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- (73) Patenthaver: **Meyn Food Processing Technology B.V., Noordeinde 68, 1511 AE Oostzaan, Holland**
- (72) Opfinder: **De Vos, Ferdinand Allard, p/a Noordeinde 68, 1511 AE Oostzaan, Holland**
Vonk, Pieter Willem, Noordeinde 68, 1511 AE Oostzaan, Holland
Waasdijk, Martinus Casper Melchior Balthasar, Noordeinde 68, 1511 AE Oostzaan, Holland
- (74) Fuldmægtig i Danmark: **Budde Schou A/S, Hausergade 3, 1128 København K, Danmark**
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DESCRIPTION

[0001] The invention relates to a method for processing poultry or apart thereof, including the step of detaching and/or collecting a cartilage of the poultry's keel bone.

[0002] In the poultry industry virtually nothing goes to waste. There is an ongoing pressure on machine-developers to devise machines and methods in which to the greatest possible extent parts from the poultry's carcass that have an appreciable commercial value are harvested.

[0003] It is the object of this invention to provide a method in which parts of the poultry may be harvested to a greater extent and with improved integrity as to its constitution free from alien parts, so that the parts that get harvested exhibit the largest possible commercial value.

[0004] As is common in the art, use is made in this method of a carrier for the poultry's carcass, which carrier moves the carcass along a processing line that is provided with detaching means for a cartilage of the poultry's keel bone. Such a method and apparatus are known from US-B-6,283,847.

[0005] From a commercial point of view it has been found considerably rewarding that when detaching and/or collecting a cartilage of the poultry's keel bone, this is carried out during transport of the poultry's carcass by making a cut in the cartilage of the keel bone, which cut is made initially transverse to the transport direction of the poultry and towards the poultry's backbone, and which cut develops from said transverse direction to eventually a direction opposed to the transport direction. This allows that the cartilage of the keel bone can be harvested without being spoiled by other parts of the keel bone or the carcass, allowing that the highest commercial value of this cartilage can be realized.

[0006] The just mentioned method can effectively be carried out in an apparatus which is provided with detaching means for the cartilage of the poultry's keel bone, which detaching means comprises a knife that is movable towards and from a path that the carrier follows in the processing line.

[0007] Particularly in the case the poultry's carcass is supported by a carrier, having the neck-side pointed in the transport direction, it is preferable that the knife is movable towards and from said path depending on the carrier's position in the processing line. Thus the operation of the apparatus can be attuned to the part of the poultry's keel bone where the cartilage is located. More precisely: during use, the knife moves towards the path of the carrier, when the carrier is in a position such that the knife cuts the keel bone of the poultry supported by said carrier exclusively at the cartilage of said keel bone, that is avoiding the part of the keel bone adjacent to the cartilage.

[0008] The knife can be of any shape or form; it can for instance be shaped as a band-saw.

[0009] The step of harvesting a part of the poultry's carcass in accordance with the invention may include further a step selected from the group of processing steps, comprising

- detaching and/or collecting the poultry's membrane of the keel bone and/or
- scraping and/or collecting residual meat from the sides of the poultry's keel bone.

[0010] The method of the Invention may to this end advantageously be employed in an apparatus that is provided with detaching means for the poultry's membrane of the keel bone, wherein the detaching means comprise a cutting instrument having a cutting edge pointing opposite to the transport direction at a level coinciding, during use, with a frontal extremity of the poultry's keel bone, and which cutting instrument has adjacent to it catching means for gripping the membrane of said keel bone and tearing same loose therefrom.

[0011] During transport of the poultry's carcass an initial cut is made in a frontal part of the keel bone, so as to cut the membrane loose from the keel bone there-under, where-after said membrane is caught and stripped from the carcass. This effectively assists and promotes the ease of harvesting the cartilage of the keel bone thereafter.

[0012] The invention will hereinafter be further elucidated with reference to a schematic exemplary embodiment as illustrated with reference to the attached drawing.

[0013] In the drawing

- fig. 1 shows the processing line embodied with an apparatus or apparatuses to perform the method according to the invention;
- fig. 2 - fig. 5 show the operation of an apparatus according to the invention for detaching and/or collecting a poultry's membrane of the keel bone;
- fig. 6 - fig. 8 show the operation of an apparatus according to the invention for scraping and/or collecting residual meat from the sides of the poultry's keel bone and
- fig. 9 - fig. 12 show schematically the method of detaching and/or collecting a cartilage part of the poultry's keel bone with an apparatus according to the invention.

