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(54) **CONTAINER**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A blank (1) of stiff yet foldable sheet material erectable into a container base (3), comprising a rectangular bottom panel (10), a pair of side wall panel means foldably connected to sides of the bottom panel and provided with end flaps (19,20; 21,22), a pair of end wall panel means each comprising a first end wall panel (27,28) foldably connected to an associated end of the bottom wall panel (1) so as to be foldable upwardly therefrom and a second end wall panel (31,32) foldably connected to the first end wall panel, and foldable gusset means (43-46) at each corner of the bottom panel connecting opposite ends of each side wall panel means to opposite ones of said end wall panel means. In the erected container base the two end flaps (19,20; 21,22) are folded against the associated first end wall panel (27,28) and the second end wall panel (31,32) of each end wall panel means is folded over the underlying end flaps.

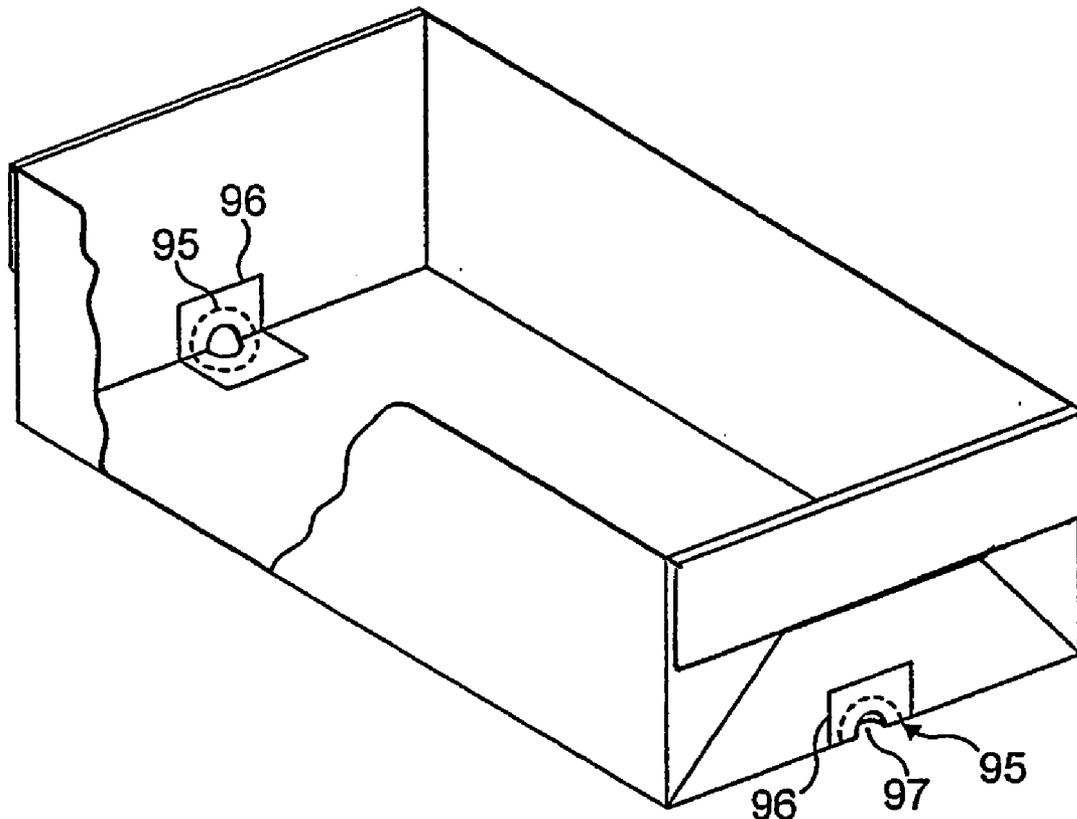
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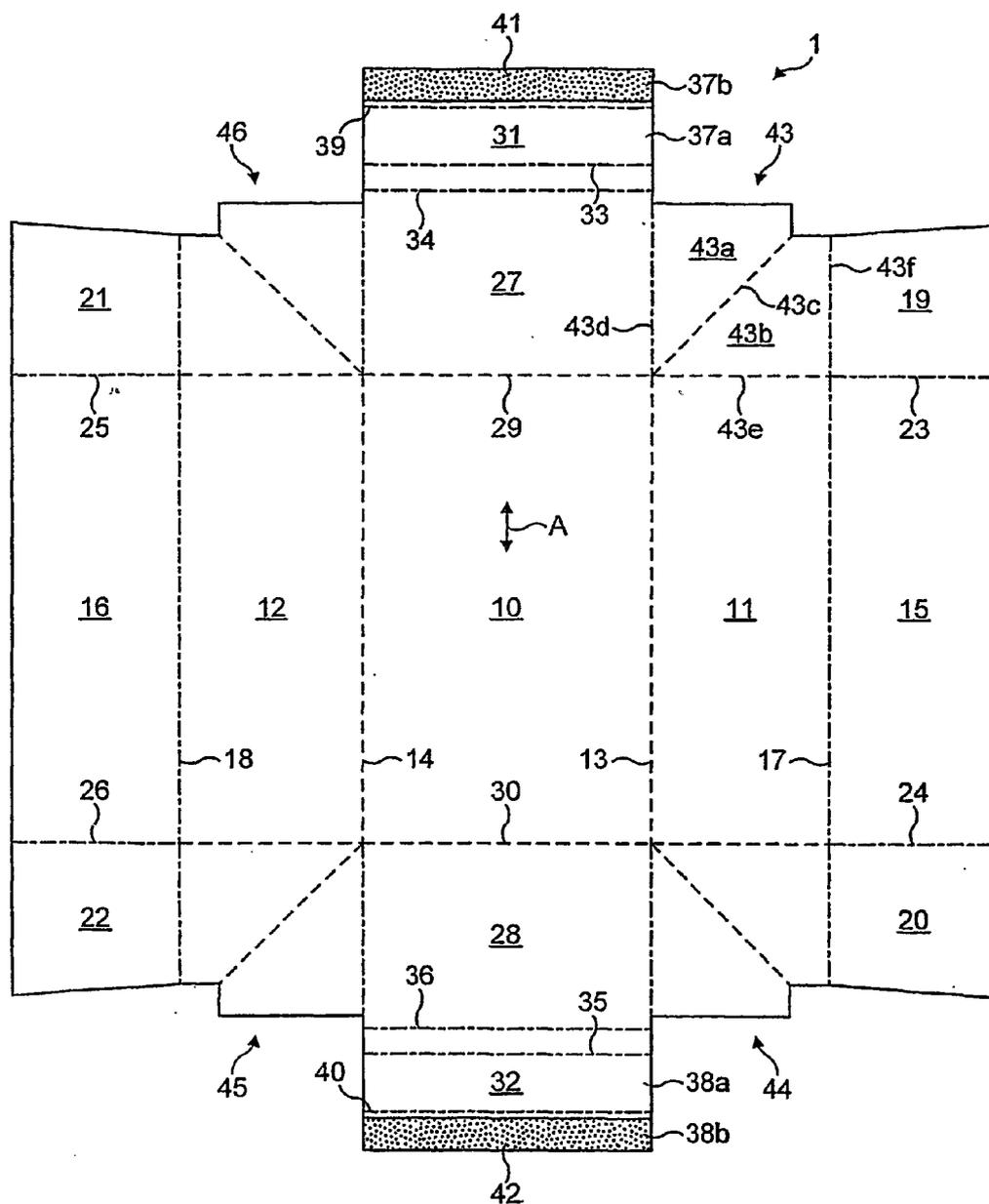


