

(19)



(11)

EP 2 852 539 B1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

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

14.09.2016 Bulletin 2016/37

(21) Application number: **13721775.8**

(22) Date of filing: **13.05.2013**

(51) Int Cl.:

B65D 81/34 ^(2006.01)

(86) International application number:

PCT/EP2013/059786

(87) International publication number:

WO 2013/174669 (28.11.2013 Gazette 2013/48)

(54) **FOOD PACKAGING**

LEBENSMITTELVERPACKUNG

EMBALLAGE ALIMENTAIRE

(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**

(30) Priority: **21.05.2012 US 201261649537 P**

(43) Date of publication of application:

01.04.2015 Bulletin 2015/14

(73) Proprietor: **Nestec S.A.**

1800 Vevey (CH)

(72) Inventors:

- **HUFFMAN, Samuel Lamar**
Columbus, Ohio 43221 (US)

• **HEINZE, Erich**

Streetsboro, Ohio 44241 (US)

(74) Representative: **Mollet, Beat Max**

Nestec S.A.

CT-IA

Avenue Nestlé 55

1800 Vevey (CH)

(56) References cited:

EP-A1- 0 449 643

JP-A- H10 129 742

US-A- 4 941 401

US-A- 5 931 333

US-A1- 2009 179 029

EP 2 852 539 B1

Note: Within nine months of the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent in the European Patent Bulletin, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to that patent, in accordance with the Implementing Regulations. Notice of opposition shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European Patent Convention).

Description

BACKGROUND

[0001] This invention relates to food packaging.

[0002] A great variety of packaged convenience foods are available to a consumer. However, there is a continuing need for packaged convenience foods that suit the tastes of as many consumers as possible.

[0003] For example, EP 0 449 643 A1 discloses a food product comprising first and second nested containers, the first container being a closed container formed of a non-metallic (e.g. plastics) material capable of withstanding retorting conditions, the said first container being in the form of a dish and containing a food which has been subjected to cooking by retorting in the container; the second container being a closed container formed of a non-metallic (e.g. plastics) material capable of withstanding temperatures generated in a microwave oven, the said second container containing a dehydrated foodstuff. In particular, the first and second containers are in the form of a set of nested bowls, the outermost of the two bowls containing a pre-cooked dehydrated foodstuff such as instant rice or instant pasta, and the innermost of the two bowls containing a wet retorted foodstuff.

[0004] US 4 941 401 A discloses an elongated microwaveable fish poacher comprising a non-metallic, plastic base, rack and cover, and defining a fish poacher interior. The assembled parts present the appearance of a fish, with handles serving as a tail and fins, and cooperate to minimize undesired exchange of air from exterior of the assembled parts within which fish is adapted to be cooked in a microwave oven.

[0005] JP H10 129742 A discloses a container with a lid which holds different kinds of objects and can be handled as a single container when sold, used, and so forth and which, for the use after unsealing, may constitute separate containers and which is easy to unseal. The package with lid comprises a container body which holds objects for packaging inside and a lid body in the form of sheets provided for closure of the opening part of the container body. The container body is composed of a plurality of container constituents, which are laid one over another in a manner of causing the perimetric parts of their opening parts to slide against each other so as to expose part of the perimetric part on the lower side. The lid body is attached to the respective container constituents along the perimetric parts.

SUMMARY

[0006] In an aspect of the present invention, food packaging has a food vessel and a food tray. The vessel has an upper lip and an inwardly projecting ledge below the upper lip. The food tray has a pair of opposed handle structures and a tray portion depending from the handle structures. Each handle structure has an outwardly projecting protuberance. The food tray is positioned within

the food vessel with each protuberance resting on the inwardly projecting ledge such that the tray portion is suspended within the food vessel by the handle structures. This forms two food compartments: one below and one above the tray portion. The vessel may be topped by a topping film.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] In the drawings which illustrate example embodiments of this invention,

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of food packaging made in accordance with an embodiment,

FIG. 2 is an exploded view of the packaging of **FIG. 1**, **FIG. 3** is a cross-sectional view of a food bowl of the packaging of **FIG. 1**,

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the packaging of **FIG. 1** shown containing food components and covered with a topping film,

FIGs. 5 and 6 are perspective views of the packaging of **FIG. 1** containing food components showing the packaging in use,

FIG. 7A is a cross-sectional view along the lines **7A-7A** of **FIG. 1**,

FIG. 7B is a cross-sectional view of the food bowl of the food packaging of **FIG. 1** and a tray in accordance with another embodiment,

FIGs. 8 to 13 are perspective views of trays made in accordance with different embodiments, each for use with the food bowl of **FIG. 1**,

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of a food bowl made in accordance with another embodiment,

FIG. 15A is a cross-sectional view of the food packaging in accordance with another embodiment,

FIG. 15B is a cross-sectional view of the food packaging in accordance with another embodiment, and

FIG. 16 is a perspective view of a food bowl made in accordance with another embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0008] Turning to **FIGs. 1 to 3**, food packaging **50** has a food vessel and a food tray **54** which rests within the food vessel.

[0009] The example food vessel is a food bowl **52** with a circumferential upper lip **56** and an inwardly projecting continuous circumferential ledge **58** in the side wall **60** of the bowl below the upper lip **56**. As will be apparent, the side wall **60** of the bowl is smooth and terminates at base wall **62**.

[0010] With reference to **FIGs. 1 and 2** food tray **54** has a pair of opposed handle structures **70a, 70b** with a disc shaped tray portion **72** depending from the handle structures **70a, 70b**. Each handle structure **70a, 70b** has a pair of arms **74, 76** extending upwardly from the tray portion **72** and terminating in a cross-bar **80** which bridges the pair of arms. The cross-bar **80** has an outwardly

projecting protuberance lip **82**. The arms **74, 76** are joined at their basal ends by a reinforcing ridge **84**. In consequence, there is an opening **86** through the handle structures between the pair of arms **74, 76**; this opening is sized so as to be able to receive the thumb of a user. The cross-bar **80** is curved with a radius of curvature matching the radius of curvature of the bowl **52** at the ledge **58**. The tray portion **72** of food tray **54** has a plurality of through holes **88** arranged in a pattern of concentric circles.

[0011] The food tray **54** can be positioned within the bowl **52** with the protuberance lip **82** of each handle structure **70a, 70b** resting on the inwardly projecting ledge **58** such that the tray portion **72** is suspended within the bowl by the handle structures **70a, 70b** as is illustrated by **FIGs. 1** and **7A**. In this regard, the diameter of the tray portion **72** may be chosen so as to be slightly less than the diameter of the bowl **52** at the level where the tray portion is suspended within the bowl by the handle structures. Because the cross-bars **80** have a radius of curvature matching that of the bowl at the ledge **58**, the tray portion **72** can be suspended within the bowl **52** at any angular orientation of the food tray **54** with respect to the bowl **52**. The cross-bars are laterally elongated so as to extend along a section of the ledge. This enhances the stability of the food tray within the bowl. The cross-bars **80** are designed so that, with the tray portion suspended within the bowl, the protuberance lips **82** of the cross-bars extend in close proximity to the side wall **60** of the bowl so that there is insufficient space between the outside edge of protuberance lips **82** and the bowl side wall **60** to admit a finger of a user. It will be apparent from **FIG. 7A** that, with the food tray **54** resting within the bowl **52**, the bowl is divided into a lower compartment **90** and an upper compartment **92**.

[0012] Food packaging **50** can be used to package a convenience food. For example, with reference to **FIG. 4**, bowl **52** may hold a first component **94** of a convenience food such as a food component that includes a liquid: for example, the first food component could comprise meat and a sauce. Food tray **54** may hold a second food component **86**, such as a solid component, for example, pasta.

[0013] Both the bowl **52** and food tray **54** may be made of a microwaveable material such as polypropylene. The bowl may be constructed by an injection moulding or thermoforming process. The tray could be constructed by injection moulding, or by a thermoforming process followed by secondary operations.

[0014] To package a convenience food, a first food component may be added to bowl **52**, food tray **54** may be placed within the bowl so that the tray portion **72** is suspended by handle structures **70a, 70b** and a second food component added on top of the tray portion **72**. Next a topping film **98** may be adhered to the upper lip **56** of the bowl. The topping film may be a self-venting film or a steam impervious film. Typically, the food components will be frozen. To prepare the convenience food, the con-

sumer may simply place the filled food packaging of **FIG. 4** in the microwave where the film **80** is self-venting. If the film is not self-venting, a portion of the film may be peeled back or the film may be punctured prior to microwave heating or cooking.

[0015] During microwave heating or cooking, the openings **88** in the tray portion **72** allow moisture from the first food component to rise through the second food component as steam.

[0016] Where the topping film **98** is a peelable film, at the conclusion of microwave heating or cooking, the consumer may peel away the film. Next, as illustrated in **FIG. 5**, the user may place a thumb (or finger) at and within the opening **86** in each handle structure **70a, 70b** and draw upwardly on the cross-bars **80** of the handle structures to move the food tray **54** upwardly along the side wall **60** of the bowl. Once the cross-bars reach the top of the bowl, the user may grasp the cross-bars between the thumb and fingers of both hands, lift the food tray above the bowl, and tip the food tray to dispense (all or a selected amount of) the second food component into the first food component, as illustrated in **FIG. 6**. The food components may be stirred together, as desired and, optionally, consumed directly from the bowl **52**.

[0017] A user also has the option of dispensing the second food component into a separate food container if the user wished to enjoy the food components separately.

[0018] Turning to **FIGs. 7A** and **7B**, optionally food bowl **52** can be used with a second food tray **154** rather than with the aforescribed first food tray **54**. Second food tray **154** is similar to first food tray **54** except that the arms of handle structures **170a, 170b** of food tray **154** are longer than the arms of handle structures **70a, 70b** of food tray **54** and the diameter of the tray portion **172** of food tray **154** is less than the diameter of the tray portion **72** of food tray **54**. In consequence, tray portion **174** of food tray **154**, when suspended within bowl **52** by handle structures **170a, 170b**, is positioned deeper within the bowl than is tray portion **74** of food tray **54**. Thus, the first food compartment **190** formed within bowl **52** by food tray **154** is smaller than the first food compartment **90** formed within bowl **52** by food tray **54** and the second food compartment **192** formed within bowl **52** by food tray **154** is larger than the second food compartment **92** formed within bowl **52** by food tray **54**. This adapts the food packaging for use with a convenience food with different relative portions of the first and second food components. Advantageously, therefore, different convenience foods can be packaged in the same food bowl **52** by using different food trays.

