its splayed-out configuration.

[0043] The above sheet - designated as a whole by the reference number 100 - has a pre-set outline 101 and pre-defined folding lines 103 to enable formation of the tray 4 simply through an operation of folding of the sheet.

Figure 3 also shows, designated by the same reference numbers, the various portions that come to constitute the base 4I and the lateral walls 4II, 4III, 4IV, and 4V, respectively.

[0044] The portions that are to define the lateral walls 4II, 4III, 4IV, and 4V have, on the respective opposite lateral edges, projecting appendages 44 provided for engaging by slotting, or hooking, homologous appendages obtained on the adjacent lateral walls. In this way, the four lateral walls support one another in the raised position and, on the other hand, can be easily knocked down to access the product.

[0045] The above configuration facilitates, on the other hand, the operations of packaging machines that form the package according to the invention.

[0046] With reference once again to the example illustrated, it may be noted that the two longitudinal walls 4III, 4V each have a folding line 105, which is parallel to the corresponding folding line that connects the lateral wall to the base 4I, and passes along the wall at a certain distance from the base 4I.

[0047] The aforesaid folding line enables the corresponding wall to follow the curvature of the product and hence remain adherent thereto, covering the product P

to a greater extent and preventing, as has been seen above, the tray 4 from modifying the appearance of the wrapped product.

[0048] Finally, with reference to Figure 2, it will be noted how the lateral walls 4III and 4V cover the product for a major extent thereof, hence also these performing a function of protection, in particular when the consumer gets hold of the product from its side.

[0049] Of course, without prejudice to the principle of the invention, the details of construction and the embodiments may vary, even significantly, with respect to what has been illustrated herein purely by way of non-limiting example, without thereby departing from the scope of the invention, as defined by the annexed claims.

Claims

1. A package (10) for a foodstuff product, comprising:

- a foodstuff product (P);
- an outer wrapper (2) that envelops said product (P) completely so as to define a closed chamber (C) containing said product; and
- a support (4), set on which is said product (P), which is housed within said closed chamber (C) together with said product (P),

said package being **characterised in that** said support (4) comprises a base (4I), on which said product rests, and lateral walls (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V) that surround said product, wherein said lateral walls include a pair of lateral walls (4II, 4IV) that are set in positions opposed to one another with respect to said product (P) and have a height such as to project above said product (P), wherein said pair of lateral walls (4II, 4IV) are configured for constituting a support for a further package positioned directly on top of said package, and wherein said pair of lateral walls (4II, 4IV) have respective top edges (42) that are set at a distance apart shorter than the size of said base (4I) in a corresponding direction.

2. The package according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein said pair of lateral walls (4II, 4IV) have respective top edges (42) that are located at a greater height than a top surface of said product (P), measured from said base (4I).

3. The package according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the other lateral walls (4III, 4V) of said support have top edges (43) that are located at a height lower than the top edges (42) of said pair of lateral walls (4II, 4IV), measured from said base (4I).

4. The package according to any one of the preceding

claims, wherein said support is constituted by a folded sheet (100) defining said base (4I) and said lateral walls (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V).

5. The package according to Claim 4, wherein said lateral walls (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V) are provided with respective slotting or engagement portions for supporting each other in a position raised with respect to said base (4I).

6. The package according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein one or more of said lateral walls are folded along a folding line (105) substantially parallel to said base (4I) so as to remain adherent to corresponding parts of said product (P).

7. The package according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said outer wrapper (2) is formed by a wrapping sheet wrapped around said product (P) and sealed according to packaging modalities of a flowpack type.

8. A system for displaying or packaging a plurality of packages, comprising:

- a first package according to any one of the preceding claims;
- a second package according to any one of the preceding claims, which is set on said first package in a condition where the base (4I) of the support (4) of said second package rests on and is supported by said pair of lateral walls (4II, 4IV) of the support of said first package, without weighing upon the product (P) contained in said first package.