FIG. 1

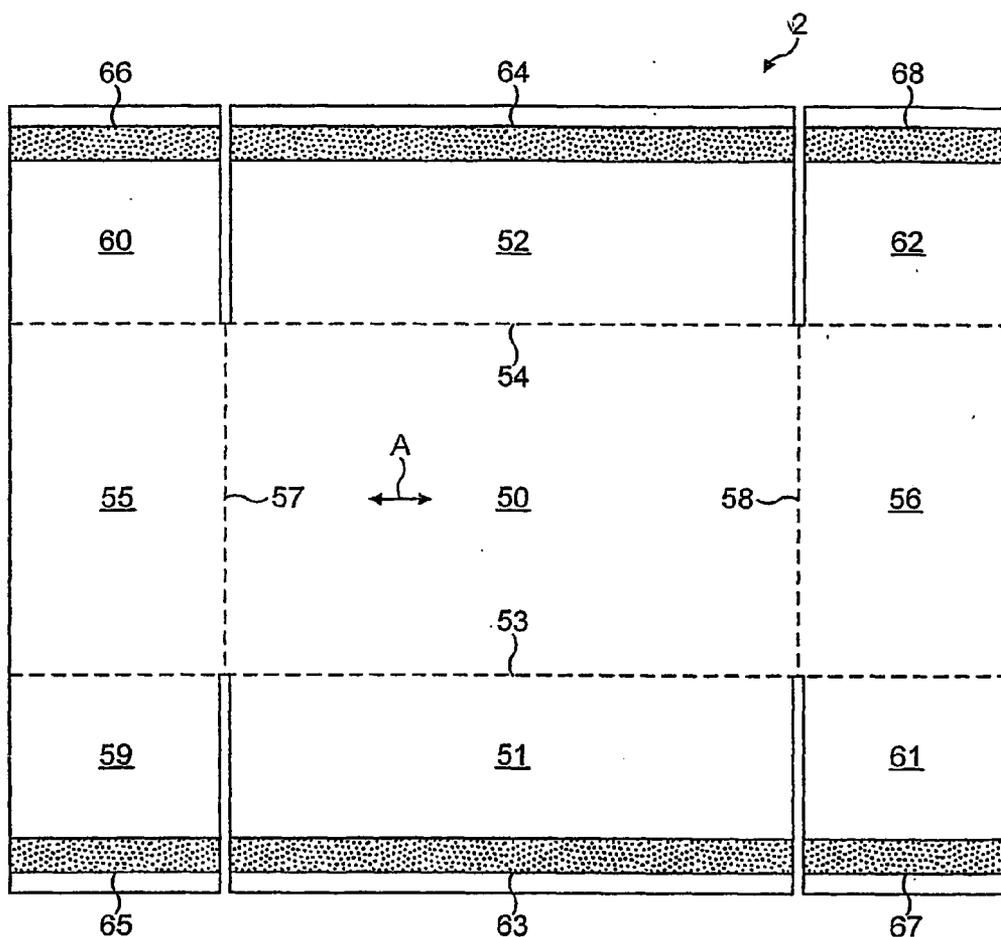


FIG. 2

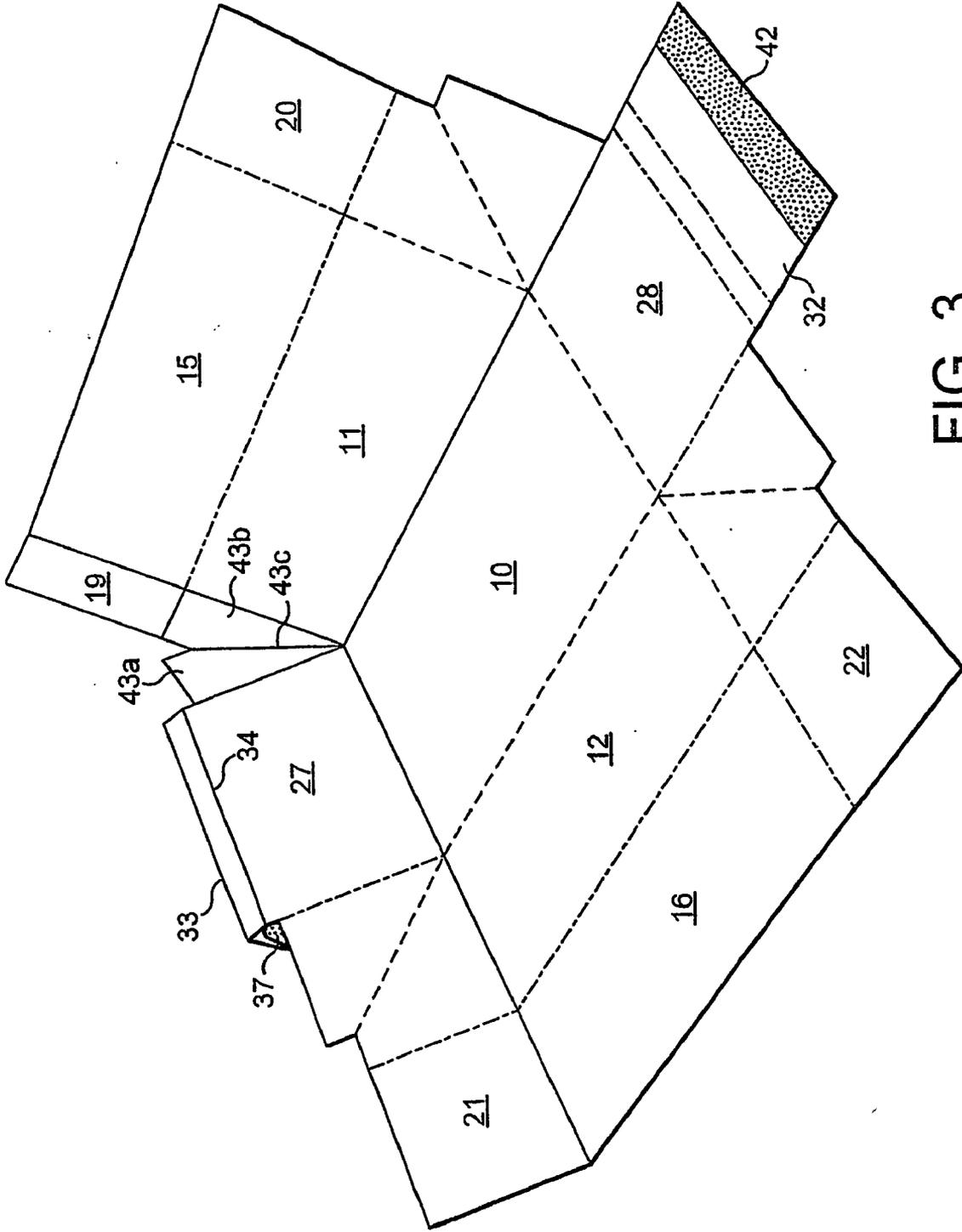
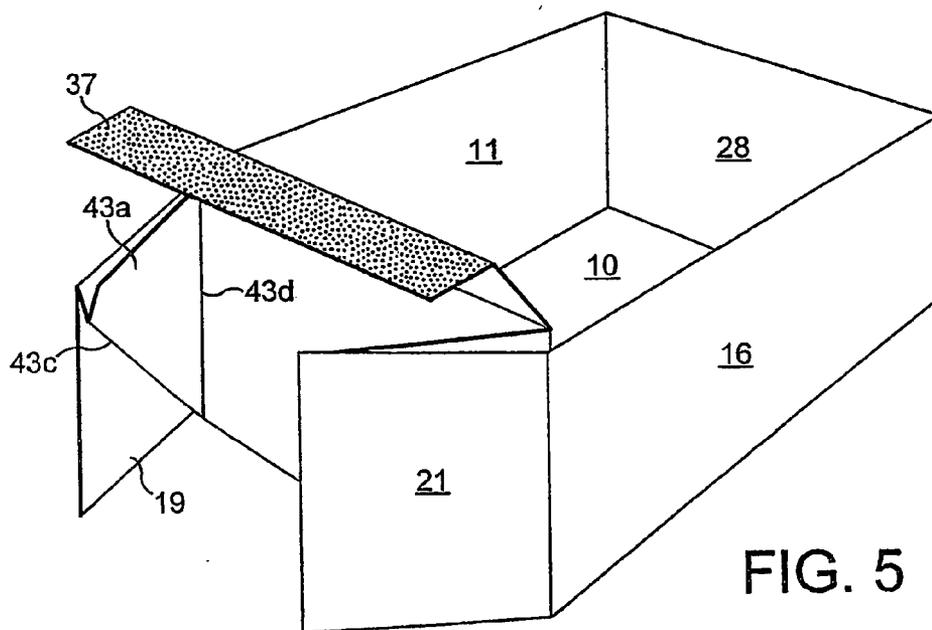
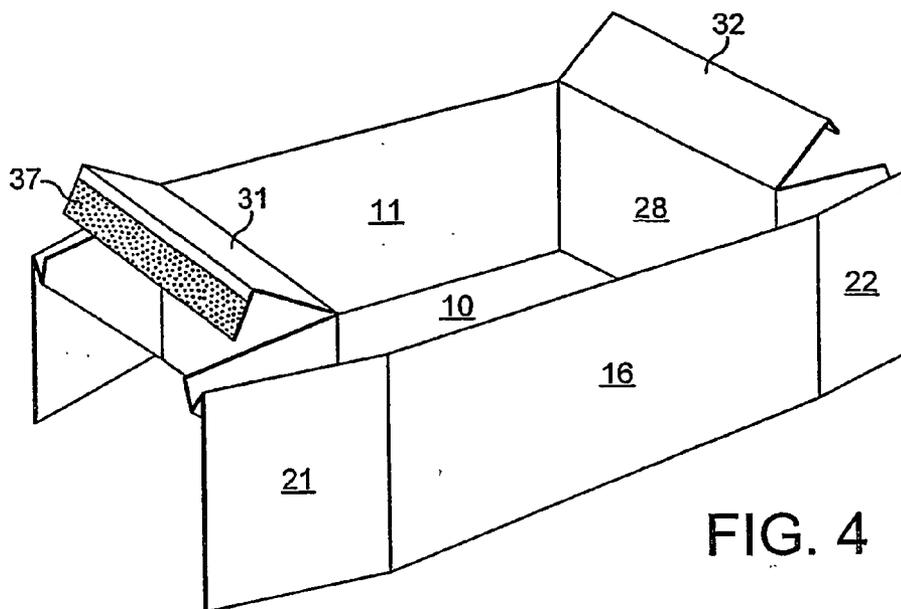
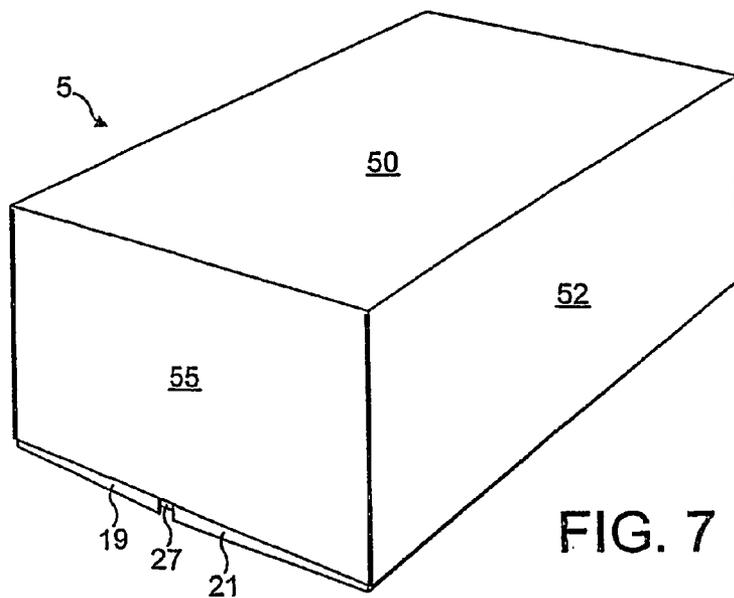
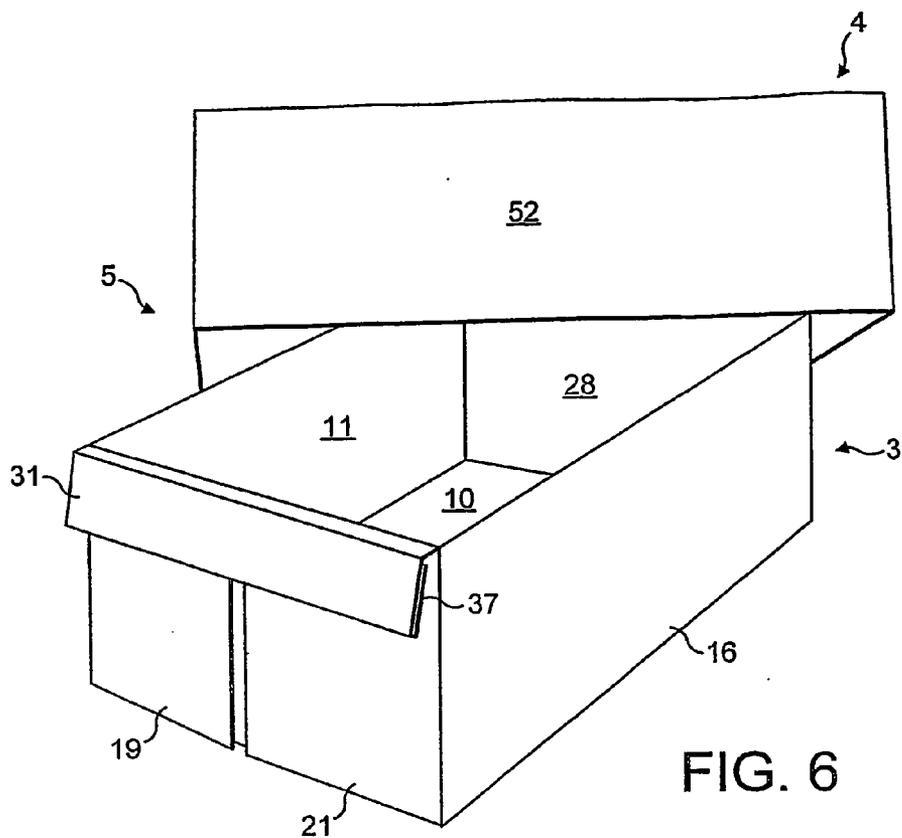