[0019] A variety of differently designed food trays may be used with food bowl **52**. For example, turning to **FIG. 8**, a food tray **254** has handle structures **270a, 270b** each with an upstanding wall **274** terminating in an outwardly projecting protuberance lip **282**. Each wall **274** is buttressed by a radially inwardly directed fin **276** that is joined to the middle of the wall **274**. The sides of each

fin have raised dimples 277. The holes 288 in the tray portion 272 of the food tray 254 have a different pattern. In using food tray 254, the user may grip the opposed fins 276 of the tray. The dimples frictionally enhance the grip of the tray. Optionally, the dimples may be concave rather than raised.

[0020] FIG. 9 illustrates another food tray 354 that may be used with bowl 52. Food tray 354 has a pair of spaced fins 376 bridged by a cross-bar 380 with protuberance lip 382. The fins have dimples 377 on their outer sides. The tray portion 372 of food tray 354 has no through holes and so is suited for use with a food component that might otherwise drop through holes in the tray portion. In use, the user has the option of gripping the outer surface of each pair of fins between thumb and fingers or placing a thumb (or finger) in the hole 386 formed between the pair of fins 376 at the cross-bar 380 of each handle structure 370a, 370b in order to raise the food tray 354.

[0021] Turning to FIG. 10, food tray 454 has handle structures 470a, 470b each with a concavely curved up-standing wall 474 terminating at either end in an outwardly projecting protuberance finger 480, 480'. The convex curve of wall 474 strengthens the wall. When in place within the bowl, the protuberance fingers rest on the ledge of the bowl. A user may grip the inner and outer sides of each wall in 474 order to lift the food tray 454 from the bowl.

[0022] The food tray 554 of FIG. 11 is similar to the food tray 254 of FIG. 8 except that the single fin of each handle structure of food tray 254 is replaced by a pair of adjacent fins 576 and 576' in food tray 554. Thus, each handle structure 570a, 570b of food tray 554 has an up-standing wall terminating in an outwardly projecting protuberance lip 582. The fins 576, 576' are shown smooth walled which, especially for lighter second food components, may provide a sufficient gripping surface to allow a user to lift the food tray from the bowl.

[0023] The tray portion 672 of the food tray 654 of FIG. 12 has opposed cut-out areas 671 from which upstanding walls 674 of handle structures 670a, 670b extend. The top of each upstanding wall 674 curves outwardly and protuberance fingers 680, 680' extend outwardly from the top of each wall at either end of the wall. The protuberance fingers are designed to rest on the ledge of the bowl when the food tray 654 is placed within the bowl. There is an opening 687 between the protuberance fingers such that a user's finger will fit between the wall 674 and the side wall of the bowl so that the user can raise the food tray 654 either by hooking his or her fingers under the outwardly curved top of each wall 674 or by gripping the outer and inner sides of each wall 674.

[0024] The tray portion 772 of food tray 754 of FIG. 13 has opposed cut-out areas 771 from which upstanding walls 774 of handle structures 770a, 770b extend. Each wall 774 terminates in an outwardly protruding protuberance flange 780 that rests on the shelf of the bowl when the food tray 754 is placed within the bowl. The user may

grip opposite ends of the flange 780 to raise the food tray from the bowl. The tray portion 772 has holes in the nature of slots 788 which may allow a greater amount of steam from the lower food component to pass through the upper food component during cooking.

[0025] Each of the described food trays may also be used with the food bowl 152 of FIG. 14. Referencing FIG. 14, food bowl 152 is a bowl similar to bowl 52 of FIG. 2 except that its side wall 160 has an array of inwardly directed dimples 161 extending medially between the base wall 162 of the bowl and its upper lip 156. In use, with a food tray set within bowl 152, the dimples abut and frictionally engage the outer periphery of the tray portion of the food tray when the protuberances of the food tray rest on the inwardly directed ledge 158 of the bowl. Thus, the dimples assist to further stabilize the food tray within the bowl.

[0026] Optionally, as illustrated in FIGs. 15A and 15B, the dimples 261 of the bowl 252 may be more vertically elongated than the dimples of bowl 152 of FIG. 14 so that they will abut the outer periphery of the tray portion of both food trays 54 and 154 with different length handle structures.

[0027] Each of the described food trays may also be used with the food bowl 352 of FIG. 16. Food bowl 352 is a bowl similar to bowl 52 of FIG. 2 except that its side wall 360 has an array of inwardly directed lugs 361, 363 extending medially between the base wall 362 of the bowl and its upper lip 356. In use, a food tray is positively set within bowl 352 such that the tray portion of the food tray snaps under lugs 363 to rest on lugs 361 when the protuberances of the food tray rest on the inwardly directed ledge 358 of the bowl. This strongly seats the food tray within the bowl.

[0028] While the example food trays are shown with a tray portion which is preferably a wall-less platform, optionally, the tray portion could be a platform with a peripheral wall.

[0029] While the example food vessels are round bowls, the food vessels may have any other desired shape (although this may constrain the orientation of the food tray within the food vessel).

[0030] Other features of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art and, therefore, the invention is defined in the claims.

Claims

1. Food packaging (50), comprising:

a food vessel (52) having an upper lip (56) and an inwardly projecting ledge (58) below said upper lip (56);

a food tray (54) having a pair of opposed handle structures (70a, 70b) and a tray portion (72) depending from said handle structures (70a, 70b), each handle structure having an outwardly pro-

- jecting protuberance (82), said food tray (54) positioned within said food vessel (52) with each said protuberance resting on said inwardly projecting ledge (58) such that said tray portion (72) is suspended within said food vessel (52) by said handle structures (70a, 70b). 5
2. The packaging according to claim 1 wherein said inwardly projecting ledge (58) is a continuous ledge extending about a circumference of said food vessel (52). 10
 3. The packaging according to claims 1 or 2, wherein said tray portion (72) has a plurality of through holes (88). 15
 4. The packaging according to claims 1 to 3, wherein each said protuberance (82) is laterally elongated so as to extend along a section of said ledge (58). 20
 5. The packaging according to claim 4 further comprising an opening between each said protuberance (82) and a base of each said handle structure (70a, 70b) sized to receive a thumb or finger of a user. 25
 6. The packaging according to any of claims 1 to 5, further comprising a topping film (98) adhered to said upper lip (56) of said food vessel (52). 30
 7. The packaging according to claim 6 further comprising a first food component (94) within said vessel below said tray portion (72) of said food tray (54) and a second food component (86) supported on said tray portion (72) of said food tray (54). 35
 8. The packaging according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein said food vessel (52) is a bowl, wherein each said protuberance (82) is laterally elongated so as to extend along a section of said ledge (58). 40
 9. The packaging according to claim 8, wherein each said handle structure (70a, 70b) comprises a pair of arms (74, 76) extending upwardly from said tray portion (72) terminating in a cross-bar (80) bridging said pair of arms (74, 76), said cross-bar comprising said protuberance (82) of said each handle structure (70a, 70b). 45
 10. The packaging according to claim 8, wherein said handle structures (70a, 70b) comprise opposed inwardly directed fins. 50
 11. The packaging according to claim 2 wherein said food vessel (52) has a circumferential array of inwardly directed dimples (161) extending medially between a base of said food vessel (52) and said upper lip (156) frictionally engaging said tray portion (72) of said food tray (54). 55

12. A food packaging system, comprising:

a food vessel (52) having an upper lip (52) and an inwardly projecting ledge (58) below said upper lip (56);
 a first food tray (54) having a pair of opposed first handle structures (70a, 70b) and a first tray portion (72) depending from said first handle structures (70a, 70b), each first handle structure having an outwardly projecting first protuberance (82), said first food tray (54) positionable within said food vessel (52) with each said first protuberance (82) resting on said inwardly projecting ledge (58) such that said first tray portion (72) is suspended within said food vessel (52) by said first handle structures (70a, 70b); and
 a second food tray (154) having a pair of opposed second handle structures (170a, 170b) and a second tray portion (172) depending from said second handle structures (170a, 170b), each second handle structure having an outwardly projecting second protuberance, said second handle structures (170a, 170b) being longer than said first handle structures (70a, 70b), said second food tray (154) positionable within said food vessel (52) with each said second protuberance resting on said inwardly projecting ledge (58) such that said second tray portion (172) is suspended within said food vessel (52) by said second handle structures (170a, 170b) at a level below which said first tray portion (72) is located when suspended within said food vessel (52),

whereby a first food component (94) may be added to said food vessel (52), one of said first food tray (54) and said second food tray (154) positioned within said food vessel (52), a second food component (86) added on top of said one of said first food tray (54) and said second food tray (154), and a topping film (98) adhered to said upper lip (56) of said food vessel (52) to create a food package (50).

13. The packaging according to claim 12 wherein said bowl (52) has a circumferential array of inwardly directed dimples (161) extending medially between a base (162) of said bowl (52) and said upper lip (56), said dimples for frictionally engaging said first tray portion (72) of said first food tray (54) when positioned within said food vessel (52) with each said first protuberance (82) resting on said inwardly projecting ledge (58) and for frictionally engaging said second tray portion (172) of said second food tray (154) when positioned within said food vessel (52) with each said second protuberance resting on said inwardly projecting ledge (58).

14. A packaged convenience food comprising:

a food vessel (52) having an upper lip (56), a side wall (60), a base wall (62), and an inwardly projecting ledge (58) in said side wall;
 a food tray (56) having a pair of opposed handle structures (70a, 70b) and a tray portion (72) depending from said handle structures (70a, 70b), each handle structure having an outwardly projecting protuberance (82), said food tray (56) positioned within said food vessel (52) with each said protuberance (82) resting on said inwardly projecting ledge (58) such that said tray portion (72) is suspended within said food vessel (52) by said handle structures (70a, 70b);
 a topping film (98) adhered to said upper lip (56) of said food vessel (52);
 a first food component (94) within said food vessel (52) between said base wall (62) of said food vessel and said tray portion (72) of said food tray; and
 a second food component (86) within said food vessel (52) on top of said tray portion (72).

15. The packaged convenience food according to claim 14 wherein said bowl (52) has a circumferential array of inwardly directed dimples (161) extending medially between a base (162) of said bowl (52) and said upper lip (156), said dimples frictionally engaging said tray portion (72) of said food tray (54).

