

(12) PATENT
(19) AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

(11) Application No. **AU 199923842 B2**
(10) Patent No. **728228**

(54) Title
Continuous manufacturing process for sections or plates and installation for
implementation of the process and the products thus obtained

(51)⁶ International Patent Classification(s)
B29C 047/02 B32B 009/06
B29C 043/24 B32B 031/20
B29C 043/28 B65D 061/00

(21) Application No: 199923842 (22) Application Date: 1999 .04 .20

(30) Priority Data

(31) Number (32) Date (33) Country
9804970 1998 .04 .21 FR

(43) Publication Date : 1999 .10 .28
(43) Publication Journal Date : 1999 .10 .28
(44) Accepted Journal Date : 2001 .01 .04

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

CONTINUOUS MANUFACTURING PROCESS FOR SECTIONS OR PLATES
AND INSTALLATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCESS AND
THE PRODUCTS THUS OBTAINED

This invention concerns a continuous manufacturing process of sections (11) or plates from soft matter (2) which is extruded under heat and encased by at least one strip sheet (3, 3'), said
5 encased matter subsequently being calendered, shaped to the desired profile and finally cut into lengths, process which is particularly remarkable in that the matter used is a mixture containing a non-synthetic binder and water, so that the mixture becomes sticky by
10 undergoing said heat treatment in an aqueous medium, which assures adhesion of the casing onto the matter during calendering, while the product undergoes at least one drying operation after said calendering operation.

15 The binder is advantageously starch-based and the mixture may also contain a plasticizer, for example containing urea.

The invention also concerns an installation for implementation of the process and the products thus
20 obtained.

Figure 1.

AUSTRALIA

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**COMPLETE SPECIFICATION
(ORIGINAL)**

Application Number: Class Int. Class
Lodged:

Complete Specification Lodged:
Accepted:
Published:

Priority

Related Art:

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Invention Title:

**CONTINUOUS MANUFACTURING PROCESS FOR SECTIONS OR PLATES AND
INSTALLATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCESS AND THE
PRODUCTS THUS OBTAINED**

Our Ref : 577179
POF Code: 359314/359322

**The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best
method of performing it known to applicant(s):**

CONTINUOUS MANUFACTURING PROCESS FOR SECTIONS OR PLATES
AND INSTALLATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCESS AND
THE PRODUCTS THUS OBTAINED

This invention relates to a continuous manufacturing process for sections or plates, and more particularly for corner bars. The invention also concerns an installation to implement the process and,
5 needless to say, the products manufactured using said process.

For the manufacture of corner bars, strips of paper or cardboard are known to be glued together and covered with a casing that is preferably impermeable.

10 Also, paper-polythene complexes are known to be glued together under a flame and subsequently encased or not.

Products entirely in plastic material also exist.

However, French patent 2 528 350 filed by the
15 same holder, suggests in interesting manner that sections and plates can be made from a soft material which is extruded under heat and encased in at least one strip sheet, which unit is subsequently calendered, shaped to the desired profile and finally cut into
20 lengths.

The material used is a thermoplastic material which may or may not contain other materials, and the process described in the above-mentioned patent is chiefly innovative compared with some other processes
25 using thermoplastics, in that it avoids plastic flow of

the thermoplastic material by fully encasing the material with one or two strip sheets taking care that the edges are properly covered.

The present invention therefore aims to provide a process for manufacture of a product that is recyclable by the paper industry and/or biodegradable.

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a continuous manufacturing process for sections or plates from soft matter which is extruded under heat and encased by at least one strip sheet providing a casing, said encased matter subsequently being calendered, shaped to the desired profile and finally cut into lengths, wherein the matter used is a mixture containing a non-synthetic binder and water, so that the mixture becomes sticky by undergoing the heat treatment in an aqueous medium, which assures adhesion of said casing onto the matter during calendering, while the product undergoes at least one drying operation after said calendering operation, said casing being permeable or made permeable to vapour in order to facilitate drying of the finished or semi-finished product.

Thus, the invention provides a process of the above-mentioned type, that is to say a manufacturing process using a soft material which is extruded under heat, encased in at least one strip sheet, and subsequently calendered, shaped to the desired profile and finally cut into lengths. But it is remarkable in that the matter used is a mixture containing a non-synthetic binder and water so that the mixture becomes sticky by undergoing the heat treatment in an aqueous medium. This ensures that the casing adheres to the matter during calendering. The product also undergoes at least one drying operation after the calendering operation.