[0014] Wherever in the figures the same reference numerals are applied, these relate to the same parts.

[0015] With reference first to fig. 1, several poultry's carcasses 1 are shown as supported in a manner known per se to the person skilled in the art by carriers 2 that move the poultry's carcasses 1 in a transport direction A along a processing line 3.

[0016] The processing line 3 is provided with harvesting means 4, 5, 6, that operate or are intended to operate on a part or parts of the poultry's carcass 1.

[0017] Said harvesting means 4, 5, 6, are selected from the group comprising

- detaching means 4 for the poultry's membrane of the keel bone
- scraping means 5 for collecting residual meat from the sides of the poultry's keel bone and
- detaching means 6 for a cartilage of the poultry's keel bone.

[0018] It is specifically remarked that although the just mentioned detaching means 4, scraping means 5 and detaching means 6 are shown to be separate apparatus parts or apparatuses, they can be suitably embodied in a single apparatus as well without departing from the scope of the invention.

[0019] The said harvesting means 4, 5, 6, for a part of the poultry's carcasses 1 are preferably embodied in accordance with the following elucidation.

[0020] With reference first to fig. 2 -fig. 8, the operation and basic construction of the detaching means 4 for the poultry's membrane of the keel bone is shown.

[0021] Fig. 2 shows a carcass 1 as it is transported in the transport direction (arrow A) and supported by a carrier 2.

[0022] The detaching means 4 comprises a cutting instrument 7 having a cutting edge 8 pointing opposite to the transport direction A at a level that, during use, coincides with a frontal extremity 9 of the poultry's keel bone 10.

[0023] The cutting instrument 7 further has adjacent to it catching means 11, 12, for gripping the membrane 15 of the keel bone 10 and tearing the membrane 15 loose from the keel bone 10.

[0024] Due to the cut effected by the cutting edge 8 of the cutting instrument 7 said membrane 15 of the keel bone 10 is detached from said keel bone 10, where-after it can be completely removed by the operation of the catching means 11, 12.

[0025] The catching means 11, 12, preferably comprises a roller 12 and a wedge 11 that is shaped to follow circumferentially at least part of the roller's surface 14, so as to leave a nip 13 as shown in fig. 3 between the surface 14 of the roller 12 and the wedge 11, that is sufficient to receive the membrane 15 detached from the keel bone 10.

[0026] Fig. 3 shows the initial making of the cut by the cutting edge 8 of the cutting instrument 7, and fig. 4 shows how subsequently the membrane 15 is caught in the nip 13 between the surface 14 of the roller 12 and the wedge 11.

[0027] In order to support that the membrane 15 is effectively torn loose from the carcass 1, the roller 12 is preferably having teeth circumferentially. Since it is completely clear how this should be embodied, same is not further shown in the drawing of fig. 2 - fig. 5.

[0028] Fig. 5 shows that eventually due to the continued rotation of the roller 12, the membrane 15 is entirely loosened and collected from the carcass 1 that continues its movement in the transport direction A.

[0029] With reference now to fig. 6 - fig. 8, the scraping means 5 are shown that are used for the subsequent collecting of residual meat from the sides of the poultry's keel bone 10.

[0030] The scraping means 5 comprise scrapers 16', 16", as can be best seen in fig. 7, which is a view in the transport direction A, as shown in fig. 6.

[0031] In fig. 7 the scrapers 16', 16", are shown at a relatively distant position as compared to the path that the carrier that supports the poultry's carcass 1 is following, which path essentially coincides with the route of the keel bone 10.

[0032] Fig. 8 shows in comparison with fig. 7 that the scrapers 16', 16", are movable; in fig. 8 the scrapers 16', 16", are moved towards the path that the carrier 2 follows in the processing line. In fig. 8 the scrapers 16', 16", are pressed against opposite sides of the keel bone 10 such that as a result of the continued movement of carcass 1 in the transport direction A (see fig. 6) the residual meat on said keel bone 10 is effectively removed such that it can be collected in, for instance, a bin provided below the scrapers 16', 16", due to the operation of gravity.

[0033] It is preferable that the scrapers 16', 16", are flexible. Advantageously the scrapers 16', 16", may be made of rubber.

[0034] Alternatively or in addition, the scrapers 16', 16", may be resiliently supported on a chassis and as mentioned before, when the scrapers 16', 16", are moved towards the path of the carrier 2, the scrapers must be capable to press on opposite sides of the keel bone 10 of a passing poultry's carcass 1.