FIG. 3





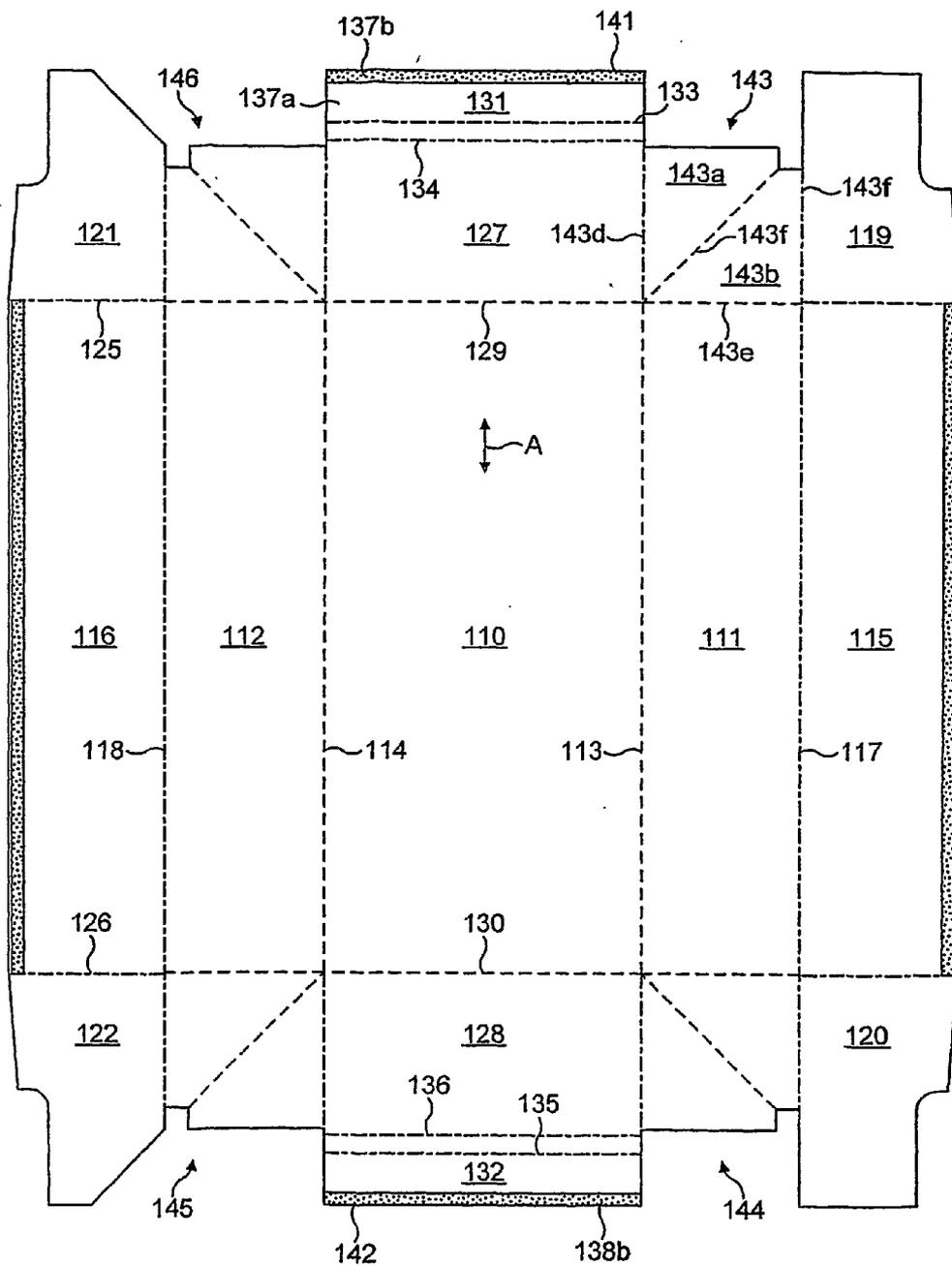


FIG. 8

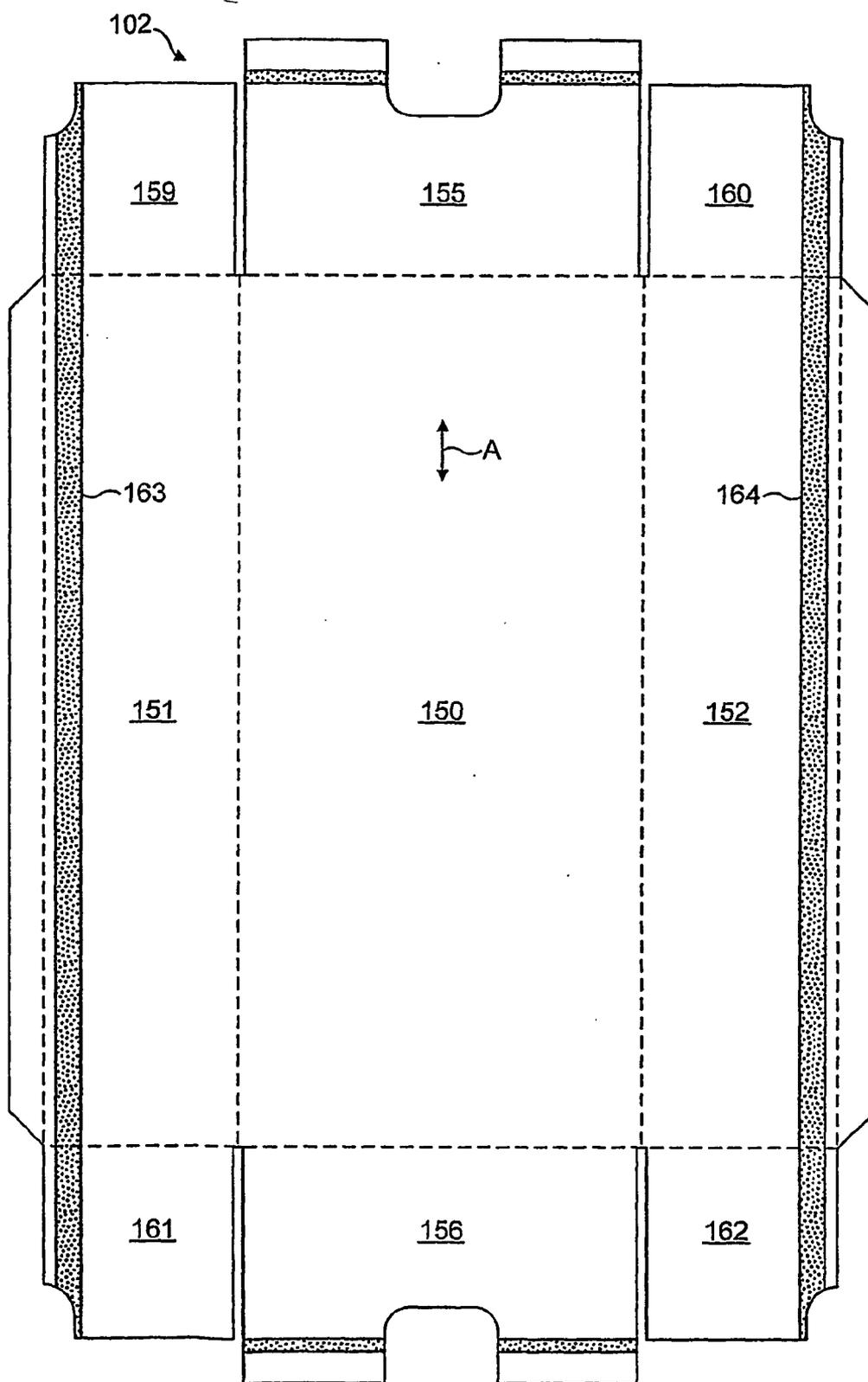
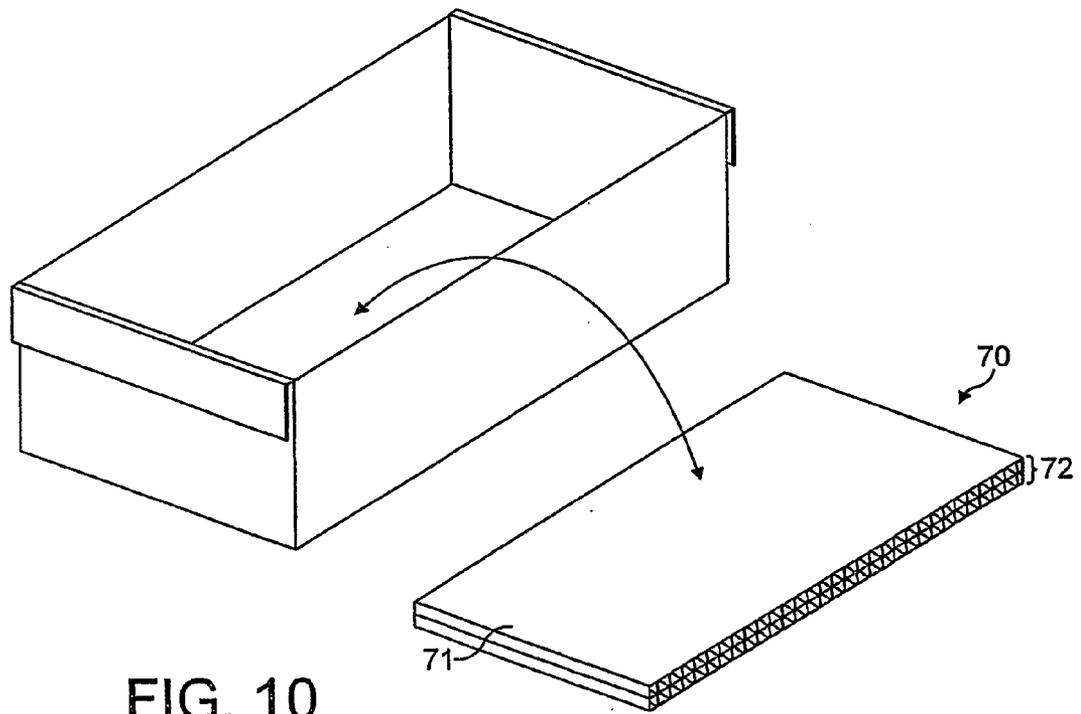