Not only does the invention give the benefit of all the advantages of biodegradable materials, but the choice of materials also assures simple, effective adhesion of the casing.

In fully advantageous manner, the non-synthetic binder contains starch which becomes sticky after gelling and fusion due to the heat treatment in an aqueous medium.

Generally, the starch-containing binder is derived from flour of non-foodstuff quality whose dry



mass proportion in the mixture exiting the extruder is between 4 and 30%.

Preferably, the sheet or sheets intended to form the casing are chiefly made up of resistant paper or cardboard, and they may evidently be made up of a complex.

To assure good adhesion, the water content of the mixture exiting the extruder is, for example, between 4.5% and 15%.

10 According to one embodiment, the mixture comprises a plasticizer, contained for example in the mixture in a dry mass proportion of between 5% and 15%, said plasticizer containing a fatty acid or urea.

15 With a starch-based binder, the temperature of the material in the extruder is maintained between the melting point of starch, which depends upon its water content, and the degradation temperature of urea, this temperature being for example maintained for at least a certain time within a range of between 130°C and 150°C.
20 The temperature is adjusted in relation to the chosen water content.

Advantageously, the mixture also comprises biodegradable loads, the latter being for example contained in the mixture in a dry mass proportion of
25 40% to 85% and comprising mainly paper for example up to 4/5.

According to one embodiment, the product undergoes drying during processing, using for example infra-red and/or micro-wave and/or high frequency.

However, and in addition, specific drying can be provided at the end of manufacture on each length of section or plate, which are passed in front of means blowing hot air.

- 5 According to one embodiment, at least one of the sheets intended to form the casing is permeable in order to facilitate drying of the finished or semi-finished product, said sheet being, for example, made permeable by perforation in numerous places before
10 depositing the matter.

The sheet or sheets intended to form the casing, may only partially surround the matter in order to facilitate drying of the finished or semi-finished product.

- 15 The invention also concerns an installation for implementing the process, said installation comprising extrusion means for soft matter, means for encasing the latter at least in part, and means for its calendering, forming and cutting into lengths, while it is
20 remarkable in that it also comprises drying means placed between at least some of said processing means.

- Said installation may also comprise a drying unit positioned after the length cutting means, said unit comprising means of blowing hot air and means of
25 transporting section lengths. The installation may also comprise perforating means to perforate at least one of the sheets intended to form the casing according to one embodiment of the process of the invention as mentioned above.
-

Finally, the invention evidently relates to any section or plate formed from the soft matter encased by at least one sheet which is manufactured according to the above-mentioned process.

5 The invention will be well understood on reading the following description which refers to the appended drawings in which :

- 10 - figure 1 is an illustration giving a vertical section view of the manufacturing installation,
- figure 2 is a perspective view of the installation in figure 1,
- figure 3 gives a detailed view of the drying unit illustrated in figure 1,
- 15 - figures 4, 5 and 6 give a cross section view of the possible corner bars manufactured according to the invention,
- figures 7, 8, 9 and 10 illustrate cross-sections of sheets intended to form the casing of the product according to several
20 embodiments.

The drawings show, as an example, one manufacture of corner bars according to the invention, but they
25 could evidently relate to other types of sections or even plates.

In figures 1 and 2, an extruder 1 is shown intended to produce a soft matter 2 in relatively thick ribbon form.

Matter 2, which will be further described below in respect of composition, is deposited on strip sheet 3, which is unrolled from spool 4 then given translation motion, said matter 2 being carried by sheet 3 during its translation motion.

As shown more particularly in figure 2, sheet 3 is then folded along its longitudinal edges by system 5 to raise said edges and means 6 and 7 to fold the latter before it reaches a calendering device 8 (figures 1 and 2).

After calendering, the product is formed into a corner bar, in this example by passing through two pairs of rollers 9, 9' before being cut into lengths for example by knives 10 (figure 1).

The section lengths 11 thus obtained are then dried in a drying unit 12 illustrated in figure 1 and seen in more detail in figure 3.

In the embodiment shown in figure 2, sheet 3 only partly encases matter 2 so that a section of type 11a in figure 4 is obtained, but it could evidently entirely encase the product as is shown by the section of type 11b in figure 5.

It would even be fully feasible to use two strip sheets and, for example, to have another strip 3' brought over the top of them as illustrated in the chain dotted line in figure 1 in order to obtain a section of type 11c in figure 6.

Figure 1 also illustrates a cross section of different possible products under manufacture when the

latter are still in flat shape, that is to say before they are formed.