[0035] With reference now to fig. 9 - fig. 12, the operation of the apparatus according to the invention for subsequently detaching and/or collecting a cartilage of the poultry's keel bone 10 is elucidated.

[0036] With reference first to fig. 9, it is shown that the keel bone 10 comprises a remaining part 17 of the keel bone 10 and the cartilage 18 which is intended to be harvested from the keel bone 10.

[0037] Fig. 10 shows that the detaching means 6 for the cartilage 18 of the poultry's keel bone 10 comprises a knife 19 that is movable towards and from the path that the carrier with the carcass 1 follows in the transport direction A of the processing line.

[0038] In order to only harvest the cartilage 18 while the carcass 1 moves in the transport direction A, the knife 19 is movable towards and from said path that the carrier with the carcass 1 follows in the transport direction depending on the carrier's position in said transport direction A. This way the knife 19 will only move towards the carcass 1 when the carrier 2 is in a position such that the knife 19 cuts the keel bone 10 of the poultry supported by the carrier exclusively at the cartilage 18 of the keel bone 10.

[0039] Fig. 10 shows the poultry's carcass 1 supported by a carrier 2 in a position that the knife 19 has not yet moved in the direction of the carcass 1; movement of the knife 19 is delayed up to the moment that the cartilage 18 is in front of the cutting edge 20 of the knife 19, such that immediately when possible after passing of the remaining part 17 of the keel bone 10, the cartilage 18 is cut loose from the keel bone 10.

[0040] As fig. 10 and fig. 11 show in sequence a very beneficial arrangement of the knife 19, is to have a cross-section being shaped with a bend wherein the cutting edge 20 is at an extremity of the bend, and whereby the knife 19 is rotatable.

[0041] The knife 19 has a centre of rotation 22 which lies externally from the knife's body, whereby the knife 19 has an inner surface 21 that along its circumferential area exhibits a constant distance to said centre of rotation 22. This causes that the cutting edge 20 - when moved into the path that the carrier 2 with the poultry 1 follows in the transport direction A of the processing line - will result in a cut that develops from a transverse cut with reference to the transport direction, to eventually a direction as shown in fig. 11, being opposed to the transport direction A.

[0042] Fig. 12 shows that thus a fairly complete removal and collection of the cartilage 18 that is adjacent to the remaining part 17 of the keel bone 10 can be effected.

[0043] Fig. 12 finally shows in the right hand corner the removed and collected cartilage 18 taken from the keel bone 10 of the carcass 1 as explained hereinabove.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

- US6283847B [0004]

PATENTKRAV

1. Fremgangsmåde til bearbejdning af fjerkræ eller en del deraf i en bearbejdningsslinje, omfattende trinnet med at adskille og/eller opsamle et bruskvæv (18) fra fjerkræets
5 brystben (10), **kendetegnet ved, at** under transport af fjerkræets slagtekrop (1) i bearbejdningsslinjen foretages et snit i bruskvævet (18) af brystbenet (10), hvilket snit indledningsvis foretages på tværs af transportretningen (A) for fjerkræet og imod fjerkræets ryggrad, og hvilket snit udvikler sig fra den nævnte tværgående retning til til slut en retning modsat transportretningen (A).

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2. Fremgangsmåde ifølge krav 1, hvori snittet foretages under undgåelse af den del af brystbenet (10), som er tilstødende bruskvævet (18).

3. Fremgangsmåde ifølge krav 1 eller 2, hvori bearbejdningen af fjerkræet omfatter
15 adskillelse og/eller opsamling af fjerkræets membranhinde (15) på brystbenet (10), **kendetegnet ved, at** under transport af fjerkræets slagtekrop (1) i bearbejdningsslinjen foretages et indledende snit i en frontal del (9) af brystbenet (10), for derved at skære membranhinden (15) løs fra brystbenet (10) derunder, hvorefter membranhinden (15) gribes og trækkes af slagtekroppen (1).

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4. Fremgangsmåde ifølge ethvert af kravene 1-3, hvori bearbejdningen af fjerkræet omfatter skrabning og/eller opsamling af restkød fra siderne af fjerkræets brystben (10), **kendetegnet ved, at** under transport af fjerkræets slagtekrop presses skrabeeleenter (16', 16") imod modstående sider af brystbenet (10).