Patentansprüche

1. Verpackung (10) für ein Lebensmittelprodukt, aufweisend:

- ein Lebensmittelprodukt (P);
- eine äußere Hülle (2), die das Produkt (P) vollständig umschließt, sodass sie eine geschlossene Kammer (C) definiert, die das Produkt enthält; und
- einen Träger (4), auf dem sich das Produkt (P) befindet und der zusammen mit dem Produkt (P) in der geschlossenen Kammer (C) untergebracht ist,

wobei die Verpackung **dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, dass** der Träger (4) einen Boden (4I), auf dem das Produkt aufliegt, und Seitenwände (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V), die das Produkt umgeben, aufweist, wobei die Seitenwände ein Paar von Seitenwänden (4II, 4IV) beinhalten, die in Bezug auf das Produkt (P) an ge-

genüberliegenden Positionen angeordnet sind und eine solche Höhe aufweisen, dass sie über das Produkt (P) hinausragen, wobei das Paar von Seitenwänden (4II, 4IV) so konfiguriert ist, dass es einen Träger für eine weitere Verpackung bildet, die direkt auf der genannten Verpackung positioniert ist, und wobei das Paar von Seitenwänden (4II, 4IV) jeweils Oberkanten (42) aufweist, die in einem Abstand voneinander angeordnet sind, der in einer entsprechenden Richtung kürzer als der Boden (4I) ist.

2. Verpackung nach Anspruch 1 oder Anspruch 2, wobei das Paar von Seitenwänden (4II, 4IV) jeweils Oberkanten (42) aufweist, die sich, vom Boden (4I) aus gemessen, auf einer Höhe oberhalb der Oberseite des Produkts (P) befinden.
3. Verpackung nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei die anderen Seitenwände (4III, 4V) des Trägers Oberkanten (43) aufweisen, die sich, vom Boden (4I) aus gemessen, auf einer Höhe unterhalb der Oberkanten (42) des Paares von Seitenwänden (4II, 4IV) befinden.
4. Verpackung nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei der Träger aus einem gefalteten Bogen (100) gebildet ist, der den Boden (4I) und die Seitenwände (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V) definiert.
5. Verpackung nach Anspruch 4, wobei die Seitenwände (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V) mit entsprechenden Einsteck- oder Eingriffsabschnitten versehen sind, um sich in einer in Bezug auf den Boden (4I) erhöhten Position gegenseitig zu stützen.
6. Verpackung nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei eine oder mehrere der Seitenwände entlang einer im Wesentlichen parallel zum Boden (4I) verlaufenden Faltlinie (105) gefaltet sind, sodass sie an den entsprechenden Teilen des Produkts (P) haften bleiben.
7. Verpackung nach einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei die äußere Hülle (2) aus einem um das Produkt (P) gewickelten Verpackungsbogen gebildet ist und gemäß den Verpackungsmodalitäten vom Typ Flowpack versiegelt ist.
8. System zum Ausstellen oder Verpacken einer Vielzahl von Verpackungen, aufweisend:
 - eine erste Verpackung gemäß einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche;
 - eine zweite Verpackung gemäß einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, die sich auf der ersten Verpackung befindet, und zwar in einem Zustand, in dem der Boden (4I) des Trägers (4) der zweiten Verpackung auf dem Paar von Seiten-

wänden (4II, 4IV) des Trägers der ersten Verpackung aufliegt und von diesem getragen wird, ohne das in der ersten Verpackung enthaltene Produkt (P) zu beschweren.

Revendications

1. Emballage (10) pour un produit alimentaire, comprenant :
 - un produit (P) alimentaire ;
 - une enveloppe externe (2) qui enveloppe complètement ledit produit (P) de manière à définir une chambre fermée (C) contenant ledit produit ; et
 - un support (4), sur lequel est placé ledit produit (P), qui est logé à l'intérieur de ladite chambre fermée (C) conjointement avec ledit produit (P) ledit emballage étant **caractérisé en ce que** ledit support (4) comprend une base (4I) sur laquelle ledit produit repose, et des parois latérales (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V) qui entourent ledit produit, lesdites parois latérales comprenant une paire de parois latérales (4II, 4IV) qui sont placées dans des positions opposées l'une à l'autre par rapport audit produit (P) et ont une hauteur telle qu'elles font saillie au-dessus dudit produit (P), dans lequel ladite paire de parois latérales (4II, 4IV) sont configurées pour constituer un support pour un autre emballage positionné directement au-dessus dudit emballage, et dans lequel ladite paire de parois latérales (4II, 4IV) présentent des bords supérieurs (42) respectifs qui sont espacés d'une distance plus courte que la taille de ladite base (4I) dans une direction correspondante.
2. Emballage selon la revendication 1 ou la revendication 2, dans lequel ladite paire de parois latérales (4II, 4IV) présentent des bords supérieurs (42) respectifs qui sont situés à une hauteur plus grande qu'une surface supérieure dudit produit (P), mesurée à partir de la base (4I).
3. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel les autres parois latérales (4III, 4V) dudit support comportent des bords supérieurs (43) qui sont situés à une hauteur plus basse que les bords supérieurs (42) de ladite paire de parois latérales (4II, 4IV), mesurée à partir de ladite base (4I).
4. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel ledit support est constitué d'une feuille pliée (100) définissant ladite base (4I) et desdites parois latérales (4II, 4III, 4IV, 4V).