FIG. 9



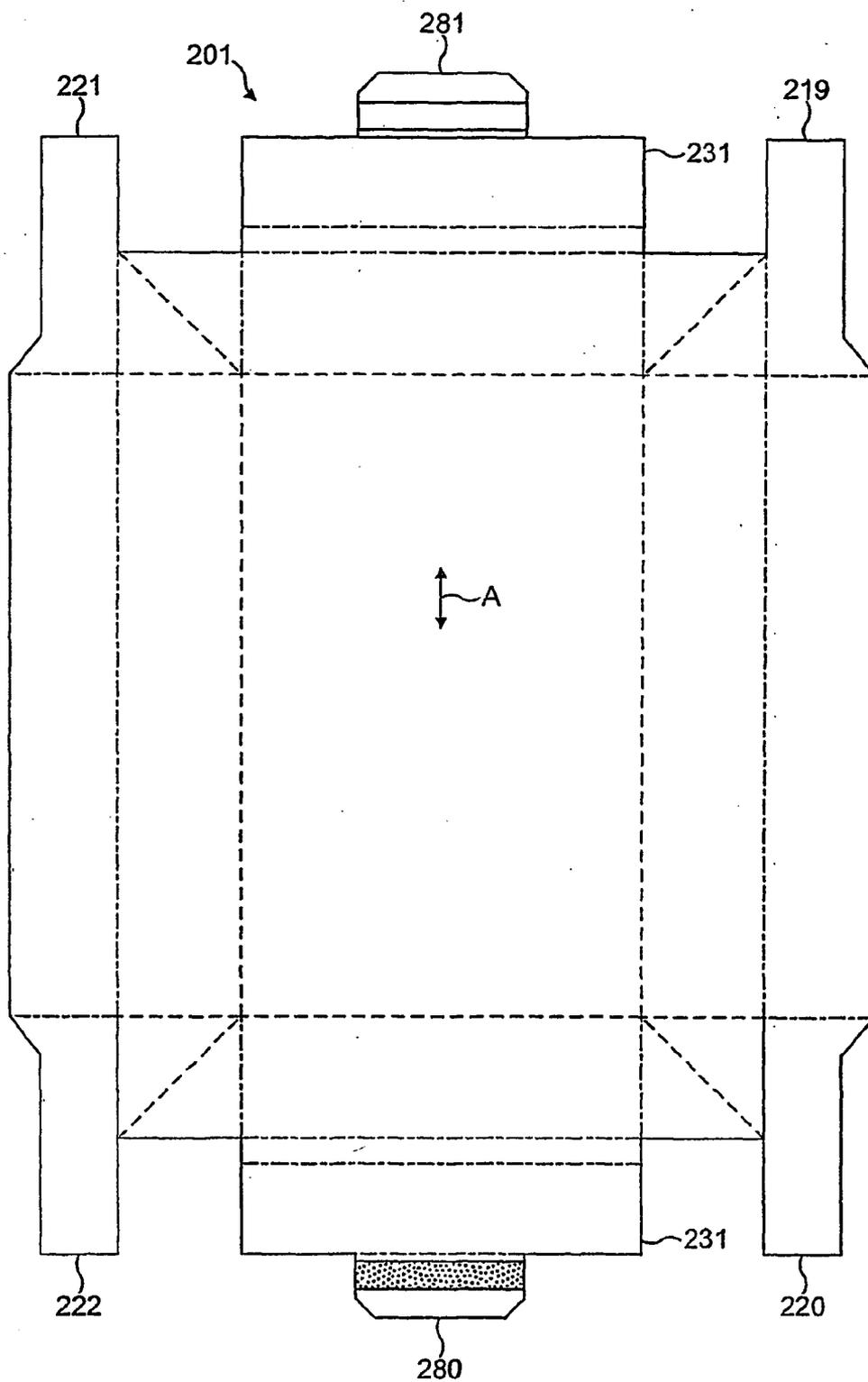


FIG. 11

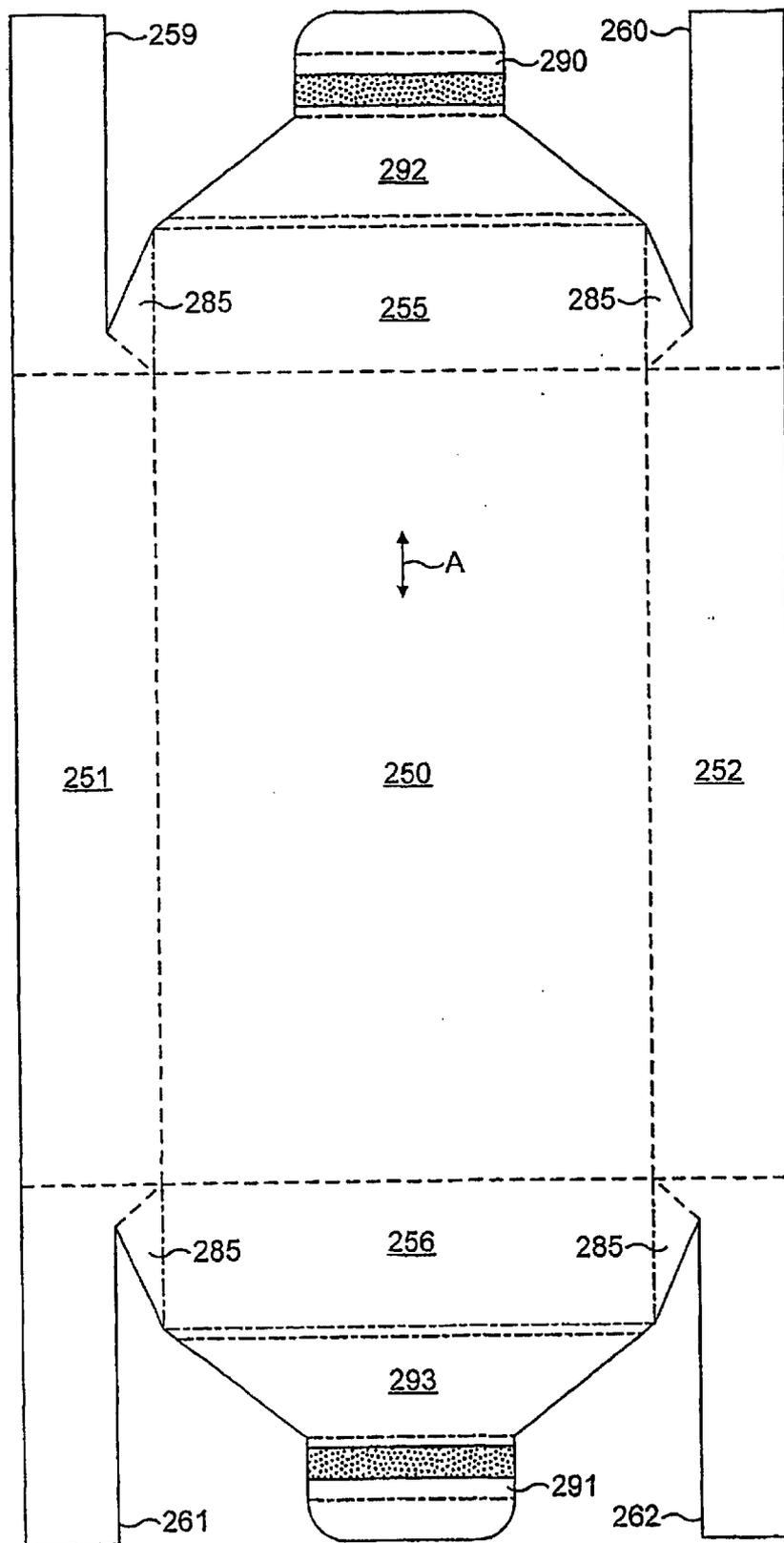


FIG. 12

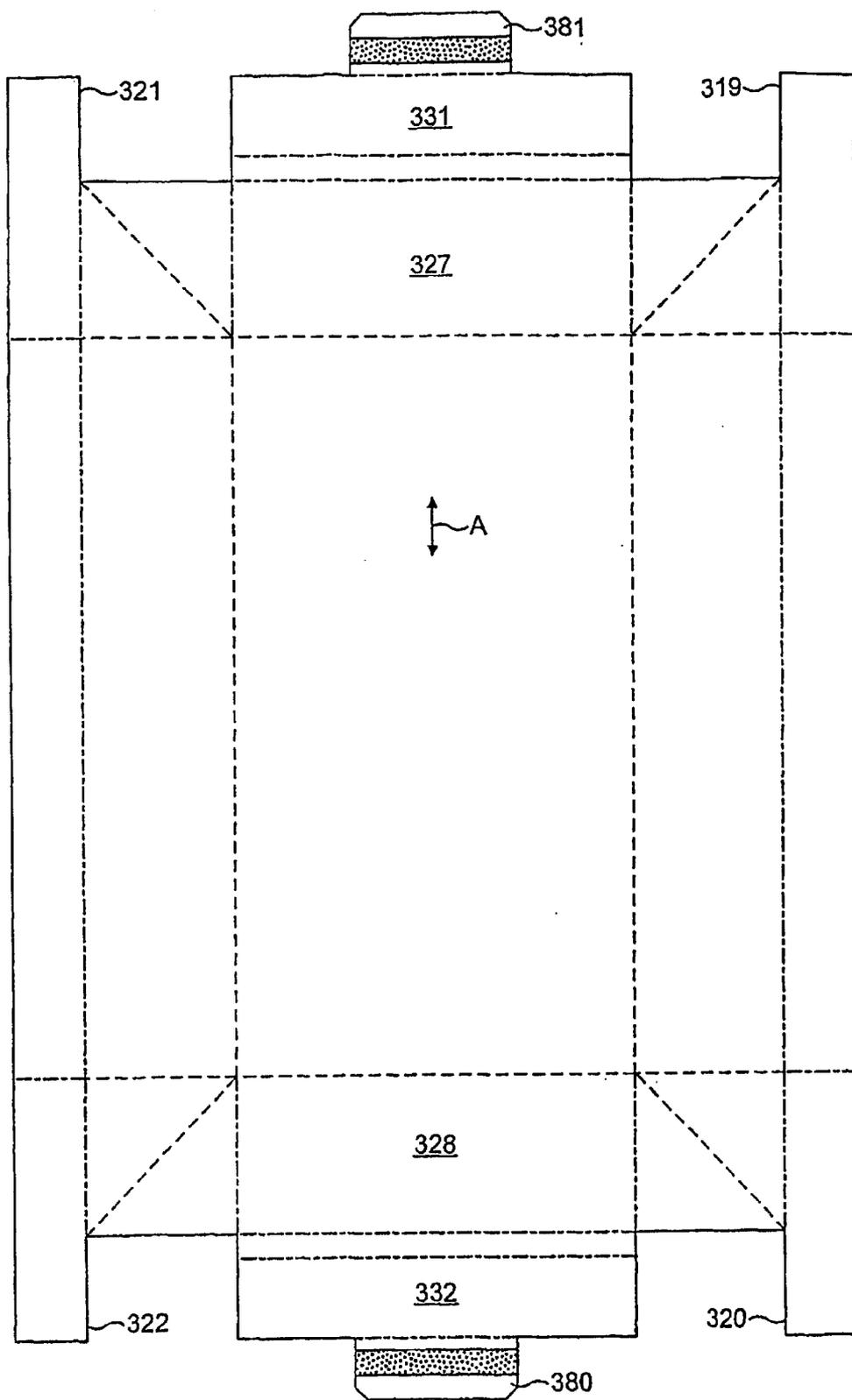


FIG. 13

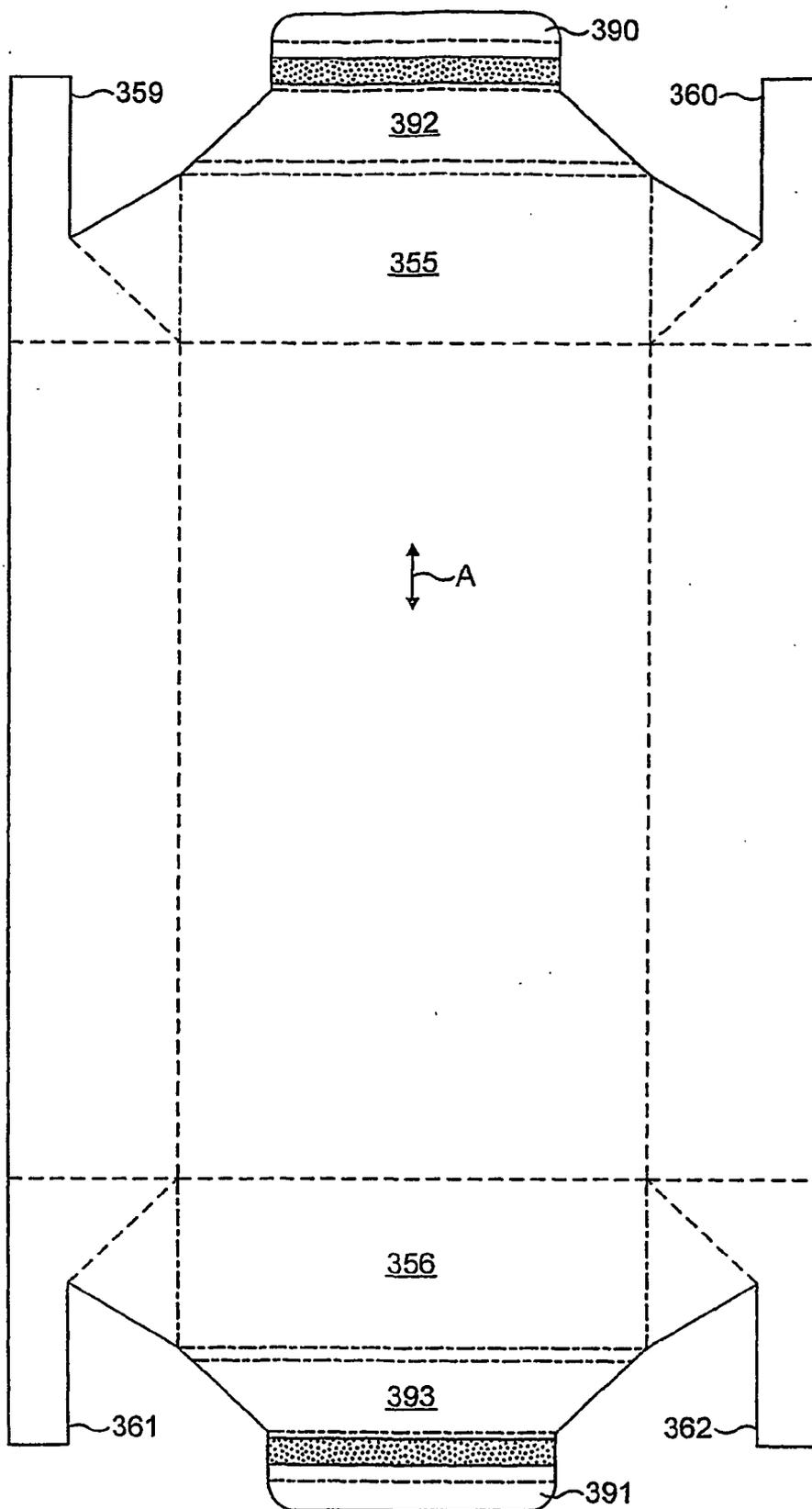


FIG. 14

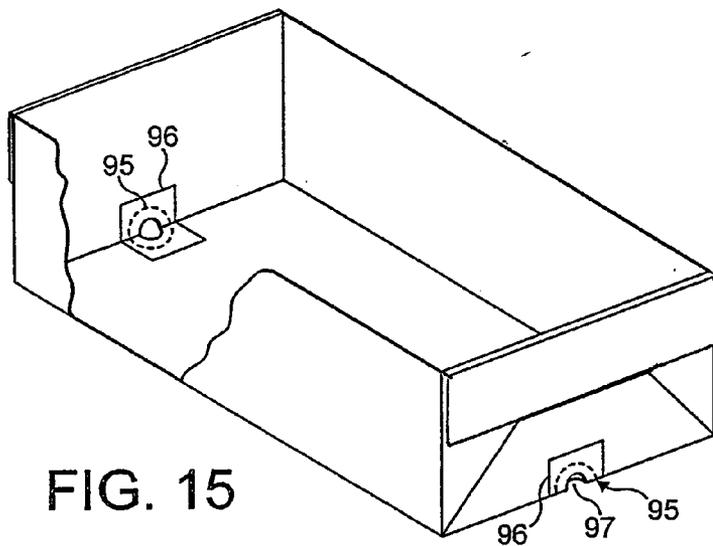


FIG. 15

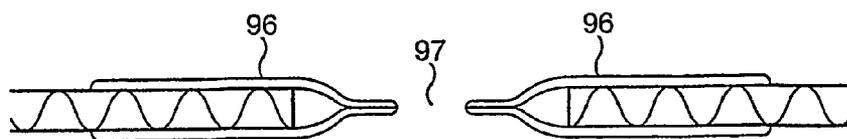


FIG. 16

CONTAINER

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to a container comprising a base and lid, each made of stiff yet foldable sheet material, e.g. corrugated material. The container is particularly, but not exclusively, suitable for containing food produce such as, for example, fresh fish. The invention also relates to a blank of stiff yet foldable sheet material, e.g. corrugated material, which is erectable into a base of a container and to a packaging method.