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DRAWINGS

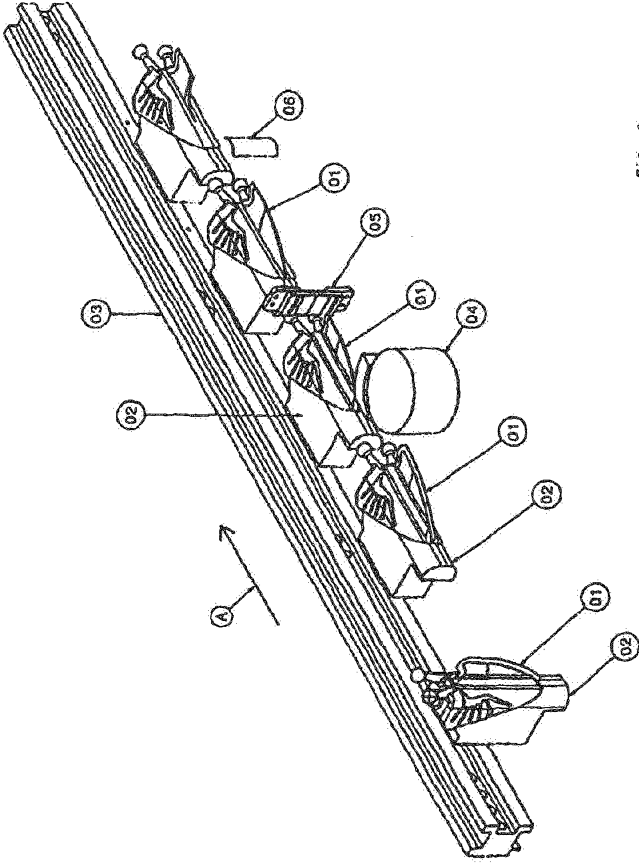


FIG. 1

