

May 1, 1973

O. E. SEIFERTH ET AL

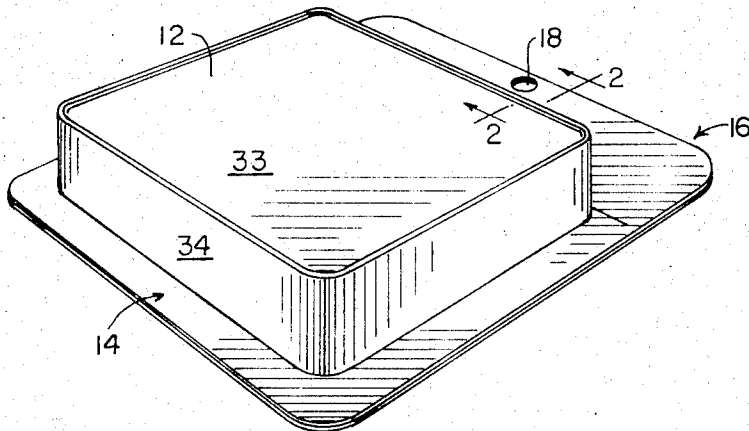
3,730,739

PACKAGE FOR INTERLEAVED PRODUCTS

Filed Sept. 29, 1971

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1.



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PACKAGE FOR INTERLEAVED PRODUCTS