Also, for reasons which shall be explained below, sheet 3 (and possibly likewise sheet 3') is perforated, here by barbed roll 13 (figures 1 and 2) in order to provide a multitude of perforations.

Figures 7 to 10 show four types of sheet respectively 3a to 3d, sheet 3a not being specially perforated, while sheets 3b, 3c and 3d are possible examples of perforations, the perforations of sheet 3d (figure 10) even representing special patterns or signs. The presence of perforations in the paper does not give rise to any technical problem when press gluing by calendering owing to the relatively low fluidity of the mixture and the considered working temperatures which shall be examined below.

Soft matter 2 is obtained on exiting extruder 1 from a heated mixture containing a non-synthetic binder, of polysaccharide type for example, and advantageously containing starch or even proteins.

The starch is derived for example from low quality flour which is a particularly advantageous starch source notably for cost reasons, such flour being for example contained in the mixture exiting the extruder in a dry mass proportion of between 4% and 30%.

The mixture also contains a plasticizer of fatty acid type, for example, of between C12 and C30 or is advantageously urea-based, said plasticizer being contained in the mixture in a dry mass proportion of

between 5% and 15%. With this plasticizer, the matter can be processed at lower temperatures and with a lower water content as shall be seen below.

The urea has the advantage, among others, of exerting positive action on destructuration, gelling and fusion of the starch.

Finally, the mixture contains water and various loads, preferably paper loads (shredded paper, sawdust, plant products etc..) in a dry mass proportion in the region of 40 to 85%, and possibly additives (borax, soda silicate, ...)

The mixture's passage through the extruder assures mixing and homogenisation of the mixture, gelling then fusion of the binder, and finally produces the ribbon of matter.

The water content of the mixture on exiting the extruder advantageously lies between 4.5% and 15%, that is to say evidently a higher content than on entering the extruder while the temperature of the matter inside the extruder is maintained at least for a certain time within a range of 130°C to 150°C, that is to say at a temperature that is higher than the melting point of starch and lower than the degradation temperature of urea.

If this description gives dry proportions for the raw materials and water content for the mixture, it must be understood that each material comprises its own humidity and that water is not generally added to the mixture.

The water content of urea and of the additives is in the region of zero while the water content of the flour is fairly constant (in the region of 14 to 17%) so that it is chiefly the biodegradable loads which are likely to alter the water content of the mixture.

This is the reason why, while having a water content of between 5% and 15% for the mixture, the proportions of raw materials could have been given with their own humidity, the proportion for flour being increased from 4-30% when dry to about 5-35% with the relatively constant humidity level mentioned above, and it will be understood that the percentage of flour will relate in particular to that of the loads and vice versa.

Sheet 3, and possibly sheet 3', are for the most part in paper or cardboard, but they may be in photographic paper or a paper-polyethylene complex, or otherwise (for example a complex containing aluminium..).

The advantage of heat treatment in an aqueous medium of this matter so formed is to make it naturally sticky, so that sheet or sheets 3 and 3' can be easily made to adhere to said matter during calendering and consequently with no other particular means.

On the other hand, owing to this humidity, the product must evidently undergo a drying operation and it even proved to be of advantage to conduct this drying during actual manufacture using, for example, apparatus such as 14, 15 and 16 (figures 1 and 2) apparatus of infra-red ramp type (or even micro-wave or

high frequency), apparatus 14 even being positioned on the manufacturing line before the ribbon of matter is even encased. Drying is important to allow the product to acquire optimum rigidity and mechanical resistance
5 and to reach stable humidity as swiftly as possible.

It is also for the purpose of facilitating drying that sheet 3 used is permeable and/or perforated (figures 8, 9, 10) and that in the embodiment shown in figure 2 the product is only partially encased contrary
10 to French patent 2 528 350 initially cited.

However, the cut section lengths require additional drying which may of course stabilize during storage, but a drying unit of the type shown by 12 in figures 1 and 3 may also be provided.

15 Drying unit 12 shown in closer detail in figure 3, has transporting means 17 intended to collect section lengths 11 and cause them to move in front of means blowing hot air such as means 18 and 19 shown.

It will be understood that the product thus
20 obtained is advantageously recyclable and/or easily biodegradable.

This product offers appreciable mechanical qualities owing to the use of a casing, which also allows inscriptions for example to be made.