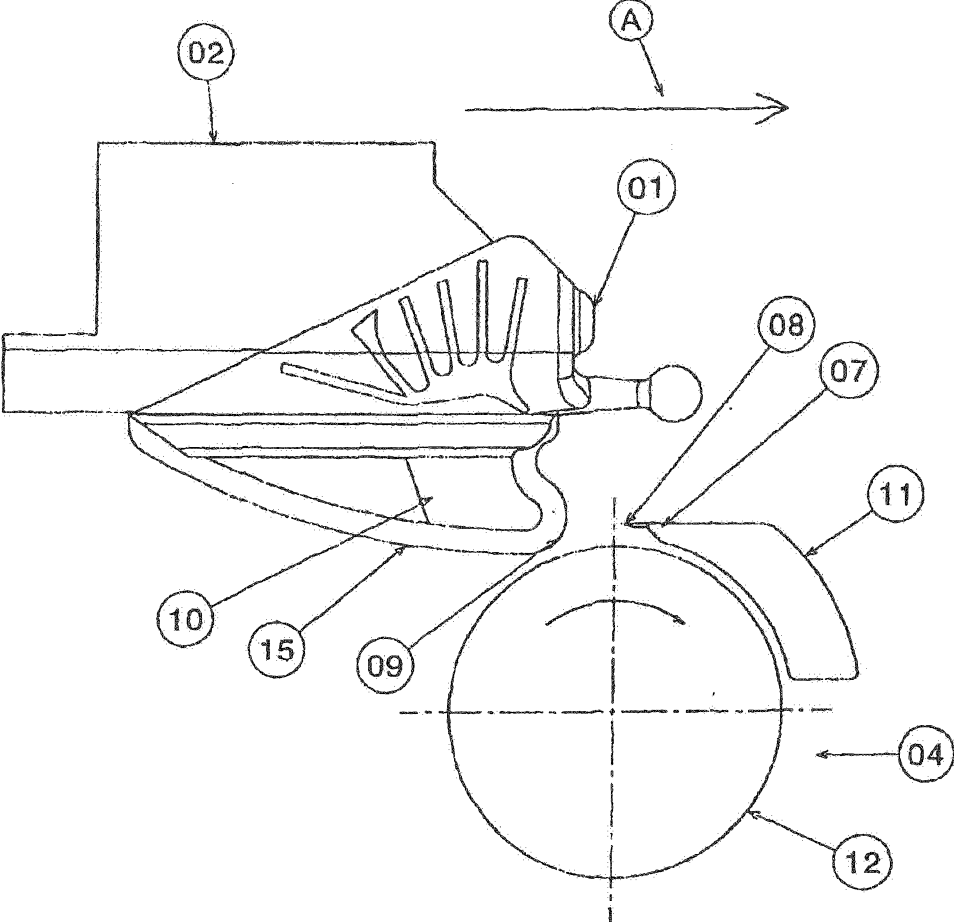


Fig. 2

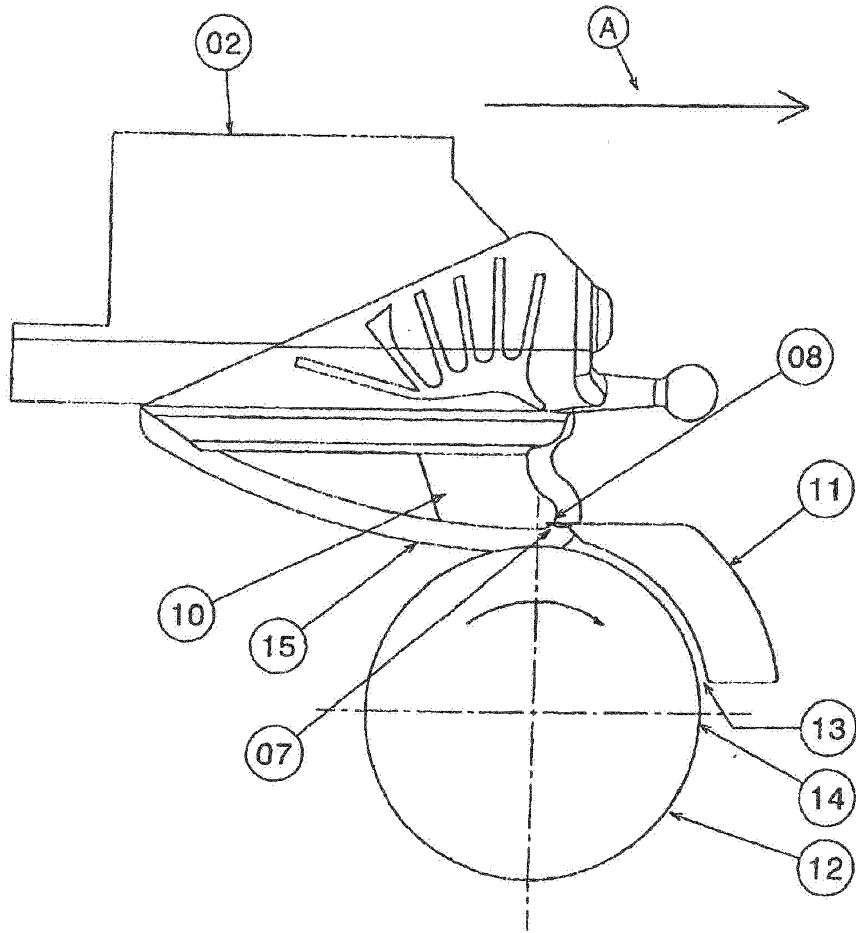


Fig. 3

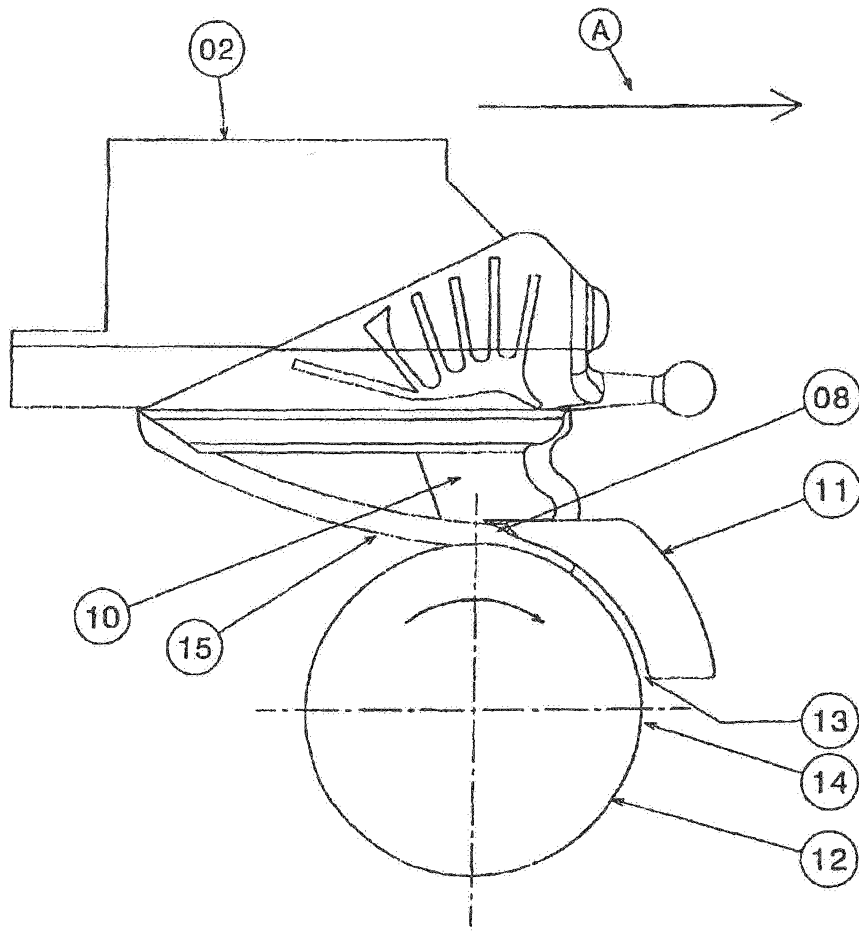