5. Emballage selon la revendication 4, dans lequel lesdites parois latérales (4II, 4111, 41V, 4V) sont pourvues de portions de rainurage ou de mise en prise pour se supporter les unes les autres dans une position relevée par rapport à ladite base (41). 5
6. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel une ou plusieurs desdites parois latérales sont pliées le long d'une ligne de pliage (105) sensiblement parallèle à ladite base (41) de manière à rester adhérentes à des parties correspondantes dudit produit (P). 10
7. Emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel ladite enveloppe externe (2) est formée par une feuille enveloppante enveloppée autre dudit produit (P) et scellée selon les modalités d'emballage d'un type « flowpack ». 15
8. Système de présentation ou d'emballage d'une pluralité d'emballages, comprenant : 20
- un premier emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes ;
 - un second emballage selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, qui est placé sur ledit premier emballage dans une condition dans laquelle la base (4I) du support (4) dudit second emballage repose sur ladite paire de parois latérales (4II, 41V) du support dudit premier emballage et est supportée par celle-ci, sans peser sur le produit (P) contenu dans ledit premier emballage. 25 30 35

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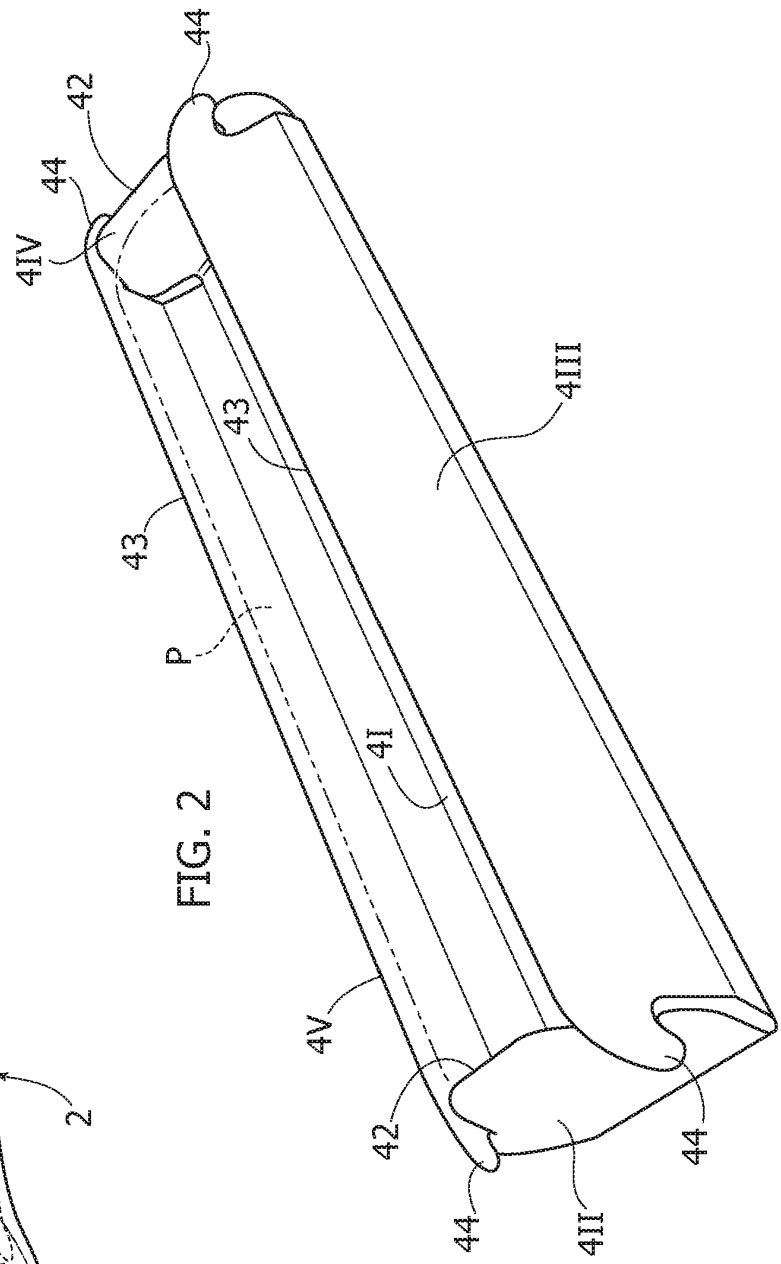
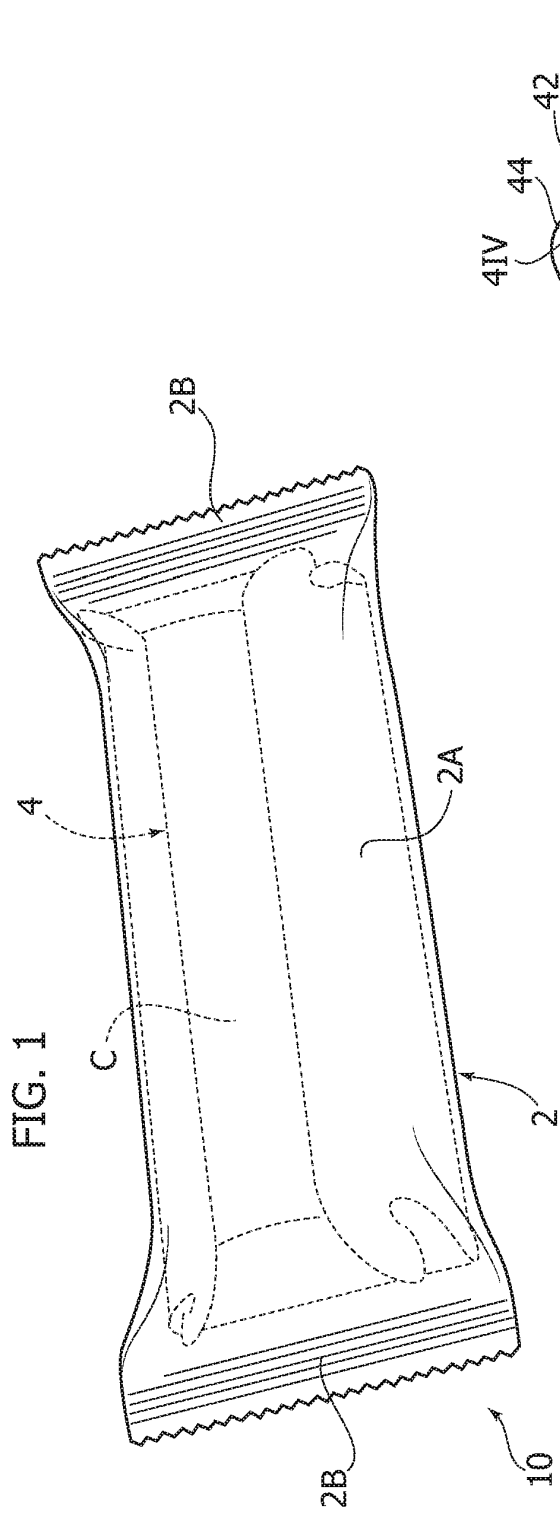


