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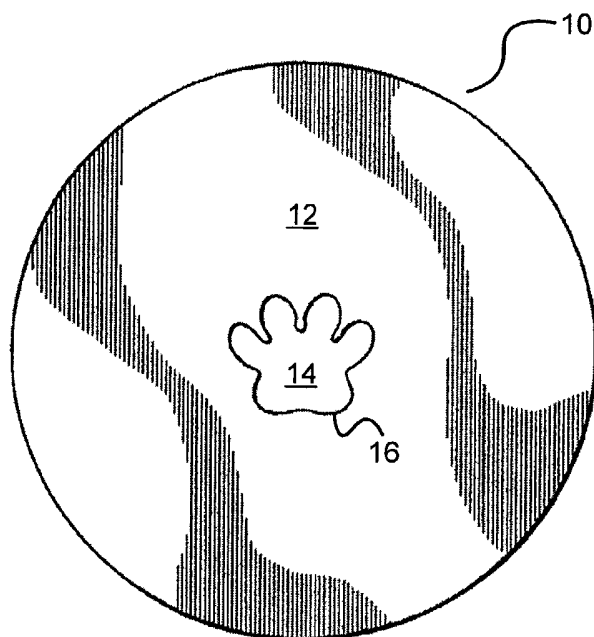
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**Declarations under Rule 4.17:**

— as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted  
a patent (Rule 4.17(ii)) for the following designations AE,  
AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH,  
CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI,  
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: DIMENSIONAL QUALITY OF DIRECT-EXPANDED FOOD PRODUCTS



(57) Abstract: The present invention comprises an improved extruder die assembly and method for using same to improve the quality of dimensional design aspects of extruded, complexly shaped, direct expanded food products. The improved system includes an improved extruder die assembly comprising a transition insert section, a plurality of spacer insert elements, an imprinting insert element, and a forming insert element, all of which are coaxially aligned and interlocking. The improved extruder die assembly of the present invention is designed for adaptation to a wide variety of commercial-grade extrusion devices (e.g., twin screw, single screw, forming extruders, and pasta extruders) common in the food industry.



- patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG)*
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<b>A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b>												
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<b>B. FIELDS SEARCHED</b>												
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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched												
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)												
<b>C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b>												
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.										
A	US 4, 786,243 A (KEHOE) 22 November 1988 (22.11.1988). See entire document	1-25										
A	US 6,258,396 B1 (DEUTSCH et al.) 10 July 2001 (10.07.2001). See entire document.	1-25										
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.												
* Special categories of cited documents: <table border="0"> <tr> <td>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</td> <td>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date</td> <td>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</td> <td>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</td> <td>"&amp;" document member of the same patent family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention	"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone	"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art	"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family	"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	
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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

PCT/US03/07892

**Continuation of Item 4 of the first sheet:**

The title does not meet the requirements of PCT Rule 4.3.

**NEW TITLE:**

**DIMENSIONAL QUALITY OF DIRECT-EXPANDED FOOD PRODUCTS.**