Patentansprüche

1. Lebensmittelverpackung (50), die Folgendes umfasst:

einen Lebensmittelbehälter (52) mit einer oberen Lippe (56) und einem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) unter der oberen Lippe (56);
 ein Lebensmitteltablett (54) mit einem Paar gegenüberliegenden Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) und einem Tablettabschnitt (72), der von den Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) abhängt, wobei jede Griffstruktur einen nach außen vorstehenden Überhang (82) aufweist, wobei das Lebensmitteltablett (54) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) positioniert ist, wobei jeder Überhang auf dem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) derart ruht, dass der Tablettabschnitt (72) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) von den Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) hängt.

2. Verpackung nach Anspruch 1, wobei der nach innen vorstehende Vorsprung (58) ein durchgehender Vorsprung ist, der sich um einen Umfang des Lebensmittelbehälters (52) erstreckt.
 3. Verpackung nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei der Tablettabschnitt (72) eine Vielzahl von Durchbrechun-

gen (88) aufweist.

4. Verpackung nach Ansprüchen 1 bis 3, wobei jeder Überhang (82) lateral gestreckt ist, so dass er sich entlang eines Abschnitts des Vorsprungs (58) erstreckt.
 5. Verpackung nach Anspruch 4, die ferner eine Öffnung zwischen jedem Überhang (82) und einer Basis von jeder Griffstruktur (70a, 70b) umfasst, die so bemessen ist, dass sie einen Daumen oder Finger eines Benutzers aufnehmen kann.
 6. Verpackung nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, die ferner eine Deckfolie (98), die auf der oberen Lippe (56) des Lebensmittelbehälters (52) haftet, umfasst.
 7. Verpackung nach Anspruch 6, die ferner eine erste Lebensmittelkomponente (94) in dem Behälter unter dem Tablettabschnitt (72) des Lebensmitteltabletts (54) und eine zweite Lebensmittelkomponente (86), die auf dem Tablettabschnitt (72) des Lebensmitteltabletts (54) gestützt ist, umfasst.
 8. Verpackung nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 7, wobei der Lebensmittelbehälter (52) eine Schale ist, wobei jeder Überhang (82) lateral gestreckt ist, so dass er sich entlang eines Abschnitts des Vorsprungs (58) erstreckt.
 9. Verpackung nach Anspruch 8, wobei jede Griffstruktur (70a, 70b) ein Paar Arme (74, 76) umfasst, die sich von dem Tablettabschnitt (72) aus nach oben erstrecken und in einer Querstange (80) enden, die das Paar Arme (74, 76) überbrückt, wobei die Querstange den Überhang (82) jeder Griffstruktur (70a, 70b) umfasst.
 10. Verpackung nach Anspruch 8, wobei die Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) gegenüberliegende, nach innen gerichtete Flügel umfassen.
 11. Verpackung nach Anspruch 2, wobei der Lebensmittelbehälter (52) eine umlaufende Anordnung von nach innen gerichteten Vertiefungen (161) aufweist, die sich medial zwischen einer Basis des Lebensmittelbehälters (52) und der oberen Lippe (156) erstrecken, wobei sie den Tablettabschnitt (72) des Lebensmitteltabletts (54) reibend greifen.
 12. Lebensmittelverpackungssystem, das Folgendes umfasst:
 einen Lebensmittelbehälter (52) mit einer oberen Lippe (52) und einem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) unter der oberen Lippe (56);
 ein erstes Lebensmitteltablett (54) mit einem Paar gegenüberliegenden ersten Griffstruktu-

ren (70a, 70b) und einem ersten Tablettabschnitt (72), der von den ersten Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) abhängt, wobei jede erste Griffstruktur einen nach außen vorstehenden ersten Überhang (82) aufweist, wobei das erste Lebensmitteltablett (54) im Lebensmittelbehälter (52) positionierbar ist, wobei jeder erste Überhang (82) auf dem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) derart ruht, dass der erste Tablettabschnitt (72) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) von den ersten Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) hängt, und ein zweites Lebensmitteltablett (154) mit einem Paar gegenüberliegenden zweiten Griffstrukturen (170a, 170b) und einem zweiten Tablettabschnitt (172), der von den zweiten Griffstrukturen (170a, 170b) abhängt, wobei jede zweite Griffstruktur einen nach außen vorstehenden zweiten Überhang aufweist, wobei die zweiten Griffstrukturen (170a, 170b) länger als die ersten Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) sind, wobei das zweite Lebensmitteltablett (154) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) positionierbar ist, wobei jeder zweite Überhang auf dem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) derart ruht, dass der zweite Tablettabschnitt (172) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) von den zweiten Griffstrukturen (170a, 170b) auf einer Höhe hängt, die sich unterhalb der Höhe des ersten Tablettabschnitts (72) befindet, wenn dieser innerhalb des Lebensmittelbehälters (52) hängt,

wobei eine erste Lebensmittelkomponente (94) zu dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52), einem des ersten Lebensmitteltablets (54) und des zweiten Lebensmitteltablets (154), die in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) positioniert sind, hinzugefügt werden kann, eine zweite Lebensmittelkomponente (86) auf einem des ersten Lebensmitteltablets (54) und des zweiten Lebensmitteltablets (154) zugefügt werden kann und eine Deckfolie (98) auf der oberen Lippe (56) des Lebensmittelbehälters (52) befestigt sein kann, um eine Lebensmittelverpackung (50) zu schaffen.

13. Verpackung nach Anspruch 12, wobei die Schale (52) eine umlaufende Anordnung von nach innen gerichteten Vertiefungen (161) aufweist, die sich medial zwischen einer Basis (162) der Schale (52) und der oberen Lippe (56) erstrecken, wobei die Vertiefungen dem reibenden Greifen des ersten Tablettabschnitts (72) des ersten Lebensmitteltablets (54) dienen, wenn es in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) positioniert ist, wobei jeder erste Überhang (82) auf dem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) ruht, und dem reibenden Greifen des zweiten Tablettabschnitts (172) des zweiten Lebensmitteltablets (154) dienen, wenn es in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) positioniert ist, wobei jeder zweite Überhang auf

dem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) ruht.

14. Verpacktes Fertiggericht, das Folgendes umfasst:

einen Lebensmittelbehälter (52) mit einer oberen Lippe (56), einer Seitenwand (60), einer Basiswand (62) und einem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) in der Seitenwand; ein Lebensmitteltablett (56) mit einem Paar gegenüberliegenden Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) und einem Tablettabschnitt (72), der von den Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) abhängt, wobei jede Griffstruktur einen nach außen vorstehenden Überhang (82) aufweist, wobei das Lebensmitteltablett (56) in der Lebensmittelverpackung (52) positioniert ist, wobei jeder Überhang (82) auf dem nach innen vorstehenden Vorsprung (58) derart ruht, dass der Tablettabschnitt (72) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) von den Griffstrukturen (70a, 70b) hängt; eine Deckfolie (98), die auf der oberen Lippe (56) des Lebensmittelbehälters (52) haftet, eine erste Lebensmittelkomponente (94) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) zwischen der Basiswand (62) des Lebensmittelbehälters und dem Tablettabschnitt (72) des Lebensmitteltablets; und eine zweite Lebensmittelkomponente (86) in dem Lebensmittelbehälter (52) auf dem Tablettabschnitt (72).

15. Verpacktes Fertiggericht nach Anspruch 14, wobei die Schale (52) eine umlaufende Anordnung von nach innen gerichteten Vertiefungen (161) aufweist, die sich medial zwischen einer Basis der Schale (52) und der oberen Lippe (56) erstrecken, wobei die Vertiefungen den Tablettabschnitt (72) des Lebensmitteltablets (54) reibend greifen.

Revendications

1. Conditionnement alimentaire (50), comprenant :

un récipient alimentaire (52) ayant une lèvre supérieure (56) et un rebord faisant saillie vers l'intérieur (58) en dessous de ladite lèvre supérieure (56) ;
un plateau pour aliments (54) comportant une paire de structures de poignée opposées (70a, 70b) et une partie plateau (72) dépendant desdites structures de poignée (70a, 70b), chaque structure de poignée ayant une protubérance faisant saillie vers l'extérieur (82), ledit plateau pour aliments (54) étant positionné à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) avec chaque protubérance précitée reposant sur ledit rebord (58) faisant saillie vers l'intérieur de telle sorte que

ladite partie plateau (72) est suspendue à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) par lesdites structures de poignée (70a, 70b).

2. Conditionnement selon la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit rebord (58) faisant saillie vers l'intérieur est un rebord continu s'étendant autour d'une circonférence dudit récipient alimentaire (52). 5
3. Conditionnement selon les revendications 1 ou 2, dans lequel ladite partie plateau (72) comporte une pluralité de trous traversants (88). 10
4. Conditionnement selon les revendications 1 à 3, dans lequel chaque protubérance précitée (82) est allongée latéralement de manière à s'étendre le long d'une section dudit rebord (58). 15
5. Conditionnement selon la revendication 4, comprenant en outre une ouverture entre chaque protubérance précitée (82) et une base de chaque structure de poignée précitée (70a, 70b) étant dimensionnée pour recevoir un pouce ou un doigt d'un utilisateur. 20
6. Conditionnement selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, comprenant en outre un film de dessus (98) mis en adhésion sur ladite lèvre supérieure (56) dudit récipient alimentaire (52). 25
7. Conditionnement selon la revendication 6, comprenant en outre un premier composant alimentaire (94) à l'intérieur dudit récipient sous ladite partie plateau (72) dudit plateau pour aliments (54) et un second composant alimentaire (86) supporté sur ladite partie plateau (72) dudit plateau pour aliments (54). 30 35
8. Conditionnement selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 7, dans lequel ledit récipient alimentaire (52) est un bol, dans lequel chaque protubérance précitée (82) est allongée latéralement de manière à s'étendre le long d'une section dudit rebord (58). 40
9. Conditionnement selon la revendication 8, dans lequel chaque structure de poignée précitée (70a, 70b) comprend une paire de bras (74, 76) s'étendant vers le haut depuis ladite partie plateau (72) se terminant en une barre transversale (80) reliant ladite paire de bras (74, 76), ladite barre transversale comprenant ladite protubérance (82) de chaque structure de poignée précitée (70a, 70b). 45 50
10. Conditionnement selon la revendication 8, dans lequel lesdites structures de poignée (70a, 70b) comprennent des ailettes opposées dirigées vers l'intérieur. 55
11. Conditionnement selon la revendication 2, dans lequel ledit récipient alimentaire (52) présente une ran-

gée circonférentielle de bossages (161) dirigés vers l'intérieur s'étendant au milieu entre une base dudit récipient alimentaire (52) et ladite lèvre supérieure (56) venant en prise par frottement avec ladite partie plateau (72) dudit plateau pour aliments (54).