[0002] Conventionally fish boxes, i.e. boxes used for the packing, storage and dispatch of fish, have been made from wood or plastics material. Such boxes are often filled on board deep-sea trawlers and take up valuable deck and storage space when not in use. These known fish boxes are relatively expensive and, as such, are re-used after being cleaned. However, it is difficult effectively to clean such fish boxes to the required hygienic standards.

[0003] It is desirable for fish boxes to have good thermally insulating properties so that fresh fish stored within the boxes do not become too hot. It is difficult to provide relatively cheap, thermally insulating fish boxes made of wood or plastics material.

[0004] It has been proposed in U.S. Pat. No. 3,937,390 to manufacture a fish box from corrugated board provided with a water-repellent impregnation. In particular, blanks of such impregnated corrugated board can be stored on board a trawler and erected when required into fish boxes having single thickness walls of the corrugated board. However although such a known fish box overcomes many of the disadvantages of fish boxes made of wood or plastics material, the thermally insulating properties of a fish box having walls of single thickness corrugated board could be improved.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is an aim of the present invention to provide an easily erectable container comprising a base and a top or lid having walls made of stiff yet foldable sheet material and possessing improved thermally insulating properties. It is also an aim of the invention to provide a container base erectable from a blank of stiff yet foldable sheet material.

[0006] According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a blank made of stiff yet foldable sheet material erectable into a container base, comprising:

[0007] a rectangular bottom panel;

[0008] a pair of side wall panel means each comprising a first side wall panel foldably connected to an associated side of the bottom wall panel so as to be foldable upwardly therefrom to provide one layer of a side wall, a second side wall panel foldably connected to the first side wall panel so as to be foldable over against the latter to provide a second layer of the side wall, and end flaps foldably connected to opposite ends of the second side wall panel;

[0009] a pair of end wall panel means each comprising a first end wall panel foldably connected to an associated end of the bottom wall panel so as to be foldable upwardly therefrom to provide one layer of an end wall, and a second end wall panel foldably connected to the first end wall panel; and

[0010] foldable gusset means at each corner of the bottom panel connecting opposite ends of each side wall panel means to opposite ones of said end wall panel means;

[0011] whereby in the erected container base the two end flaps associated with each end of the blank are folded against the associated first end wall panel to provide a second layer of the end wall and the second end wall panel of each end wall panel means is folded over; for connection to, the underlying end flaps.

[0012] A blank according to the invention enables a container base to be erected having double thickness side and end walls thereby enhancing the thermally insulating properties of the container base.

[0013] Conveniently, the second side wall panels are folded downwardly outside the first side wall panels in the erected container in which case the second end wall panels are also folded outside the first end wall panels. However it is also possible for the second side wall panels to be folded downwardly inside the first side wall panels and in this case the second end wall panels would be folded downwardly inside the corresponding first end wall panels.

[0014] In an embodiment of the invention more suitable for erection by a machine, each end flap is shaped so as to overlap the other end flap of the pair when the blank is erected into as container base.

[0015] Suitably the blank has means, such as adhesive means, for connecting the second end wall panels to the underlying end flaps. Typically the adhesive means comprises double-sided adhesive strip or tape one side of which is adhered to the blank and the other side of which has a removable non-adhesive covering thereon. Suitably the adhesive strip or tape is provided on the second end wall panels although, alternatively, it could be provided on the end flaps. In an alternative embodiment the means for connecting the second end wall panels to the end flaps comprise a tab on the second end wall panel arranged to be tucked between the end flaps and the first end wall panel after the second sidewall panels are folded downwardly.

[0016] Conveniently there is provided a further blank of stiff yet foldable sheet material for a top of the container, the further blank having a rectangular top panel and, foldable downwardly therefrom, side wall panels and end wall panels foldably connected to sides and ends, respectively, of the top wall panel, the side wall panels and end wall panels of the further blank being connectible, e.g. adhesively, to walls of the erected container base. By suitable dimensioning of the side wall panels and the end wall panels of the further blank the folded down panels provide an additional layer of thickness for the side and end walls of the container erected from the two blanks. Rectangular blanks of any suitable material, e.g. the same material as the blanks or a material having good thermally insulating properties, may be positioned on the bottom panel of the erected container base and/or beneath the top panel when the erected container is being dosed by the container top.

[0017] Suitably the sheet material of the or each blank comprises corrugated material, e.g. corrugated fibreboard or cardboard. Corrugated material, with its cavities, has good thermally insulating properties and these thermally insulating properties are considerably enhanced in an erected container having walls of more than a single thickness. In

the case of a fish box the provision of good thermal insulation is important since any ice added to the contents in use, e.g. whilst fish is being packed on a trawler, will thaw less quickly the better the thermally insulating properties of the walls of the fish box. Typically, the sheet material will be provided on both sides with a water resistant coating, such as a plastics material and/or wax, or a laminated finish or may be impregnated with water-repellent material. By way of example only, water-repellent corrugated sheet material is described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,626,945. The sheet material, at least for the blank of the container top, may have, on its side destined to form the outside of the container, a reflective foil covering for reflecting external heat and light radiation.

[0018] By using strips of adhesive material on the blanks to retain the erected containers in their erected condition, the containers can be erected on-site without the use of container erecting machinery.

[0019] At least one hole may be arranged in the blank to provide drainage in the erected base. For example, a hole in the stiff yet foldable sheet material may have at least one fluid resistant film applied over its periphery such as to allow fluid to flow through the hole without exposing the periphery to the fluid. In particular, a first layer of fluid resistant film may be applied to a first side of the blank and a second layer of fluid resistant film may be applied to a second side of the blank, the first and second layers of film having mutually coincident apertures which allow fluid to flow through the hole.

[0020] According to another aspect of the present invention there is provided a container base erected from a blank according to said one aspect of the present invention.

[0021] A set of blanks according to a further aspect of the invention comprises a base blank as described above and a lid blank erectable to into a lid sized to fit the container base, the second end wall panel of each end wall panel means being arranged to be spaced from the first end wall panel in the erected base so as to engage an end panel of the lid when the latter is fitted to the erected base to keep the lid so fitted.

[0022] The second end wall panel of the base blank, and said end panel of the lid blank, may in particular be sized to pass fully past one another on fitting the erected lid to the erected base, said end panel of the lid blank then engaging below a bottom edge of said second end wall panel.

[0023] The container may be provided with an absorbent pad or member positioned inside the base on top of the bottom panel. The purpose of such an absorbent pad is to absorb liquid material such as melted ice and blood from the stored contents, e.g. fish, inside the container base when the latter is in use. This is intended to prevent the stored contents from "floating" in the liquid material. Ideally, the absorbent member is intended to fit closely inside the container base, i.e. it will have substantially the same dimensions as the bottom panel so that there are gap or only small gaps between the positioned absorbent pad and the side walls of the container base. Typically, the absorbent pad comprises a liquid-impervious top layer and an absorbent bottom layer, which may itself be several layers thick. In particular the absorbent bottom layer may comprise corrugated cardboard material, layers, e.g. from 3 to 5, of paper. The pad may incorporate a bactericide or other substance for controlling possibly harmful bacteria, such as *salmonella*, *listeria* and *leionella*.

[0024] According to a still further aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of packaging products, such as food produce, comprising erecting a container base from a blank according to said one aspect of the present invention loading the container base with the products to be packaged, and dosing the container base with a top formed from the said further blank. An absorbent member may be positioned in the container base after erection of the base and before loading the container base with products.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION DRAWINGS

[0025] Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with particular reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0026] FIG. 1 is a plan of a first blank of stiff yet foldable sheet material which can be erected to form a base of a container according to the present invention;

[0027] FIG. 2 is a plan of a second blank of stiff yet foldable sheet material for a top of a container according to the present invention;

[0028] FIGS. 3 to 7 are schematic views not drawn to scale showing various stages in the erection of the blanks shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 into a container;

[0029] FIG. 8 is a plan of an alternative first blank of stiff yet foldable sheet material which can be erected to form a base of a container according to the present invention;

[0030] FIG. 9 is a plan of an alternative second blank of stiff yet foldable sheet material for a top of a container according to the present invention;

[0031] FIG. 10 is a schematic view showing the use of an absorbent member in the container base;

[0032] FIG. 11 is a plan of a further alternative first blank;

[0033] FIG. 12 is a plan of a further alternative second blank for use with the blank of FIG. 11;

[0034] FIG. 14 is a plan of yet a further alternative second blank for use with the blank of FIG. 13;

[0035] FIG. 15 is a partially cut-away view of a container according to the invention having drainage holes; and

[0036] FIG. 16 is a schematic sectional view of a drainage hole.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PARTICULAR EMBODIMENTS

[0037] FIGS. 1 and 2 show container blanks, generally designated by the reference numerals 1 and 2, made of stiff yet foldable sheet material. Blank 1 is intended to be erected into a container base 3 and blank 2 is intended to form a container top 4 of a container 5, for example a fish box, shown in FIGS. 6 and 7.