Fig. 4

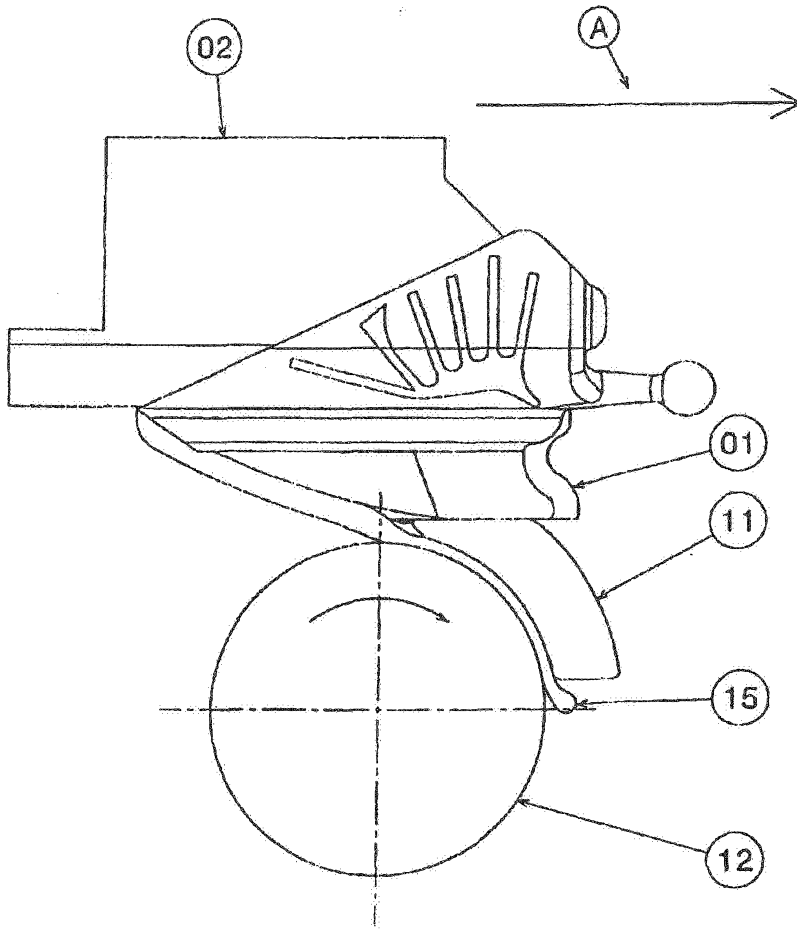


Fig. 5

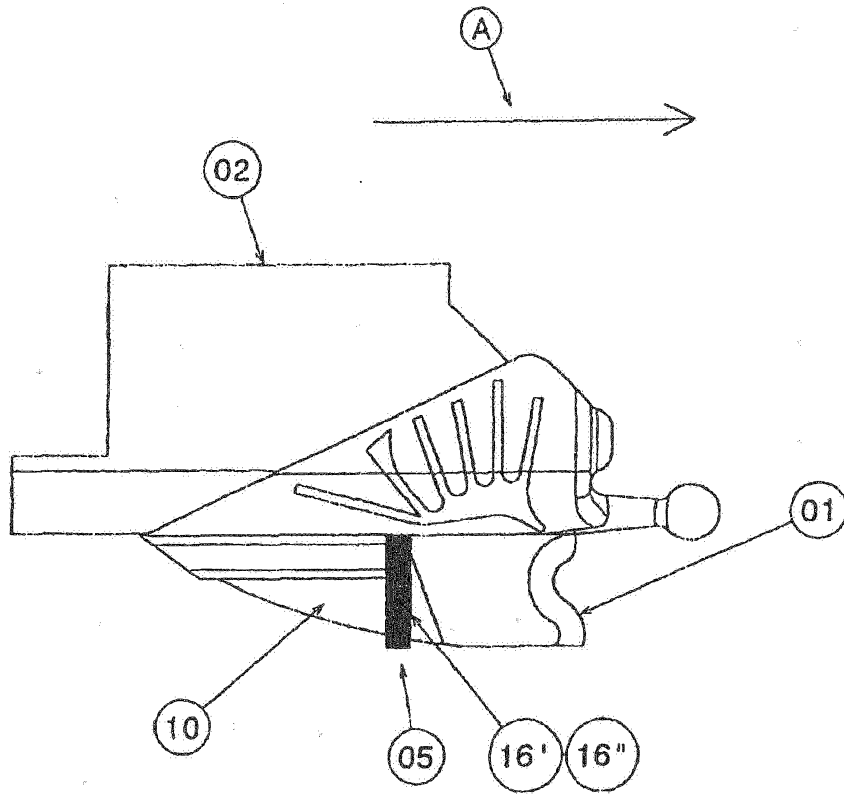


Fig. 6