12. Système de conditionnement alimentaire, comprenant :

un récipient alimentaire (52) ayant une lèvre supérieure (52) et un rebord faisant saillie vers l'intérieur (58) en dessous de ladite lèvre supérieure (56) ;
 un premier plateau pour aliments (54) ayant une paire de premières structures de poignée opposées (70a, 70b) et une première partie plateau (72) dépendant desdites premières structures de poignée (70a, 70b), chaque première structure de poignée ayant une première protubérance faisant saillie vers l'extérieur (82), ledit premier plateau pour aliments (54) pouvant être positionné à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) avec chaque première protubérance précitée (82) reposant sur ledit rebord (58) faisant saillie vers l'intérieur de sorte que ladite première partie plateau (72) est suspendue à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) par lesdites premières structures de poignée (70a, 70b) ; et
 un second plateau pour aliments (154) ayant une paire de secondes structures de poignée opposées (170a, 170b) et une seconde partie plateau (172) dépendant desdites secondes structures de poignée (170a, 170b), chaque seconde structure de poignée ayant une seconde protubérance faisant saillie vers l'extérieur, lesdites secondes structures de poignée (170a, 170b) étant plus longues que lesdites premières structures de poignée (70a, 70b), ledit second plateau pour aliments (154) pouvant être positionné à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) avec chaque seconde protubérance précitée reposant sur ledit rebord (58) faisant saillie vers l'intérieur de sorte que ladite seconde partie plateau (172) est suspendue à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) par lesdites secondes structures de poignée (170a, 170b) à un niveau au-dessous duquel ladite première partie plateau (72) se trouve lorsqu'elle est suspendue à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52),

moyennant quoi un premier composant alimentaire (94) peut être ajouté audit récipient alimentaire (52), l'un dudit premier plateau pour aliments (54) et dudit second plateau pour aliments (154) étant positionné à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52), un second composant alimentaire (86) étant ajouté au-dessus dudit plateau parmi ledit premier plateau pour aliments (54) et ledit second plateau pour ali-

ments (154), et un film de dessus (98) mis en adhésion sur ladite lèvre supérieure (56) dudit récipient alimentaire (52) pour créer un conditionnement alimentaire (50).

5

- 13.** Conditionnement selon la revendication 12, dans lequel ledit bol (52) comporte une rangée circonférentielle de bossages (161) dirigés vers l'intérieur s'étendant au milieu entre une base (162) dudit bol (52) et ladite lèvre supérieure (56), lesdits bossages servant à venir en prise par frottement avec ladite première partie plateau (72) dudit premier plateau pour aliments (54) lorsqu'il est positionné à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) avec chaque première protubérance précitée (82) reposant sur ledit rebord faisant saillie vers l'intérieur (58) et servant à venir en prise avec ladite seconde partie plateau (172) dudit second plateau pour aliments (154) lorsqu'il est positionné à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52), chaque seconde protubérance précitée reposant sur ledit rebord faisant saillie vers l'intérieur (58).

10

15

20

- 14.** Aliment prêt-à-servir emballé comprenant :

25

un récipient alimentaire (52) ayant une lèvre supérieure (56), une paroi latérale (60), une paroi de base (62), et un rebord (58) faisant saillie vers l'intérieur dans ladite paroi latérale ;
 un plateau pour aliments (56) comportant une paire de structures de poignée opposées (70a, 70b) et une partie plateau (72) dépendant desdites structures de poignée (70a, 70b), chaque structure de poignée ayant une protubérance faisant saillie vers l'extérieur (82), ledit plateau pour aliments (56) étant positionné à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) avec chaque protubérance précitée (82) reposant sur ledit rebord (58) faisant saillie vers l'intérieur de telle sorte que ladite partie plateau (72) est suspendue à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) par lesdites structures de poignée (70a, 70b) ;
 un film de dessus (98) mis en adhésion sur ladite lèvre supérieure (56) dudit récipient alimentaire (52) ;
 un premier composant alimentaire (94) à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) entre ladite paroi de base (62) dudit récipient alimentaire et ladite partie plateau (72) dudit plateau pour aliments ; et
 un second composant alimentaire (86) à l'intérieur dudit récipient alimentaire (52) au-dessus de ladite partie plateau (72).

30

35

40

45

50

- 15.** Aliment prêt-à-servir emballé selon la revendication 14, dans lequel ledit bol (52) comporte une rangée circonférentielle de bossages (161) dirigés vers l'intérieur s'étendant au milieu entre une base (162) du-

55

dit bol (52) et ladite lèvre supérieure (156), lesdits bossages venant en prise par frottement avec ladite partie plateau (72) dudit récipient alimentaire (54).