[0038] A particularly suitable material for the blanks 1 and 2 which has good thermally insulating properties is corrugated material, e.g. corrugated fibreboard or corrugated cardboard, having a pair of spaced apart flat parallel outer liner sheets and one or more fluted or corrugated sheets between these outer liner sheets. If more than one, e.g. two, fluted/corrugated sheets are provided they are separated by one or more intermediate flat sheets. In FIGS. 1 and 2 the

blank is made from corrugated fibreboard comprising spaced apart outer liner sheets which are provided with a water-resistant or water-repellent coating or lamination sandwiching a: single corrugated sheet, the flutes or corrugations of the corrugated sheets extending in the directions of double-headed arrow A. The blank 2 may be provided with a light and heat reflective layer on its lower face, i.e. the face destined to form the outside of the erected container. In the blanks 1 and 2 fold lines are represented by dashed and chain lines, the dashed lines representing folds upwardly out of the plane of the paper and the chain lines representing fold lines downwardly out of the plane of the paper. The fold lines are typically crease lines but may, for example, be full or partially perforated lines. Dotted portions of the blanks represent parts of the blank which are provided with adhesive means.

[0039] The blank 1 comprises a rectangular bottom panel 10 with a pair of side wall panel means and a pair of end wall panel means joined thereto. Each side wall panel means comprises a first side wall panel 11 (12) foldably connected to a side 13 (14) of the bottom panel 10 and a second side wall panel 15 (16) foldably connected to its associated first side wall panel 11 (12) along fold line 17 (18). Each second side wall panel 15 (16) has end flaps or panels 19 and 20 (21 and 22) foldably connected thereto about fold lines 23 and 24 (25 and 26), respectively.

[0040] Each end wall panel means comprises a first end wall panel 27 (28) foldably connected to an end 29 (30) of the bottom panel, and a second end wall panel 31 (32) foldably connected to the first end wall panel 27 (28) about a pair of closely spaced apart fold lines 33,34 (35,36). As can be seen in FIG. 1, the second end wall panels 31 and 32 are divided along fold lines 39 and 40, respectively, into inner and outer portions 37a, 37b and 38a, 38b. The upper face (as viewed in FIG. 1) of the blank 1 has double-sided self-adhesive strips 41 and 42 provided on the portions 37b and 38b, respectively. These self-adhesive strips 41 and 42 are covered by removable non-adhesive release covering strips. Alternatively (not shown) it is possible not to divide the second panels 31 and 32 by the fold lines 39 and 40 but instead to provide the self-adhesive strips 41 and 42 on the underside of the blank 1 (as viewed in FIG. 1).

[0041] At each of the four corners of the bottom panel there is a gusset means generally designated 43-46, respectively, only one (gusset means 43) of which will be described in detail hereinafter. The gusset means 43 comprises a pair of gusset panels 43a and 43b separated by a diagonal fold line 43c. Gusset panel 43a is foldably joined to the first end wall panel 27 about fold line 43d and gusset panel 43b is foldably connected to the first side wall panel 11 and the end panel 19 along fold lines 43e and 43f, respectively.

[0042] FIGS. 3 to 6 show various stages in the erection of an open-topped container from the blank 1. FIG. 3 shows initial stages of the folding of one of the side wall panel means and one of the end wall panel means relative to the bottom panel 10. In FIG. 4 it can be seen how the second side wall panels 15 and 16 are folded outwardly back against first side wall panels 11 and 12, respectively to form double thickness side walls. From FIGS. 4 to 6 it can be seen how the end flaps or panels 19-22 and gusset means 43-46 are folded flat against the outside of the respective first end wall

panels 27 and 28 to form at least double thickness end walls for the open-topped container. In the final stage of the erection of the open-topped container, the release covering strips are removed from the self-adhesive strips 41 and 42, the outer portions 37b and 38b of the end wall panels 31 and 32 are folded back against the inner portions 37a and 38a, respectively, of the end wall panels 31 and 32 and the folded over panels 31, 37 and 32, 38 are pressed against the underlying end panels 19, 21 and 20, 22 to be adhered thereto by the self-adhesive strips 41 and 42 (see FIG. 6).

[0043] The blank 2 comprises a rectangular top panel 50 having side panels 51 and 52 foldably joined to the top panel along sides 53 and 54, respectively, and end panels 55 and 56 foldably joined to the top panel along ends 57 and 58, respectively. End flaps 59, 60 and 61, 62 are foldably joined to opposite ends of the end panels 55 and 56, respectively. Double-sided adhesive tape is adhered to opposite side regions of the blank 2 to provide parallel adhesive strips 63 and 64 on side panels 61 and 52, respectively, and parallel adhesive strips 65-68 on end flaps 59-62, respectively. As with blank 1, the outer adhesive layer is covered by a suitable removable covering strip.

[0044] In order to close the open-topped container 3, the top 4 is erected from the blank 2. Suitably the top is not pre-erected but instead is positioned with the top panel 50 over the top of the open topped container. The end panels are then folded downwardly against the end walls of the container, the covering strip is removed from the adhesive strips 65-67 and the flaps 59-62 are folded against, and adhered to, the side walls of the container. Finally, the removable covering strips are removed from the adhesive strips 63 and 64 and the side panels 51 and 52 are folded downwardly against and adhered to, the side walls of the container (see FIG. 7).

[0045] FIGS. 8 and 9 show alternative first and second blanks respectively. Reference numerals in FIGS. 8 and 9 correspond to those in FIGS. 1 to 7 but with the addition of 100.

[0046] FIG. 8 shows an alternative first blank 101, which is largely similar to the first blank 1 of FIG. 1. The main difference is that the end flaps 119 to 122 of the alternative first blank 101 are elongated in the longitudinal direction of the blank. This means that when the blank is erected into a container, end flaps 119 and 121 overlap and end flaps 120 and 122 overlap. This provides additional strength to the ends of the container and helps in preventing buckling of the ends when the full container is pulled in a longitudinal direction.

[0047] FIG. 9 shows an alternative second blank 102 which comprises a rectangular top panel 150 having side panels 151 and 152 foldably joined to the top panel along sides 153 and 154, respectively, and end panels 155 and 156 foldably joined to the top panel along ends 157 and 158, respectively. End flaps 159, 160 and 161, 162 are foldably joined to opposite ends of the side panels 151 and 152 respectively. Double-sided adhesive tape is adhered to opposite side regions of the blank 102 to provide an adhesive strip 163 running along side panel 151 and end flaps 159, 161, and a parallel adhesive strip 164 running along side panel 152 and end flaps 160, 162. As with blank 101, the outer adhesive layer is covered by a suitable removable covering strip.

[0048] In order to dose an open-topped container erected from the blank 102, a top is erected from the blank 102. Either the top may be pre-erected or the blank 102 may be positioned with the top panel 150 over the top of the open topped container. The end panels 155, 156 are then folded downwardly against the end walls of the container. The covering strip is removed from the adhesive strips 163, 164 and the side panels 151, 152 are folded downwardly against, and adhered to, the side walls of the container. The end flaps 159-162 are then folded against and adhered to, the end panels 155, 156.

[0049] In the dosed container according to the invention the side and end walls provided by the open-topped container and the lid or top each have at least three thicknesses of blank material to provide good thermal insulation to any contents of the container. Typically, in use, the open topped container would be packed with suitable products, such as fresh fish and optionally also ice, and would be closed by the top erected from the blank 2 or 102. If used on-site on a trawler or the like, the blanks 1 and 2 or 101 and 102 can be kept in their unerected flat storage condition until a container is required to be used. Storage space is therefore not taken up by erected, non-filled containers.

[0050] One particular advantage of the erected open-topped container is that the construction is intended to protect any open ended flutes of the corrugated sheet material from contact/exposure to ice or water when it is being packed. Normally during packing ice is thrown in on top of the packed contents in a haphazard manner. However, as can be seen in the drawings, there is a minimum of exposure of the edge fluting with inner and outer protective layers throughout the design. In particular, none of the upper edges of the upstanding walls has exposed edge fluting.

[0051] Conveniently, an absorbent member 70 (see FIG. 10) may be positioned in the bottom of the erected open-topped container before the container is filled with products. The absorbent member 70 has a liquid-impervious, e.g. plastics, top layer 71 and an absorbent bottom layer 72 typically comprising a number, e.g. from 3 to 5, layers of paper, one or more layers of corrugated cardboard or other absorbent material. The purpose of the absorbent member 70 is to provide an absorbent pad at the bottom of the container for absorbing liquids; e.g. melted ice and blood from stored produce such as fish, to prevent the stored product from "swimming" in fluid. Ideally, the absorbent member 70 is sized to be similar to the bottom of the container so that there are no gaps, or only small gaps, between the edge of the absorbent pad and the walls of the container. The liquid-impervious top layer 71 provides a virtually dry surface or barrier on which the product to be packaged is supported. The absorbent member or "pad" may incorporate a bactericide for controlling possible harmful bacteria, such as *salmonella*, *listeria* and *leionella*. The bactericide or other substance may be impregnated in the paper or incorporated in glue or other material of the absorbent pad.

[0052] FIG. 11 shows a further alternative first blank 201, which is largely similar to the blank 101 of FIG. 8. However second end wall panels 231, 232 of the blank of FIG. 11 are wider than the corresponding second end wall panels of FIG. 8. Additionally tabs 280, 281 are provided at the centre of the free edges of the second end wall panels 231, 232 respectively. When the container base is erected tab 280 is

tucked underneath the overlapping bottom edges of end flaps 220 and 222 and tab 281 is tucked underneath the overlapping bottom edges of end flaps 219 and 221 to secure the second end wall panels in place.