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2

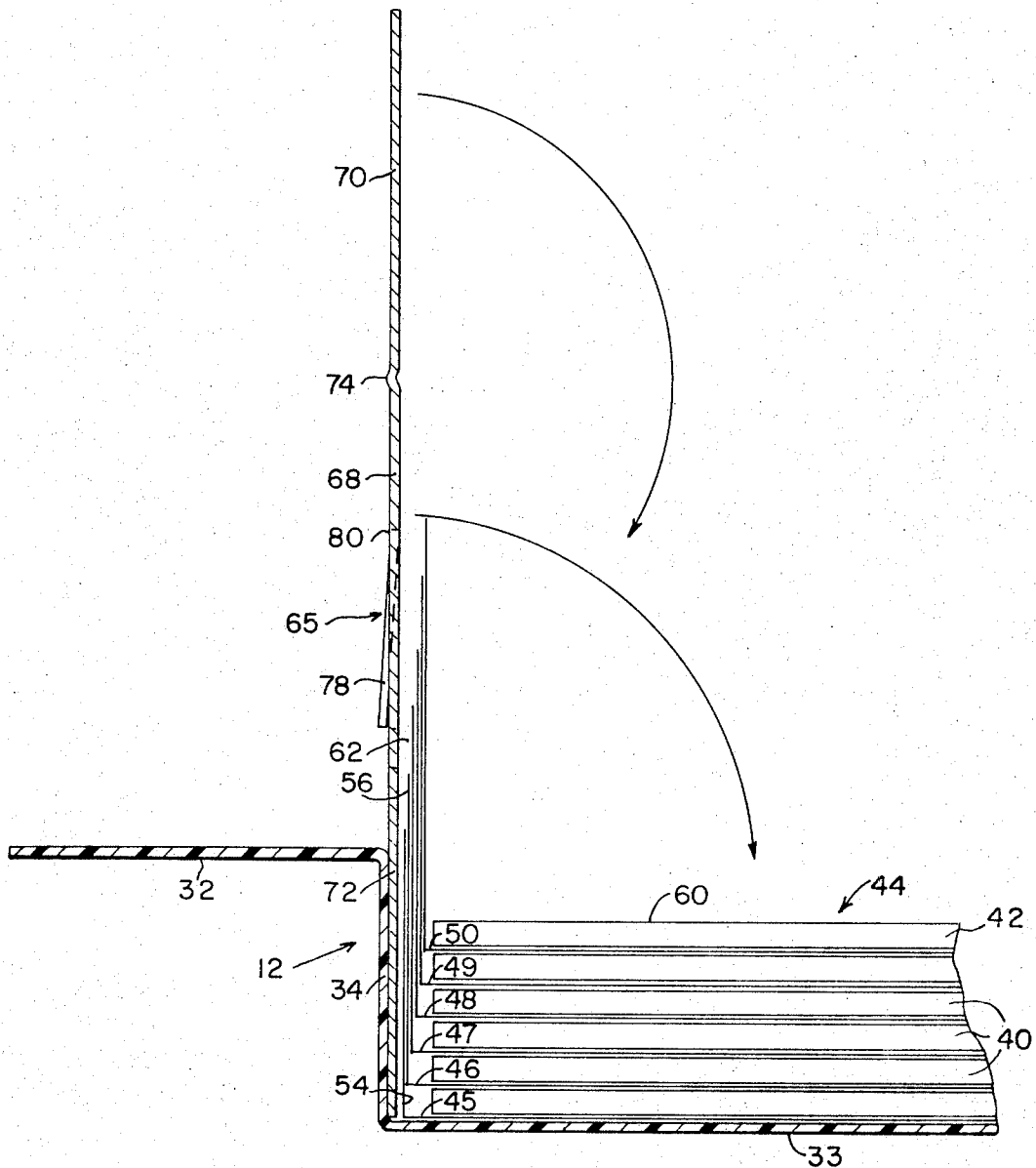


FIG. 4 -

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PACKAGE FOR INTERLEAVED PRODUCTS

Oscar E. Seiferth and Glenn M. Austin, Madison, Wis.,
assignors to Oscar Mayer & Co., Inc., Madison, Wis.

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4 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A package for convenient separation and removal of any desirable number of stacked articles, such as slices of sausage or cheese, which are of such a nature that it is necessary or desirable to separate respective, stacked articles by interleaf sheets. Uniformly sized interleaf sheets extend from between respective adjacent articles from one edge of the stack, and are folded upward along the edge of the stack to provide shingled exposed margins of the individual sheets at the top of the package. The free ends of the interleaf sheets are folded down across the top surface of the top article in the stack and are separated from the top surface of the stack for easy separation from the top article.

This invention relates to the packaging of adhesive or cohesive articles of such a nature that it is desirable or necessary to provide interleaf sheets between respective articles in the pack. It is particularly advantageous for use in packaging of stacks of slices of cohesive foods, for example, slices of liver sausage, cheese and the like.

Many relatively desirable packages have been heretofore suggested for packaging of cohesive articles such as slices of liverwurst, cheese, and the like. Also, it has been heretofore recognized that it is highly desirable to separate such articles, whether packaged in film packages or not, by interleaf sheets which, themselves, do not adhere to the cohesive or adhesive articles. However, in those packaged products in which a stack of sheets of liverwurst or sausage or cheese, or the like, is enclosed in a shaped body portion of a thin film package, it has been relatively difficult to remove individual slices from the stack without handling the slices, or without using an instrument to pry the slices apart, or without inverting the product's enclosing package for removal of most or all of the contents therefrom to facilitate separation of one or more slices from the stack.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a package in which it is reliably convenient to separate any number of slices from the stack without the necessity of directly contacting one or more slices in the stack. It is also an object to provide a separation and removal system for removing one or more slices from the stack, which system is readily incorporated into mass production packaging operations, and is characterized by great simplicity.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an improved economic package from which one or more including all slices of a cohesive material in a stack contained therein can be readily separated and removed.

These and other objects which will be apparent hereinafter are all achieved in accordance with the present invention which is described in general hereinafter and specifically in connection with a particularly preferred embodiment which is illustrated in the drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a package incorporating an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 2 is an inverted enlarged fragmentary sectional view of an edge portion of the package taken approximately along the line 2—2 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of an insert for use with the present invention; and

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FIG. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary sectional view similar to a portion of FIG. 2 showing insert 65 and ends 56 extending substantially upwardly.

Referring now to the drawings, a package is generally indicated at 10 which includes a product-containing compartment 12, and a laterally extending flange portion 14 including a label and hangable tab portion 16. Tab 16 is apertured to provide hole 18 for hanging the package 10 on a conventional peg display board or rack.

Thus, package 10 is similar in some respects to the package previously disclosed by us in our U.S. Pat. No. 3,498,018, issued Mar. 3, 1970.

Referring now to the enlarged sectional view in FIG. 2, it is seen that package 10 can also be considered to include a body-forming portion, generally indicated at 20, and a closure or lid portion generally indicated at 22. In the illustrated embodiment lid portion 22 is shown to be formed of relatively thin plastic material which has been shaped to include an offset central portion 24 and radially extending peripheral portion 26. Offset central portion 24 includes wall portion 28 and planar cover portion 30.

Body-forming portion 20 of package 10 is also formed of relatively thin plastic material to include a product-containing body portion 12 and radially outwardly extending peripheral portion 22.

Main body portion 12 includes bottom 33, and side walls 34. Mouth 36 is defined as the region between the inner faces 38 of the side walls 34 at the level at which extending portion 32 connects side walls 34.