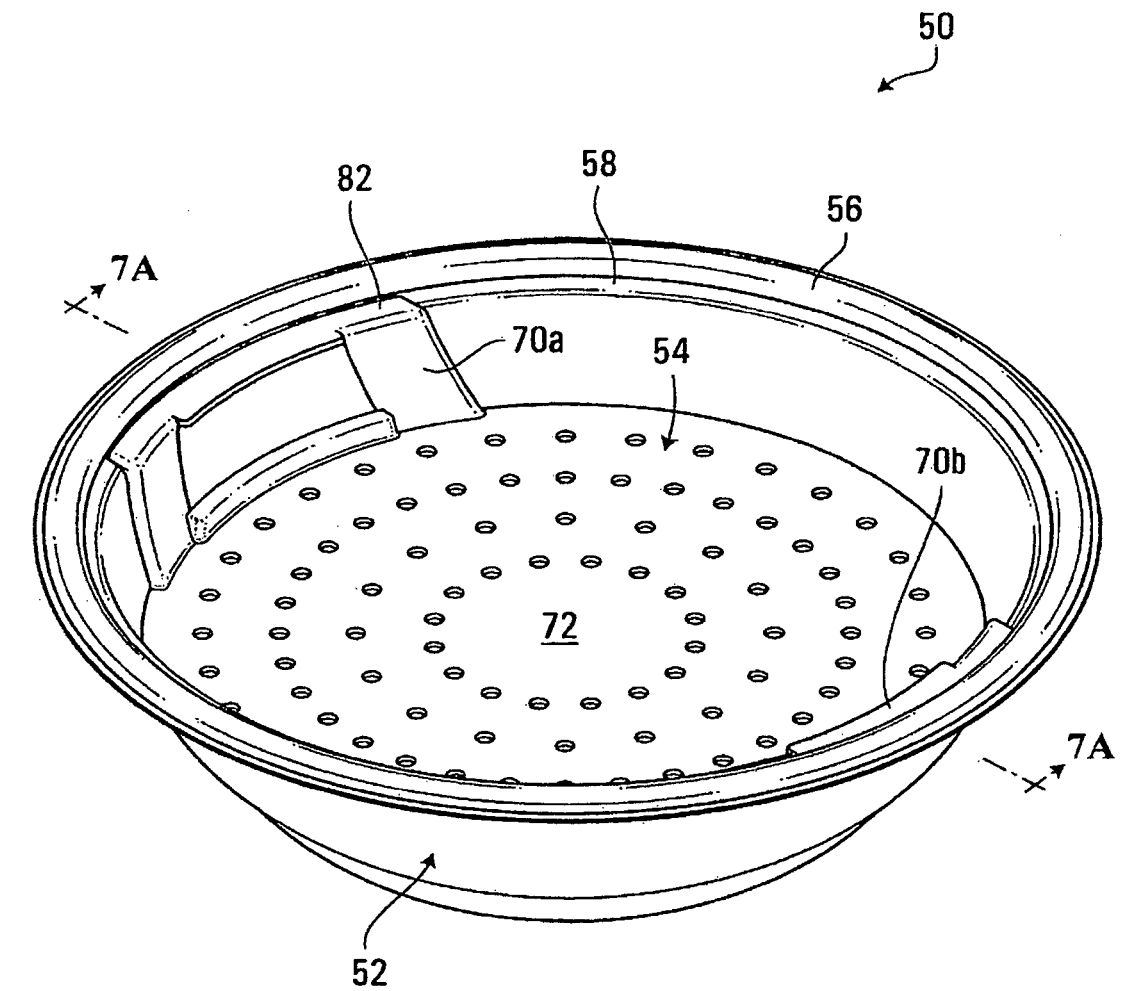


FIG. 1

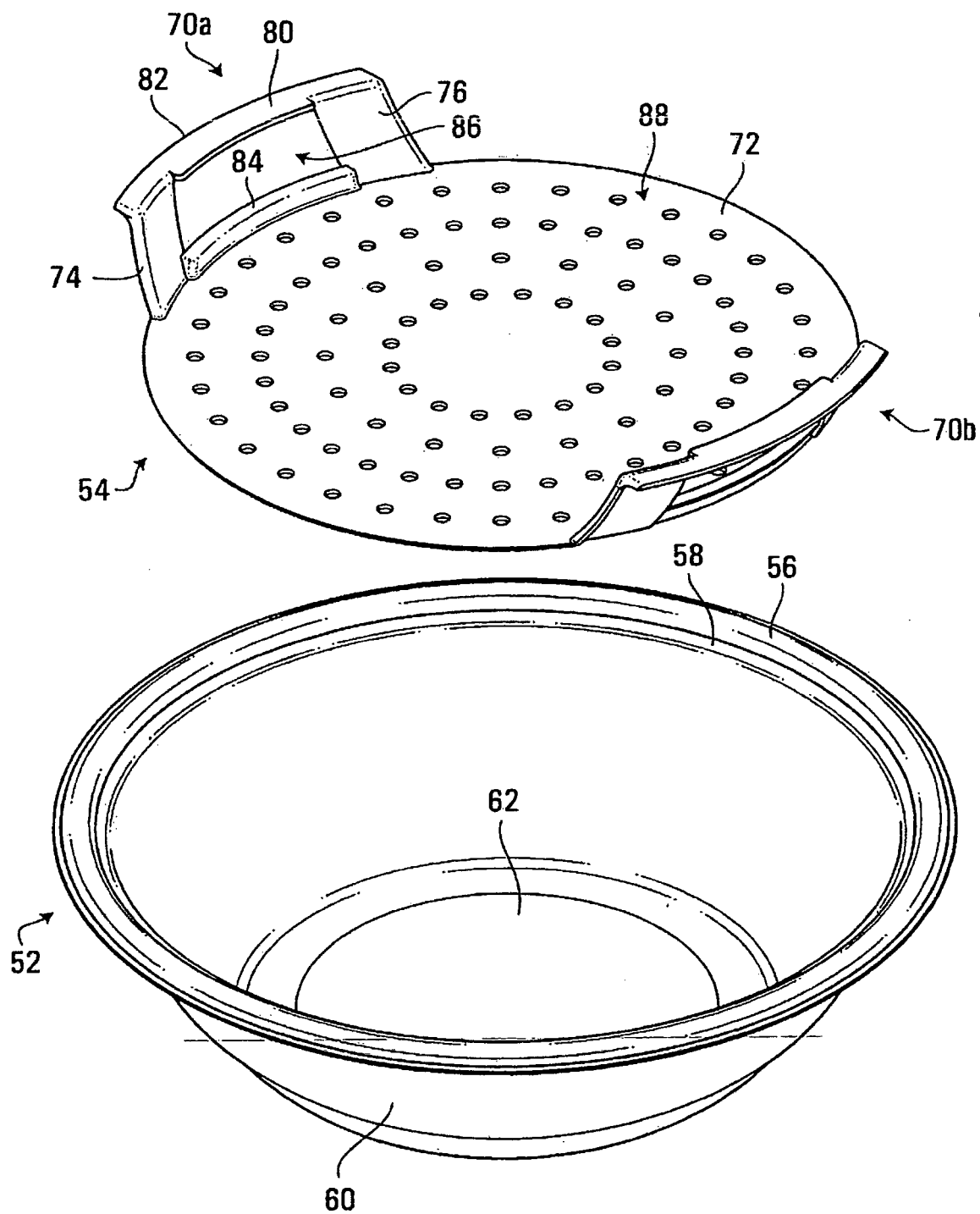
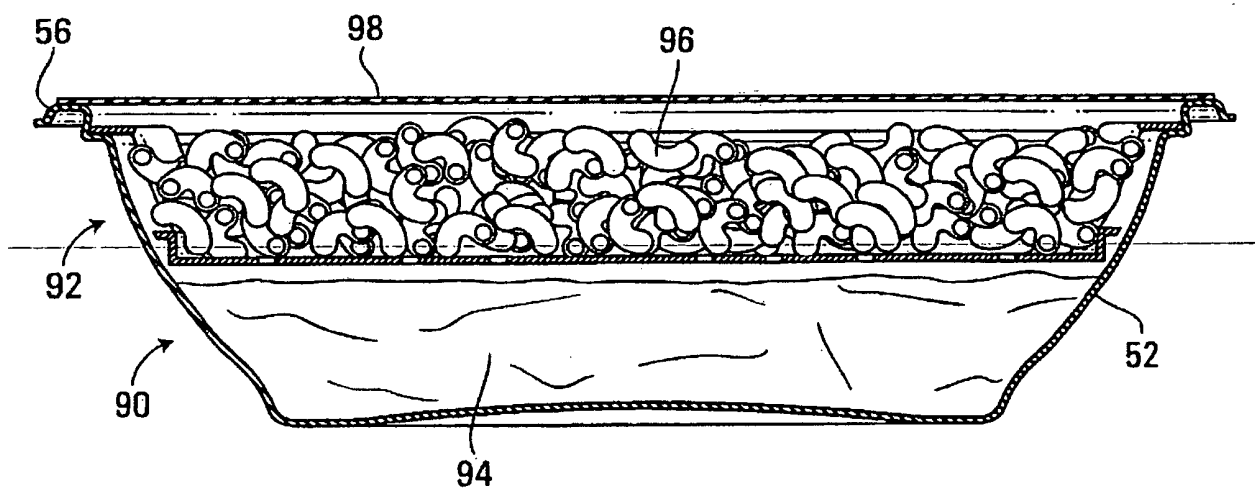
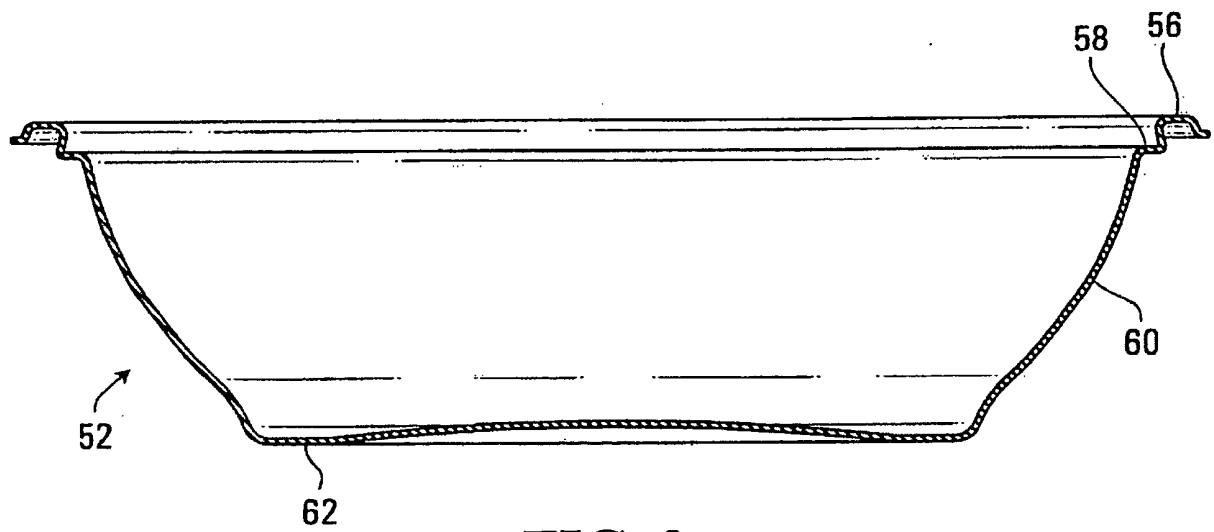