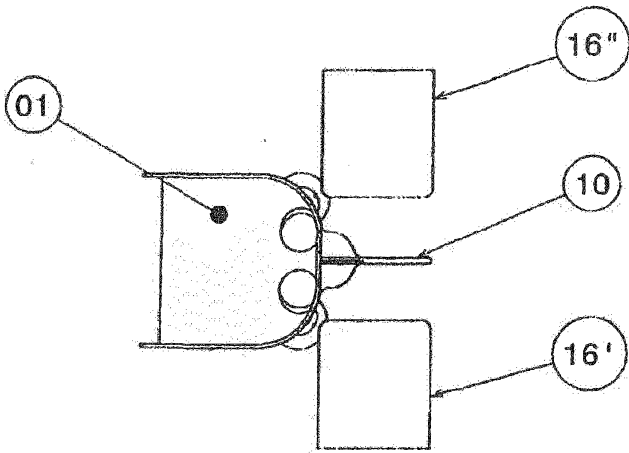


Fig. 7

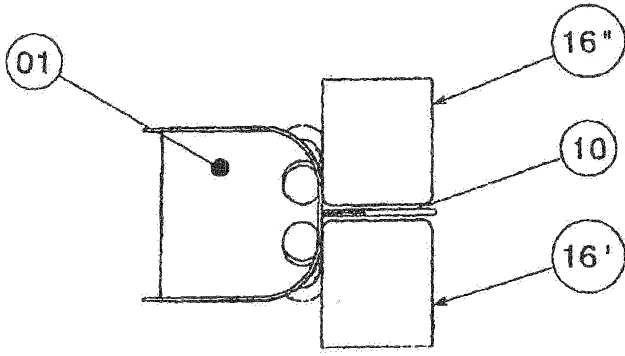


Fig. 8

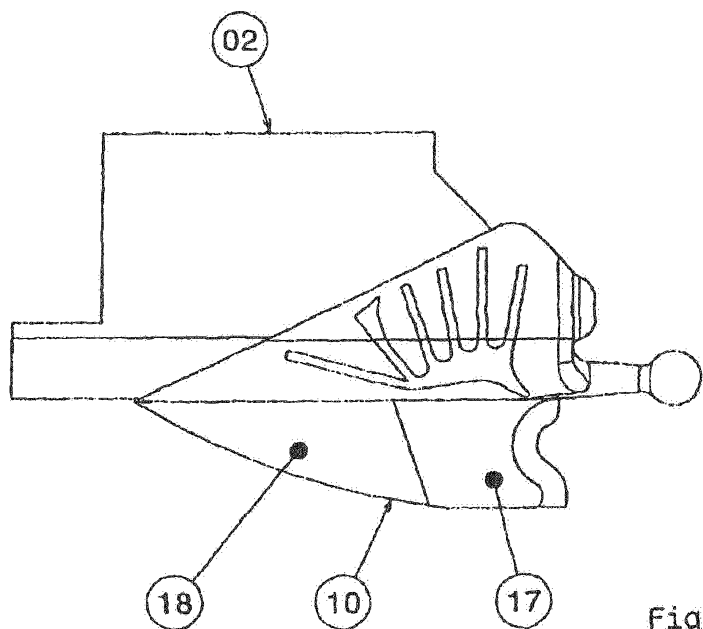