25 Numerous other means and variants can evidently be provided, in particular in respect of the casing of the matter or the number of ribbons of matter extruded at the same time, etc.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Continuous manufacturing process for sections or plates from soft matter which is extruded under heat and encased by at least one strip sheet providing a casing, said encased matter subsequently being calendered, shaped to the desired profile and finally cut into lengths, wherein the matter used is a mixture containing a non-synthetic binder and water, so that the mixture becomes sticky by undergoing the heat treatment in an aqueous medium, which assures adhesion of said casing onto the matter during calendering, while the product undergoes at least one drying operation after said calendering operation, said casing being permeable or made permeable to vapour in order to facilitate drying of the finished or semi-finished product.
2. Process according to claim 1, wherein at least one of sheets intended to form the casing is permeable.
3. Process according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein at least one of sheets intended to form the casing is made permeable by perforating it in numerous places before depositing matter.
4. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the sheet or sheets intended to form the casing only partly surround said matter.
5. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the non-synthetic binder is starch-based, which becomes sticky after gelling and fusion owing to the heat treatment in an aqueous medium.
6. Process according to claim 5, wherein the starch-based non-synthetic binder is derived from flour which is contained in the mixture exiting the extruder in a dry mass proportion of between 4% and 30%.



7. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the sheet or sheets intended to form the casing are chiefly made up of resistant paper or cardboard.

5 8. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the sheet or sheets intended to form the casing are made up of a compound material.

9. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the water content of the mixture on exiting the extruder lies between 4.5% and 15%.

10

10. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the mixture comprises a plasticizer.

11. Process according to claim 10, wherein the plasticiser is contained in the mixture in a dry mass proportion of between 5% and 15%.

15

12. Process according to claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the plasticiser is fatty acid based.

13. Process according to claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the plasticiser is urea-based.

20

14. Process according to claim 13 insofar as dependent on claim 5, wherein the temperature of the matter in the extruder is maintained at between the melting point of starch, which depends upon its water content, and the decomposition temperature of urea.

25

15. Process according to claim 14, wherein the temperature of the mixture is maintained for a period of time within a range of 130°C and 150°C.

30

16. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 15, wherein the mixture also contains a biodegradable filler.

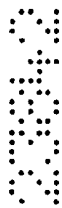


17. Process according to claim 16, wherein the biodegradable loads are contained in the mixture in a dry, mass proportion of 40% to 85%, and chiefly contain paper.

5 18. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 17, wherein the product undergoes drying during processing.

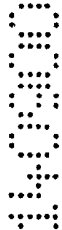
19. Process according to claim 18, wherein drying during processing is effected by means of an energy source selected from the group of infra-red
10 means, micro-wave means, and high frequency means.

20. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 19, wherein one drying operation is conducted at the end of manufacture of each section or plate length, which are moved in front of hot air blowing means.



15

21. Installation to implement the process according to any one of claims 18 to 20, including soft matter extrusion means and encasing means to encase the soft matter, at least in part, means for its calendering, forming and cutting into lengths, also including drying means positioned between at least some of said
20 processing means.



20

22. Installation according to claim 21, also including a drying unit positioned after length cutting means, said unit comprising means to blow hot air and means to transport section lengths.



25

23. Installation according to claim 21 or claim 22, for implementation of the process of claim 3, also comprising means to perforate at least one of sheets intended to form the casing.

30 24. Section or plate formed from soft matter which is encased by at least one sheet, manufactured by implementation of the process of any one of claims 1 to 20.