FIG. 2



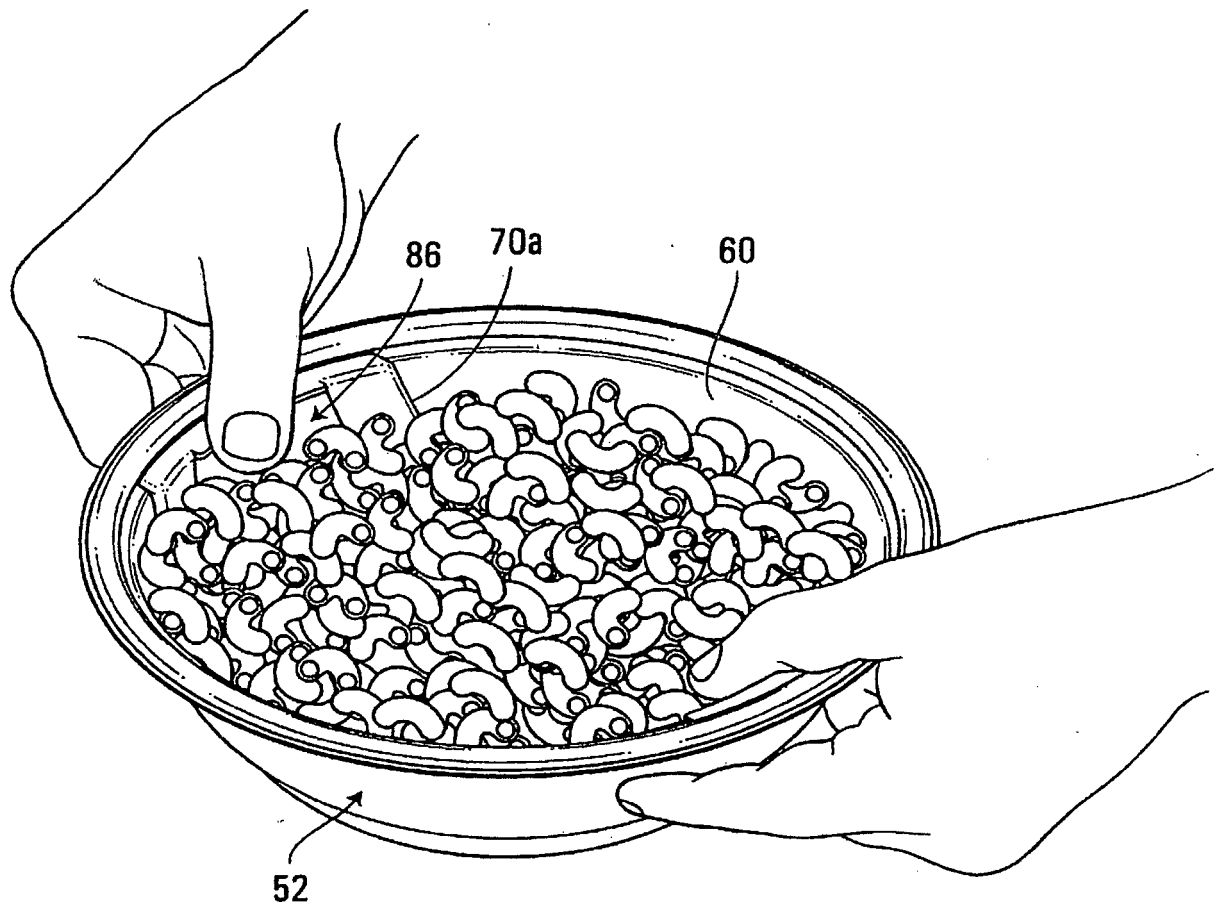


FIG. 5

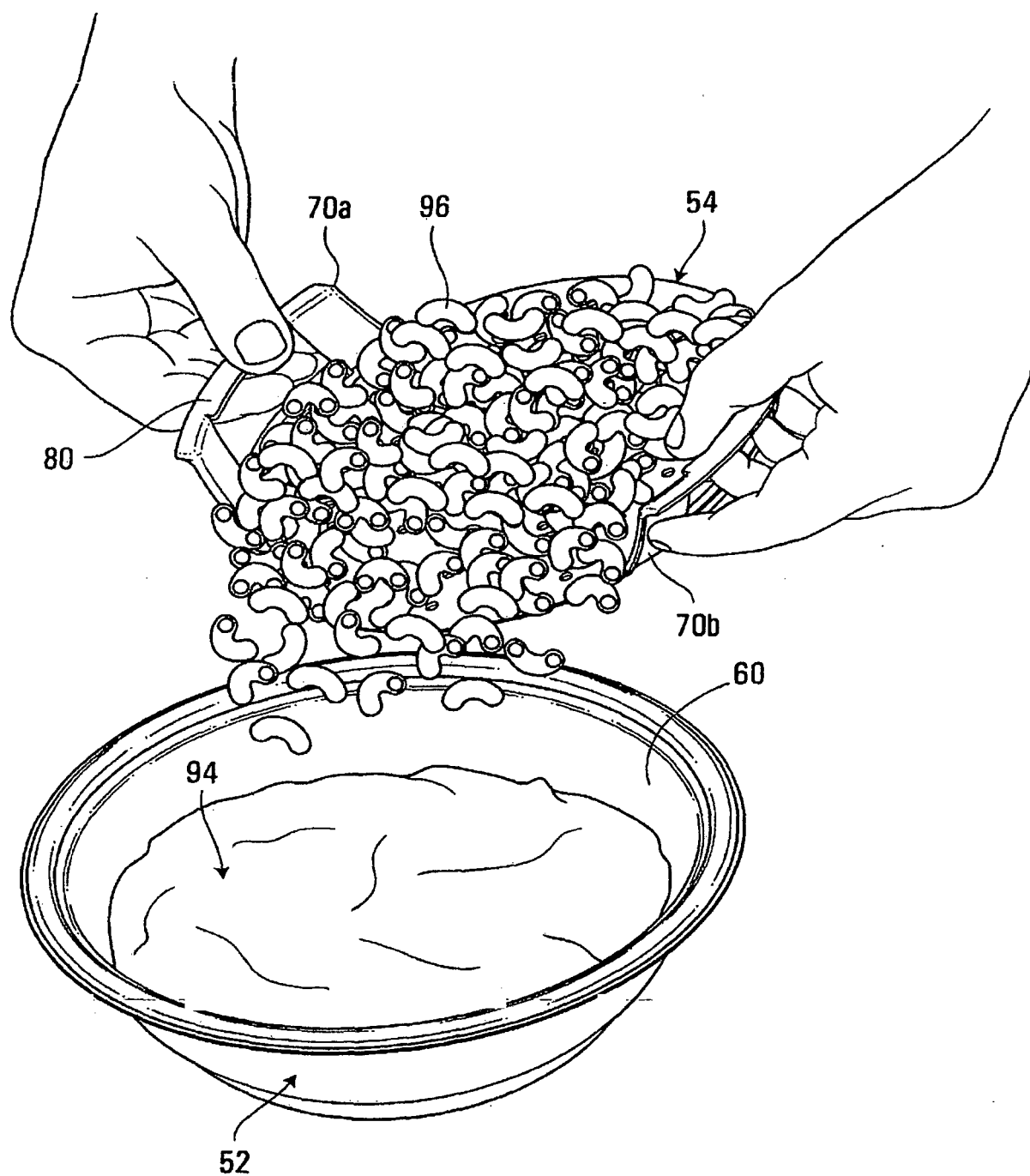


FIG. 6

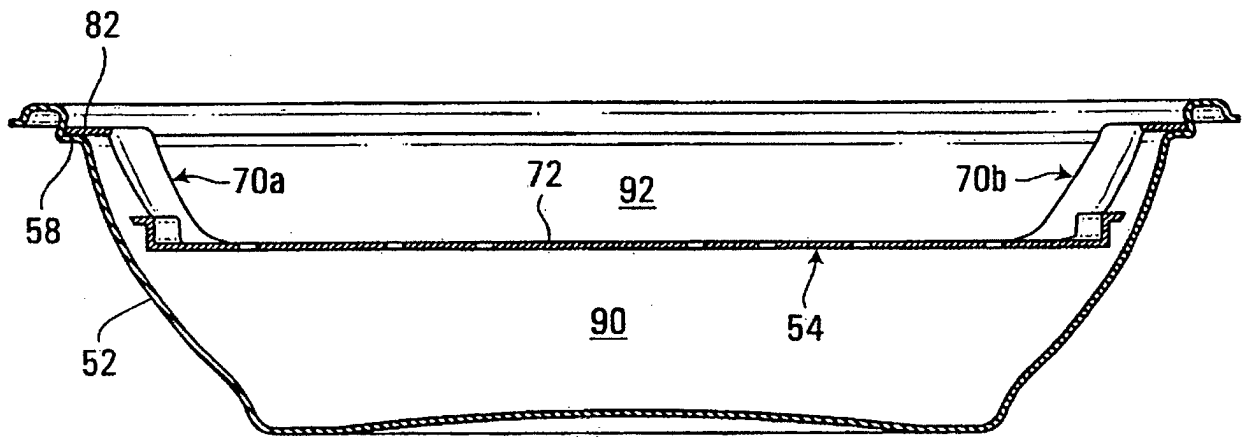


FIG. 7A

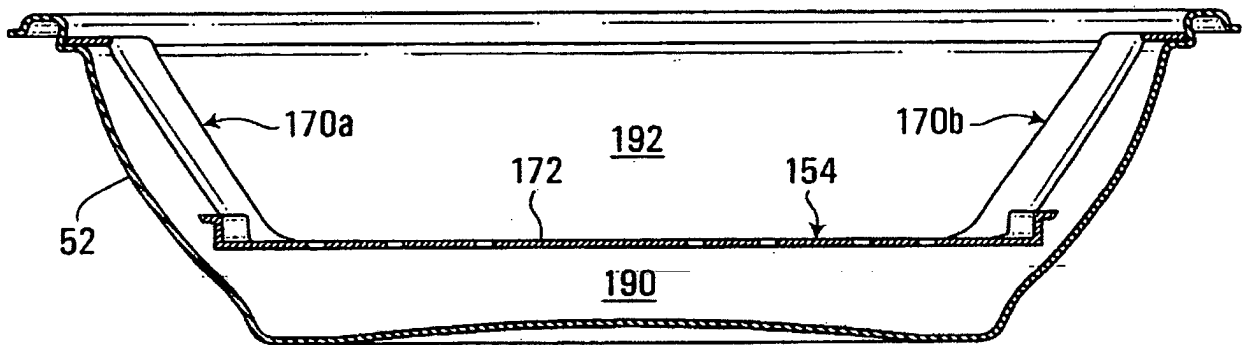


FIG. 7B

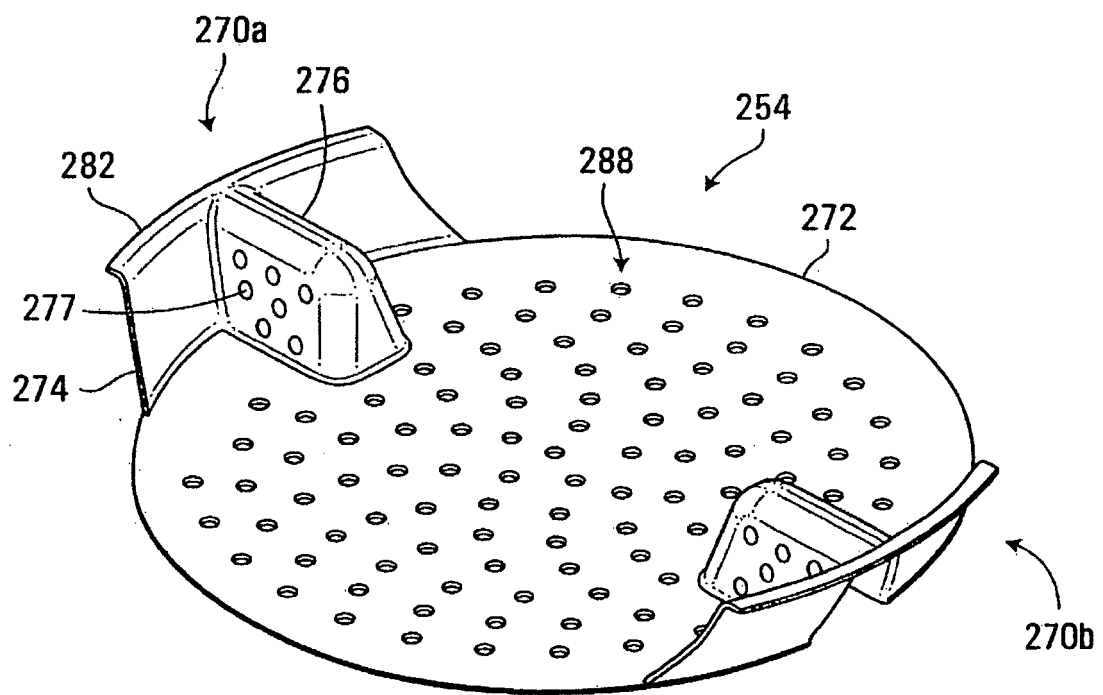


FIG. 8

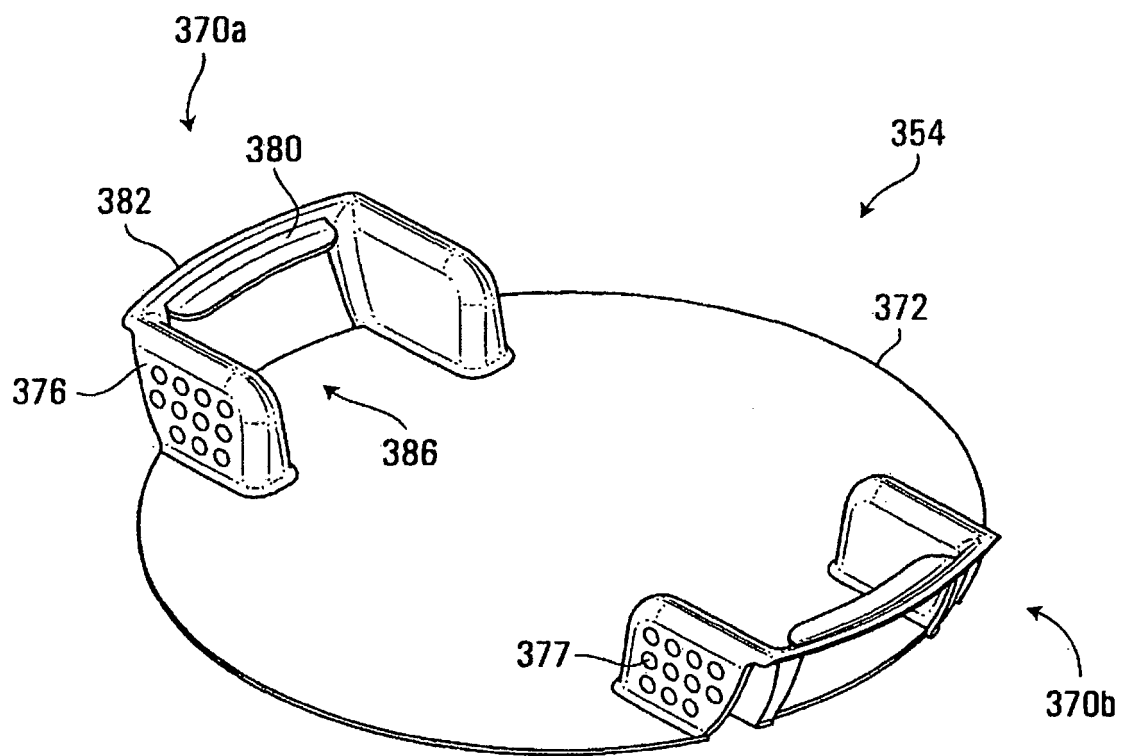