It will be appreciated that in the illustration of FIG. 2, closure portion 22 is shown separated slightly from main body portion 20 and that upon closing or sealing the package, main body portion 22 is seated upon bottom portion 20 with side walls 28 of closure portion 22 snugly fitting within side walls 34 so that central offset portion 24 resides between side walls 34 in mouth 36. This nesting or mating of central offset portion 24 within side walls 34 adds strength to the package. In the nested or mating condition it will be appreciated that radially extending portions 32, 26 abut each other and are secured to each other to provide a peripheral seal, for example, by means of either permanent or peelable adhesive. Alternatively, peripheral portions 32, 26 can be joined in any suitable manner to provide extending portions 14, 16.

In accordance with the present invention a stack of slices 40 are placed in product compartment 12 in a combination with an arrangement of interleaves which permits ready separation of the respective slices from one another, and furthermore assures ready and convenient removal of a desired number of the slices from body portion 12 without the necessity of removing all slices 40 from body portion 12. This eliminates unnecessary handling of the contents. Sheets of interleaving parchment 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 are placed between respective slices 40. In the illustrated embodiment interleaving parchment sheets 45, 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50 are all of substantially the same size, and each includes a separator portion 52 which is substantially coextensive with and positioned under its respective slice 40. In addition sheets 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 also include respective extending portions 54 which extend from the same side 55 of stack 44.

Extending portions 54 of interleaving parchment sheets 45—50 are shown folded upward between edge 56 of stack 44 and inner face 38 of wall 34. Interleaving parchment sheets 45—50 are long enough so that upwardly folded extending portion 54 extend upwardly above the top surface 60 of top slice 42. Since interleaving sheets 45—50 are the same length and are positioned so that separate portions 52 are coextensive with

slices 40, the size of respective extending portions 54 are also equal. Thus, it will be appreciated from FIG. 2 that the upwardly folded free ends 56 will be shingled providing exposed margins 62. The dimension of the exposed margins 62 will depend mainly on the thickness of the slices 40. Free ends 56 of interleaving parchment sheets 45-50 are shown folded down over the top surface 60 of top slice 42. Thus the free overlaid ends 56 are separated one by one. In accordance with a preferred embodiment of this invention some means for separating sheets 45-50 from top surface 60 to top slice 42 are preferred when slices 40 are adhesive.

In the preferred illustrated embodiment interleaving parchment sheets 45-50 are separated from at least a portion of top surface 60 of top slice 42 by a novel insert of relatively stiff material generally indicated at 65 which is shown in cross section in FIG. 2 and in plan view in FIG. 3. Insert 65 includes a portion 66 which extends between product 40 and one side wall 34 of body portion 12, and another portion 68 extending over the shingled ends and a third portion 70 which is folded under the shingled ends 56. First and second portions 66, 68 are connected along a first score line 72, and second and third portions are connected along a second hinge line 74. Portion 68 includes tab means die cut therein and generally indicated at 76 including tab 78 which is connected to the second portion 68 by a third hinge line 80 which is located between the tab 78 and the second hinge line 74. Tab 78 is preferably made by an appropriate die cut into middle portion 68.

In forming package 10 in accordance with the present invention, a stack of slices 40 (e.g. luncheon meat, cheese, etc.) are prepared by laying respective slices 40 on respective separator portions or ends 52 of respective interleaving parchment sheets 45-50 in such a manner that substantially equal extending portion 54 of interleaving sheets 45-50 extend from the same side 55 of stack 44. Insert 65 is placed in body portion 12 with anchor portion 66 adjacent side wall 34. Stack 44 is then placed within body portion 12 with extending portions 54 adjacent insert 65, causing all extending portions 54 to be folded upwardly in the direction of top slice 42 as illustrated in FIG. 4. Thus upwardly folded extending portions 54 are positioned between edge 56 and inner face 38 of side wall 34, with anchor portion 66 of insert 65 being positioned against inner face 36 and separating upwardly folded extending portions 54 from inner face 38 of side wall 34. Flap portion 70 of insert 65 is then folded downwardly along hinge line 74 so that at least a portion of free ends 56 are positioned between flap portion 70 and middle portion 68. The insert 64 is then folded along hinge line 72 to bring flap portion 70 against the top surface 60 of top slice 42.

Cover portion 22 is then inserted into mouth 36 and peripheral portions 32, 26 are sealed together to provide improved package 10.