[0053] FIG. 12 shows a further alternative lid blank 202. This has panels which correspond to those of the lid blank 102 of FIG. 9 (and designated by reference numerals with the addition of 100). However in the lid blank of FIG. 12, triangular corner pieces 285 connect end panels 255, 256 to end flaps 259-262. Also, the end flaps 259-262 are elongated. End tabs 290, 291 are provided on second end wall panels 292, 293 of the lid blank which are connected by crease lines to the first end wall panels 255, 256 respectively.

[0054] In erecting a lid from the lid blank 202, the side wall panels 251, 252 and the end wall panels 255, 256 are folded downwardly from the top panel 250. The end flaps 259-262 and triangular pieces 285 are folded to create gusseted comers thus preventing leakage even when the closed container is inverted. In contrast to the end flaps 219-222 of the base which are folded outside the first end wall panels thereof, the end flaps 259-262 of the lid blank are folded inside the first end wall panels 255, 256. Second end wall panels 292, 293 are then folded inwardly and upwardly over the end flaps 259-262 and tabs 290, 291 are tucked over and behind the end flaps.

[0055] On fitting a lid erected from the blank 202 to a base erected from the blank, the second end wall panels 231, 232 of the base press against the second end wall panels 292, 293 of the lid and provide a tight fit.

[0056] FIGS. 13 and 14 show base and lid blanks respectively having an enhanced engagement between the lid and base when erected. In this embodiment of the invention the second end wall panels 331, 332 of the base and the second end wall panels 392, 393 of the lid are narrower than the corresponding panels shown in FIGS. 11 and 12. Also the base end flaps 319-322, and the outermost parts of the lid end flaps 359-362 are narrower so that tabs 380, 381, 390, 391, can still be tucked therebehind respectively.

[0057] A lid erected from the blank of FIG. 14 has its second end wall panels 392, 393 extending upwardly inside the first end panels 355, 356 over only a part for example about half, of the height thereof. Similarly a base erected from the blank of FIG. 13 has its second end wall panels 331, 332 extending upwardly inside the first end panels 355, 356 over only a part of the height thereof, preferably about the same extent as the part of lid first end panels 355, 356 which are not covered by lid second end wall panels 331, 332. Thus, when the lid is fitted to the blank, there is a positive latching between the second end wall panels 331, 332 of the base, and the second end wall panels 392, 393 of the lid as the former move into the space above the latter and vice versa.

[0058] In machine-erectable versions (not shown) of the blanks 201, 202, 301 and 302 the end tabs 280, 281, 290, 291, 380, 381, 390, 391 are omitted and securing of the second end wall panels could be achieved solely by adhesive means.

[0059] It is often desirable to allow drainage of fluid, such as melt-water resulting from ice packed around produce in the container. To this end drainage holes may be provided. For example, as shown in FIG. 15, drainage holes 95 can be

provided at the crease between the bottom panel and the walls (here the end walls) of the container base. Simply providing a hole in the corrugated sheet material may be unacceptable because of the possible ingress of fluid into the flutes of the material. Thus, water resistant films, preferably in the form of adhesive patches **96** having drainage apertures **97**, are applied to the holes. As shown in **FIG. 16**, the patches **96** are applied to both sides of the blank and prevent fluid reaching the edges of the holes **95** that would otherwise be exposed.

[**0060**] If desired additional flat, rectangular thermally insulating blanks (not shown) may be positioned in the bottom of the erected open-topped container before the latter is filled with products and on top of the filled container just before the lid is fitted over the container. In this way, additional thermally insulating layers can be provided on the bottom and top of the container.

[**0061**] The provision of a light and heat reflective layer, at least on the surface of the blank **2**, **102**, **202** or **302** destined to form the outside of the lid or top, improves the thermal insulating properties of the top.

[**0062**] Although corrugated fibreboard/cardboard is the presently preferred material for the enclosure it may be made, for example, of double skinned fluted polypropylene copolymer or of other stiff yet foldable sheet material which may or may not be corrugated or fluted and which may comprise plastics materials e.g. EVA (ethylene vinyl acetate), EPS (polyform) or PVC.

[**0063**] According to a further aspect of the invention there is provided an absorbent pad for inclusion in a fish box or other food product box and incorporating a bactericide.

1. a blank made of stiff yet foldable sheet material erectable into: a container base, comprising:

- a rectangular bottom panel;
- a pair of side wall panels each comprising:
 - a first side wall panel foldably connected to an associated side of the bottom wall panel so as to be foldable upwardly therefrom to provide one layer of a side wall;
 - a second side wall panel foldably connected to the first side wall panel so as to be foldable over against the latter to provide a second layer of the side wall; and
- end flaps foldably connected to opposite ends of the second side wall panel;
- a pair of end wall panels means each comprising:
 - a first end wall panel foldably connected to an associated end of the bottom wall panel so as to be foldable upwardly therefrom to provide one layer of an end wall; and
 - a second end wall panel foldably connected to the first end wall panel; and
- foldable gussets at each corner of the bottom panel connecting opposite ends of each side wall panel to opposite ones of said end wall panel;

whereby in the erected container base the two end flaps associated with each end of the blank are folded against the associated first end wall panel to provide a second

layer of the end wall and the second end wall panel of each end wall panel is folded over, for connection to, the underlying end flaps.

2. A blank according to claim 1, wherein each end flap is shaped so as to overlap the other end flap of the pair when the blank is erected into a container base.

3. A blank according to claim 1 comprising an adhesive element for adhering the second end wall panels to the underlying end flaps.

4. A blank according to claim 3, wherein the adhesive element comprises a double-sided adhesive strip one side of which is adhered to the blank and the other side of which has a removable non-adhesive covering thereon.

5. A blank according to claim 3 wherein the adhesive element is provided on the said second end wall panels.

6. A blank according to claim 1 wherein the sheet material comprises corrugated material.

7. A blank according to claim 6, wherein said corrugated material comprises corrugated fibreboard or cardboard.

8. A blank according to claim 1 wherein the sheet material is provided on both sides with a water resistant coating or a laminated finish or is impregnated with water-repellent material.

9. A blank according to claim 1 comprising at least one hole arranged to provide drainage in the erected base.

10. A blank according to claim 9, wherein the at least one hole comprises a hole in the stiff yet foldable sheet material and at least one fluid resistant film applied over a periphery of the hole in the stiff yet foldable sheet material such as to allow fluid to flow through the hole without exposing said periphery to the fluid.

11. A blank according to claim 10, wherein the at least one hole has a first layer of fluid resistant film applied to a first side of the blank and a second layer of fluid resistant film applied to a second side of the blank, the first and second layers of film having mutually coincident apertures which allow fluid to flow through the hole.

12. A blank according to claim 1 comprising a lid blank erectable into a lid sized to fit the container base, the second end wall panel of each end wall panel being arranged to be spaced from the first end wall panel in the erected base so as to engage an end panel of the lid when the latter is fitted to the erected base to keep the lid so fitted.

13. A blank according to claim 12, wherein the second end wall panel of the blank erectable into the base, and said end panel of the lid blank, are sized to pass fully past one another on fitting the erected lid to the erected base, said end panel of the lid blank then engaging below a bottom edge of said second end wall panel.

14. An open-topped container erected from a blank according to claim 1 comprising a rectangular bottom, double thickness side walls extending upwardly from said bottom, double thickness end walls extending upwardly from said bottom panel, a gusset at each corner of the container connecting opposite ends of each side wall to opposite ones of said end walls, end flaps connected to opposite ends of each side wall and folded with the gusset against the end walls, and a connector connecting the end flaps to the end walls.

15. A container according to claim 14 having a lid.

16. A container according to claim 15, wherein said lid comprises a rectangular top panel, lid side walls extending downwardly from said top panel, double thickness lid end walls extending downwardly from said top panel, a lid

gusset at each corner of the lid connecting opposite ends of each lid side wall to opposite ones of said lid end walls, lid end flaps connected to opposite ends of each lid side wall and folded with the lid gusset against the lid end walls, and a lid connector connecting the end flaps to the end walls.

17. A container according to claim 16, wherein the second end wall panel of each end wall panel of the base is spaced from the first end wall panel so as to engage a lid end panel forming part of the lid end wall when the latter is fitted to the base to keep the lid so fitted.

18. A container according to claim 17, wherein the second end wall panel of the base, and said lid end panel are sized to pass fully past one another on fitting the lid to the base, said end panel of the lid blank then engaging below a bottom edge of said second end wall panel of the base.

19. A container according to claim 15 wherein said lid is adhesively joined to at least one of said side walls and said end walls.

20. A container according to claim 15 wherein said lid has a reflective foil covering for reflecting external heat and light radiation.

21. A container according to claim 14 comprising an absorbent member for positioning inside the base on top of the bottom panel.

22. A container according to claim 21, in which the absorbent member has the same dimensions as the bottom panel of the container.

23. A container according to claim 21 in which the absorbent member has a liquid-impervious top layer and an absorbent bottom layer.

24. A container according to claim 21 in which the absorbent member includes a bactericide.

25. A method of packaging products, comprising erecting a container base from a blank according to claim 1 loading the container base with the products to be packaged, and closing the container base with a top formed from a further blank.

26. (canceled)

27. A blank of stiff but foldable sheet material for forming a container, comprising a hole in the stiff yet foldable sheet material and at least one fluid resistant film applied over a periphery of the hole in the stiff yet foldable sheet material such as to allow fluid to flow through the hole without exposing said periphery to the fluid.

28. A blank according to claim 27, wherein the at least one hole has a first layer of fluid resistant film applied to a first side of the blank and a second layer of fluid resistant film applied to a second side of the blank, the first and second layers of film having mutually coincident apertures which allow fluid to flow through the hole.

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