FIG. 9

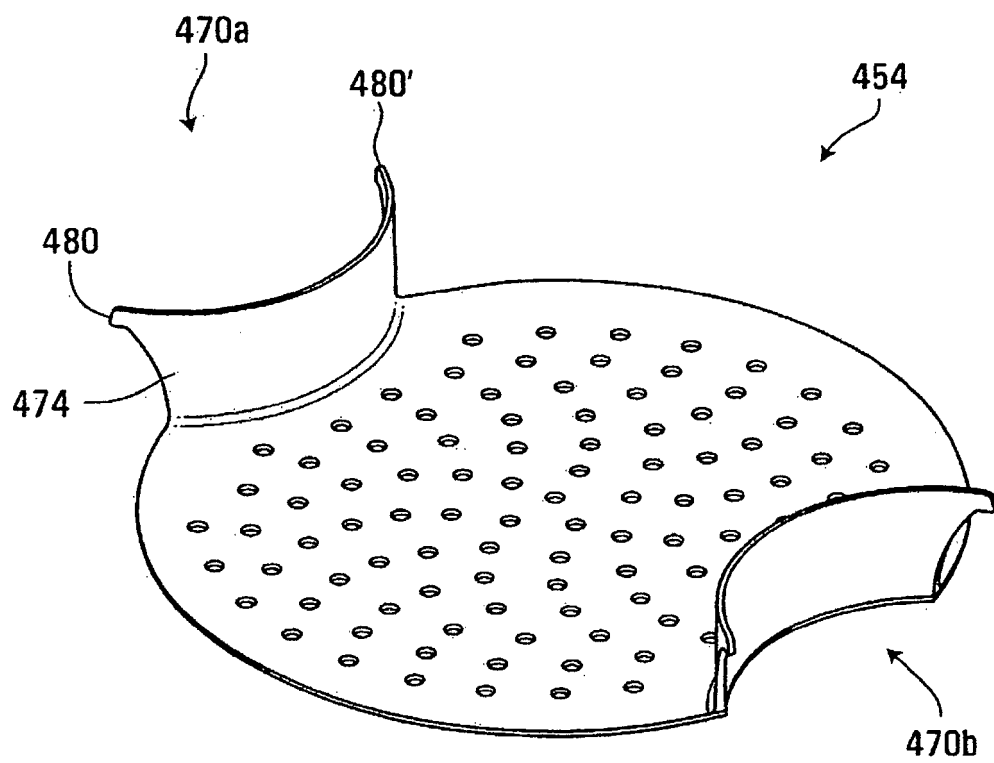


FIG. 10

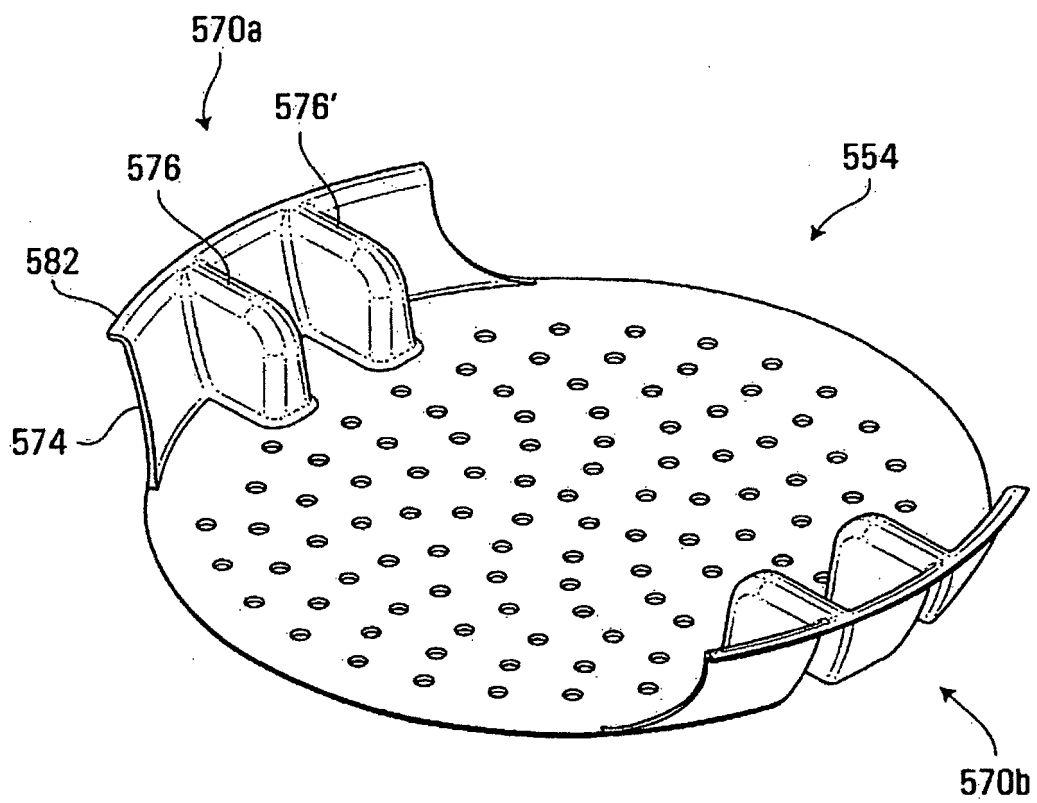


FIG. 11

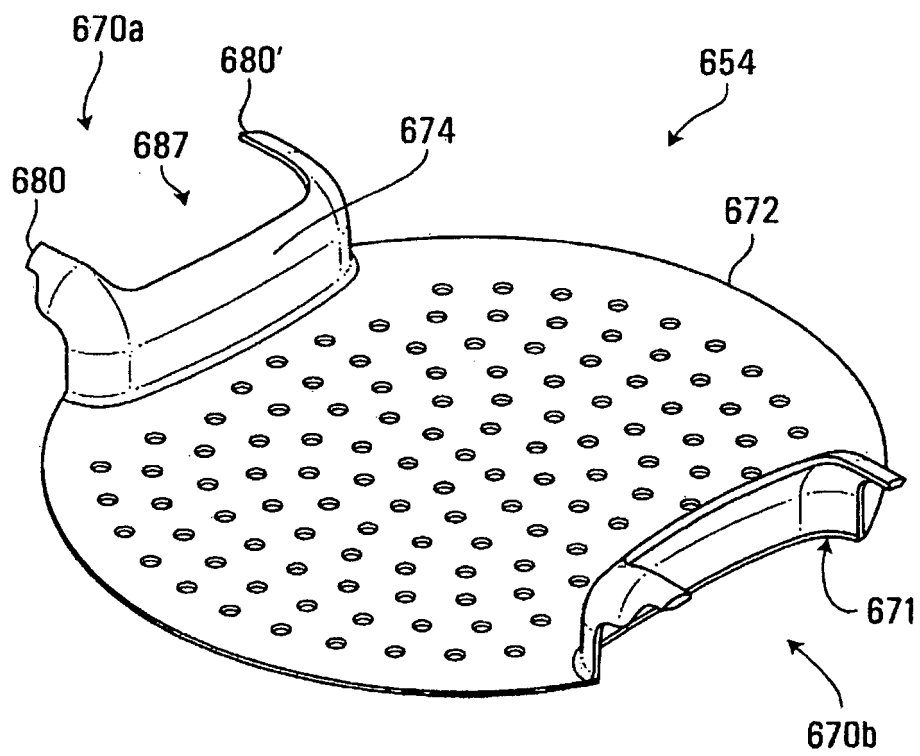


FIG. 12

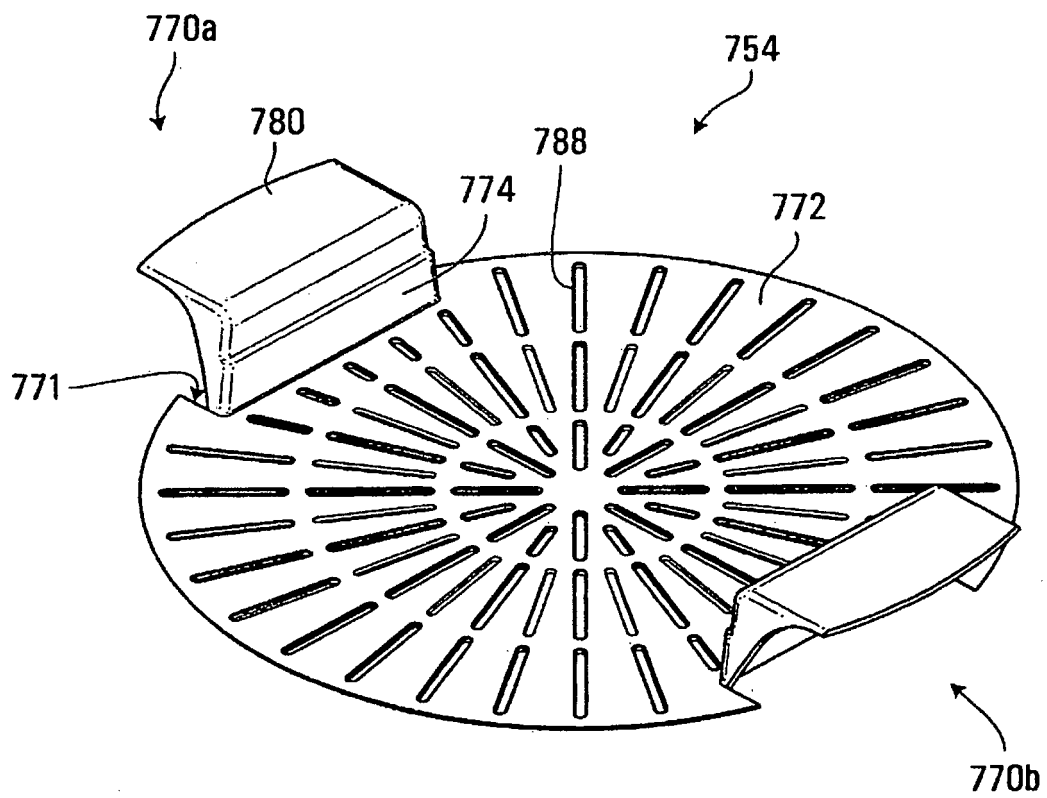


FIG. 13

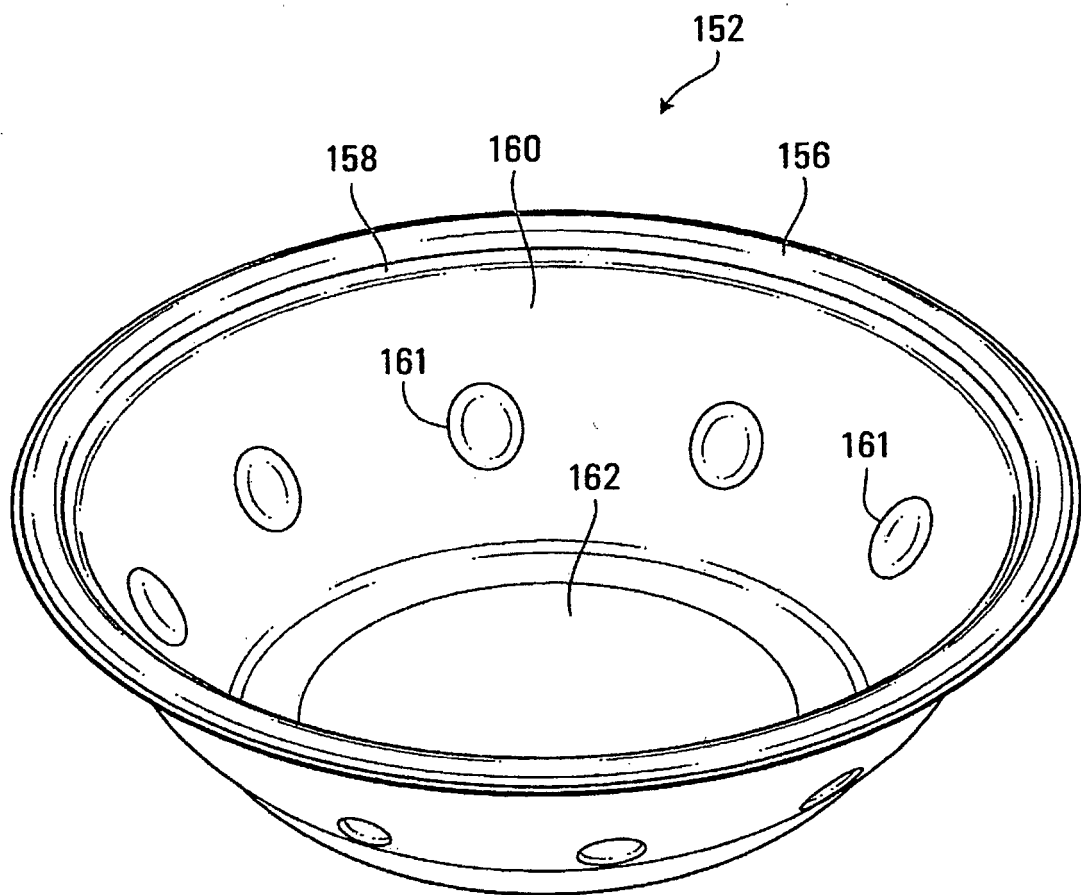


FIG. 14

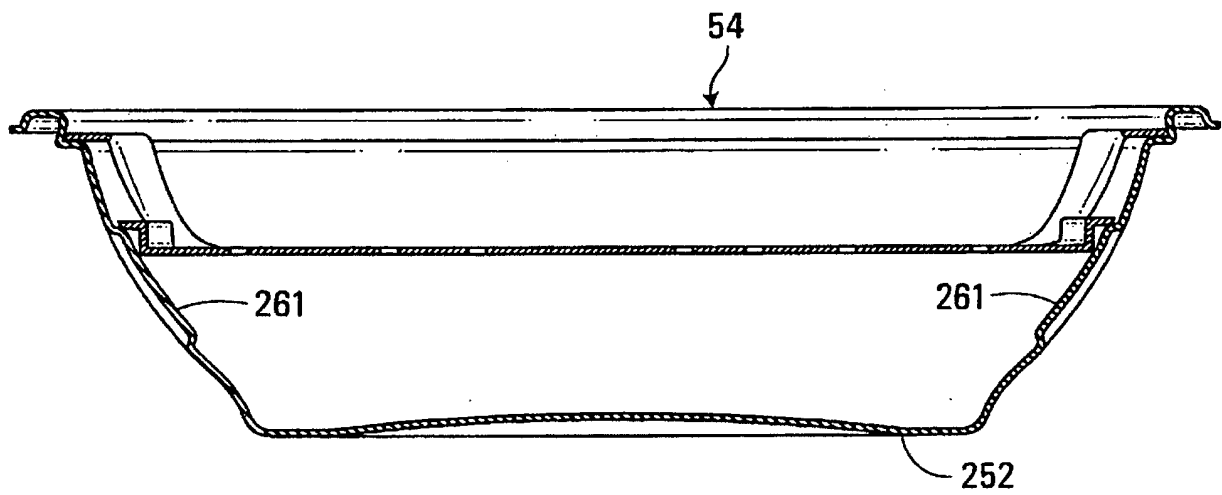