FIG. 3

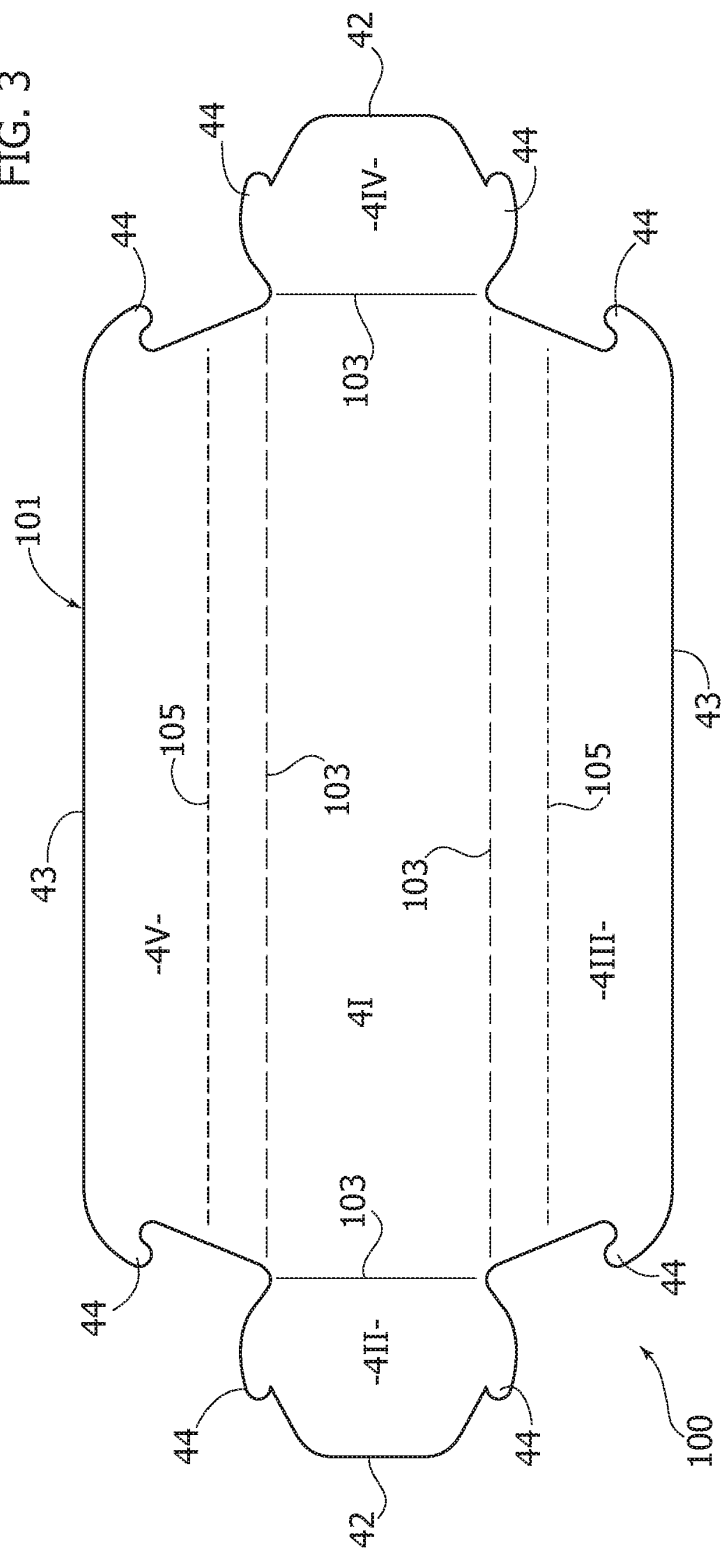
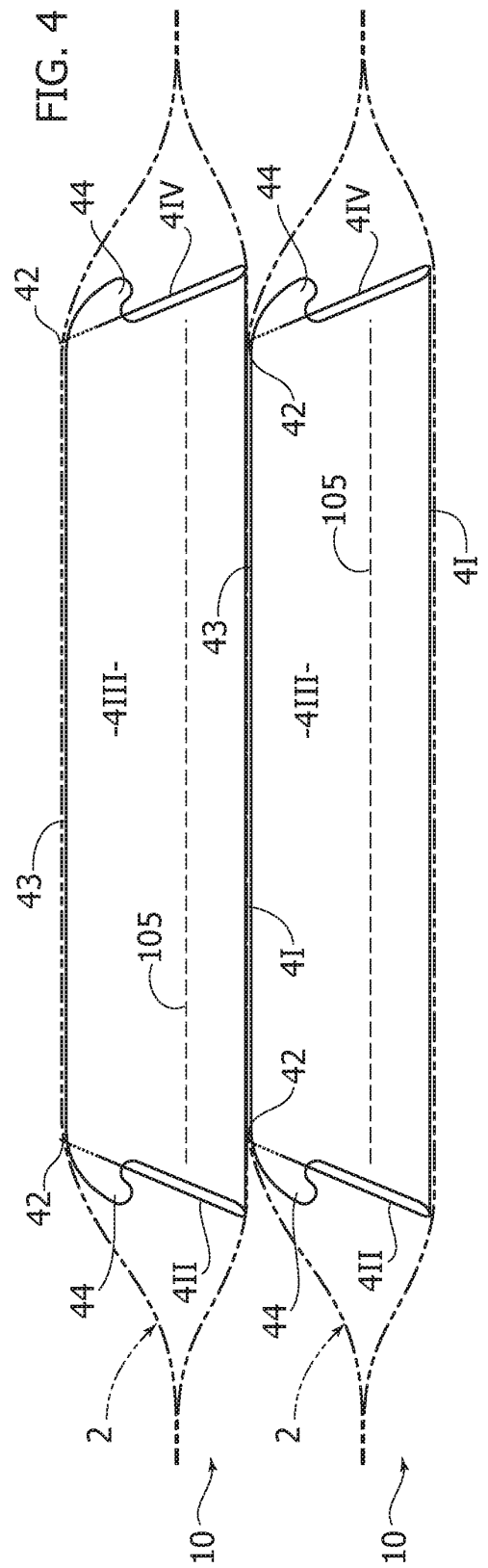


FIG. 4



REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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