25. Continuous manufacturing process substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

26. Installation substantially as herein described with reference to the
5 accompanying drawings.

DATED: 13 September, 2000

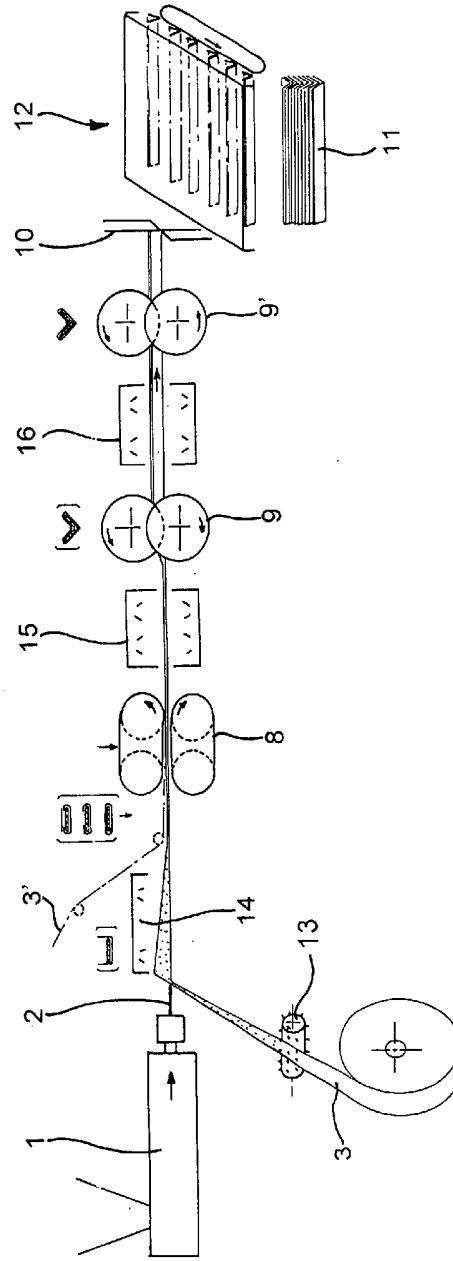
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1/4

FIG.1

3/4

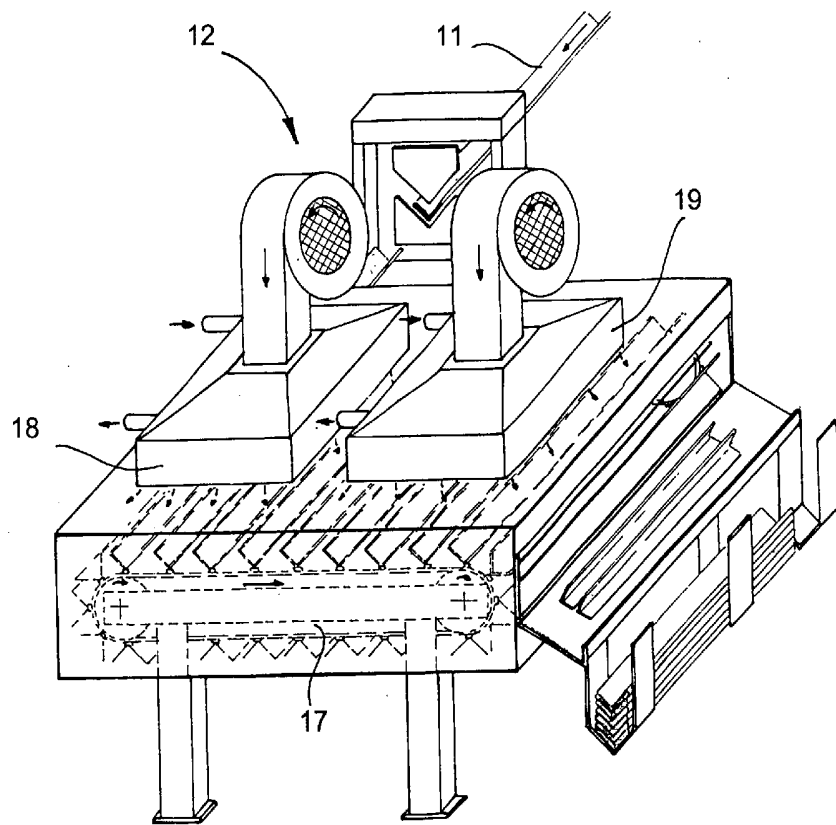


FIG.3

20 04 99 23042

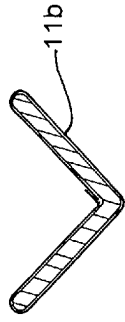


FIG. 5

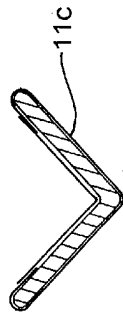


FIG. 6



FIG. 4



FIG. 7

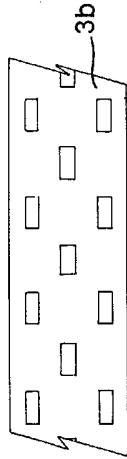


FIG. 8

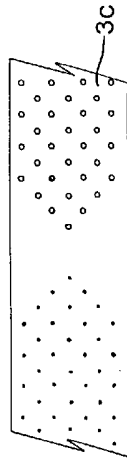


FIG. 9

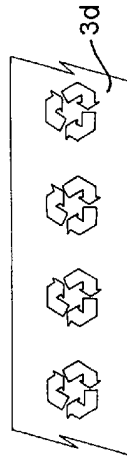


FIG. 10