FIG. 15A

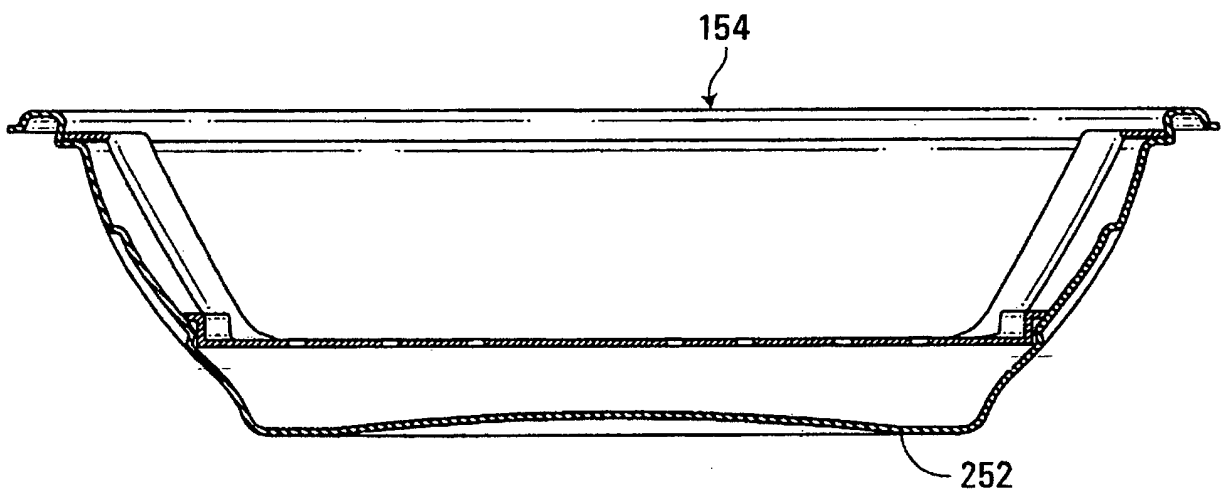


FIG. 15B

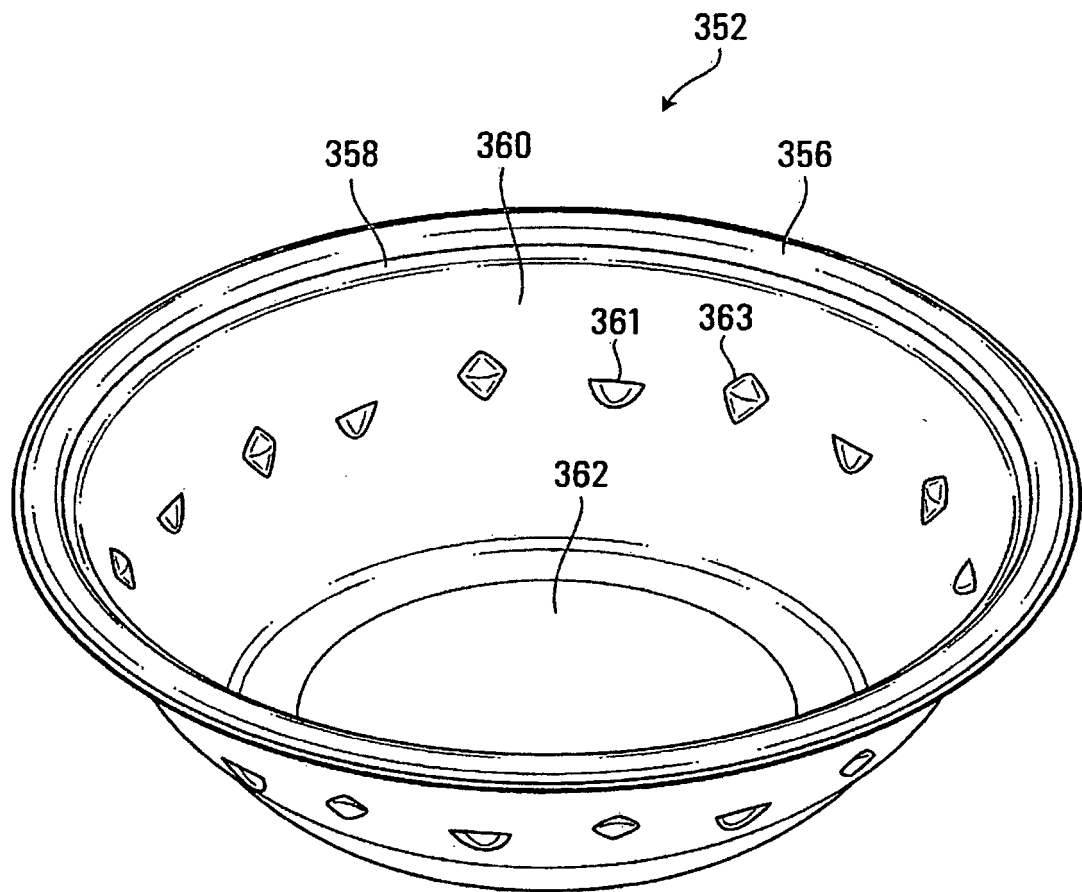


FIG. 16

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

Patent documents cited in the description

- EP 0449643 A1 [0003]
- US 4941401 A [0004]
- JP H10129742 A [0005]