The purchaser of the packaged product 10, upon removal of cover 22, can grasp tab 78 and lift insert 65 to automatically separate free end 56 of parchment sheets 45-50 from upper surface 60 of top slice 42 without handling any of the slices, and, particularly, without touching the top surface 60 of top slice 42. Due to the staggered, lapped configuration of free ends 56 the customer can very conveniently grasp the interleaving parchment sheets 45-50 and can select the exposed margin portions 62 for either the top slice 42, or of any sheets 45-50 to separate any desired number of slices 40 by gripping and pulling either the margin portion 62 of the longest sheet, or of the desired number of sheets. It will be appreciated that as slices 40 are taken from top of stack 44, upwardly extending portion 54 of lowermost parchment sheet 45 will extend upwardly a greater distance above the then remaining top slice thus providing an additional free length of sheet to be trapped between fold 70 and body 68 of insert 65.

It is apparent that, in accordance with the use of the invention, it is unnecessary to remove stack 44 from body portion 12 in order to facilitate separation and removal of respective slices 40.

It will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, in view of the general and specific disclosure herein, that many variations can be made in the present invention and different embodiments provided without departing from the scope thereof. The specific examples disclosed herein are for the purpose of illustration, and the scope of the invention is not to be limited thereby.

For example, the use of a preferred insert 64 is disclosed herein as one means of separating face ends 56 from top surface 60 of top slice 42. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that placement of a sheet of parchment against the top surface 60 of top sheet 42 would also serve as a means for separating the free ends 56 from that surface. Likewise, the extending portion 54 can alternatively be provided of sufficient length so that the free ends 56 can be folded back on top of themselves, whereby the extending portions 54 separate free ends 56 from top surface 60.

Likewise, the invention can be used with square, round, rectangular, triangular, and other shaped articles, and the invention is not to be considered as being limited to its most preferred embodiments such as that illustrated in which slices having relatively square cross section are packaged.

Likewise, although the invention is advantageously utilized in connection with the packaging of cohesive food slices, for example, slices of liverwurst, cheese, and the like, it is contemplated that the packaging system is generally applicable to the convenient packaging of any cohesive articles for example, sausage, and cheese slices, refrigerated biscuits, frozen foods, and the like. It is also satisfactory for use with other cohesive articles, for example, "slugs" or slices of moldable, uncured rubber, plastic, or the like which are of carefully predetermined weight, and prepared for use in compression molding and the like. It is also highly satisfactory for use with thin articles having surfaces which must be protected such as metal discs, glass slides or plates, and the like.

Consequently, the invention is not to be considered as being limited by the specific examples disclosed herein, and the scope of the invention is considered to be as broad as the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. As an article of manufacture, a packaged, sliced food product comprising a plurality of slice-like pieces of foodstuff in a stack, a container having a body portion for receiving said stack of slices therein, said body portion having a close-fitting side wall surrounding the stack, and having a mouth, said stack having a top slice, said top slice being adjacent said mouth, a plurality of interleaved sheets, at least one of said sheets being positioned between respective adjacent slices in said stacked array, each of said interleaf sheets having an extending portion which extends in the same direction from said stacked array, said extending portions of said interleaf sheets extending from an edge of said stacked array upwardly between the stacked array and an adjacent inside face of said body portion for a sufficient distance for the free end of each of said sheets to extend above said top slice, the free ends of the respective extending portions of said sheets being folded down over at least a portion of said top slice, and top separating means for maintaining at least a portion of the folded down free ends out of contact with the top slice of said food stuff.

2. The article of manufacture of claim 1 wherein said top separating means comprises an insert having a first portion positioned between said extending portions and said opposite inside face of said body portion, and a second portion extending across at least a portion of the top of said stacked array and said folded down free ends closely adjacent thereto, said first portion and said second

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portion being pivotally folded, said second portion including a folded-under flap positioned between at least a portion of the top of said top slice and at least a portion of said folded-down free ends.

3. The article of manufacture of claim 1 wherein each respective interleaf sheet is substantially the same size, whereby the folded free ends are shingled above said top slice.

4. The article of manufacture of claim 1 wherein said top separating means comprises an insert of relatively stiff material having a first, anchor portion, a second middle portion and a third flap portion, the first anchor portion being positioned between said extending portions and said opposite inside face of said body portion, said second middle portion extending across at least a portion of the top of said stacked array and said folded down free ends closely adjacent thereto, said flap portion being positioned between at least a portion of the top of said top slice and at least a portion of said folded down free ends, said first and second portions being pivotally folded along a first hinge line, said second and third portions

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being pivotally connected along a second hinge line and wherein said second middle portion includes pull tab means including a tab connected to said second portion along a third hinge line which is positioned between said tab and said second hinge line.

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15 FRANK W. LUTTER, Primary Examiner

S. L. WEINSTEIN, Assistant Examiner

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