Fig. 9

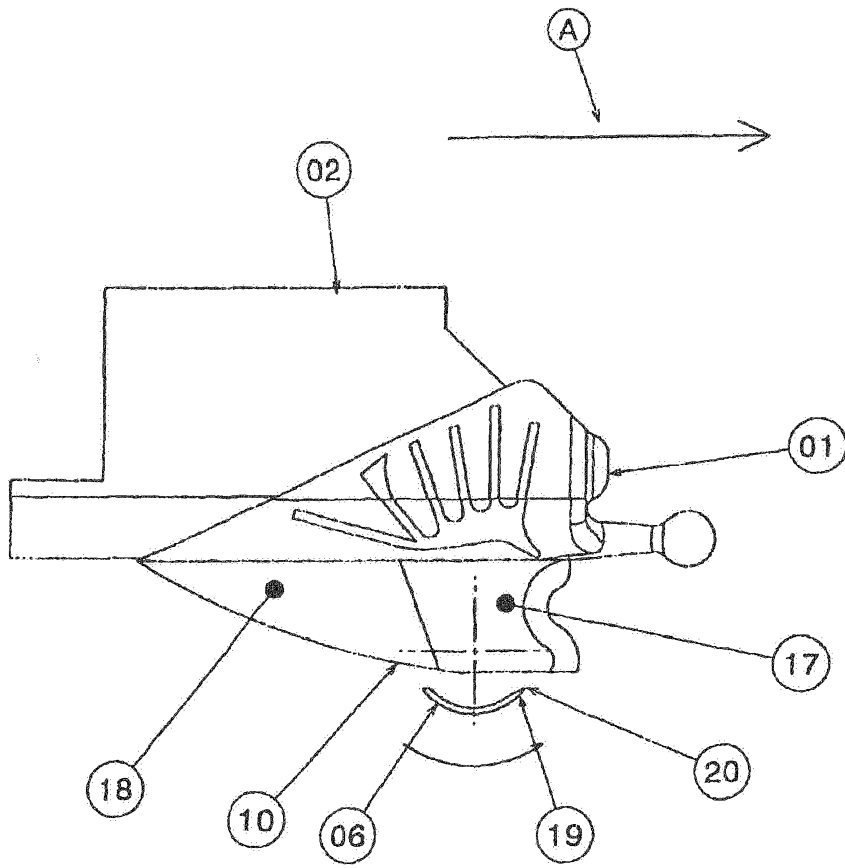


Fig. 10

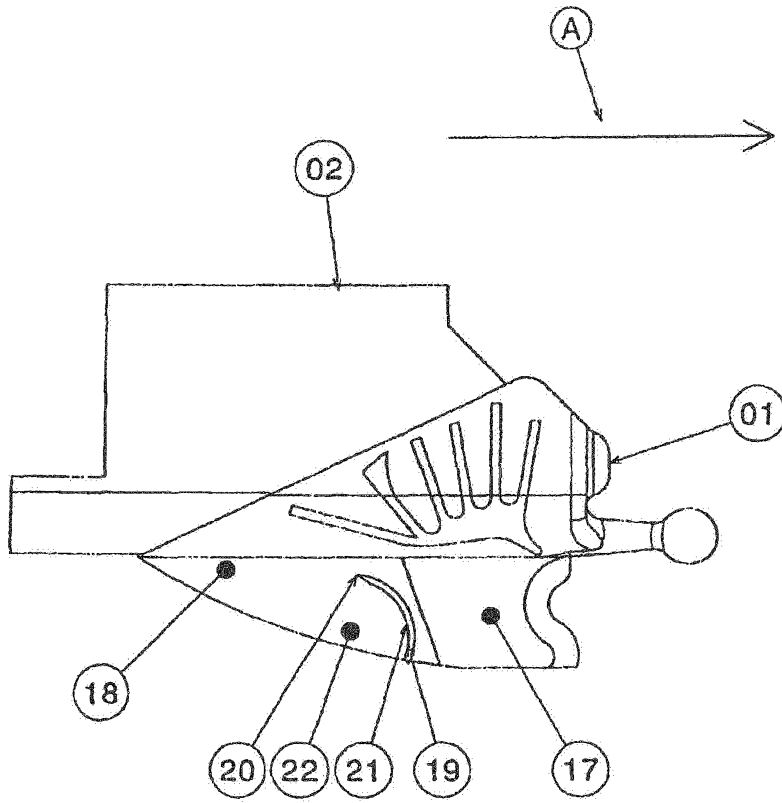


Fig. 11

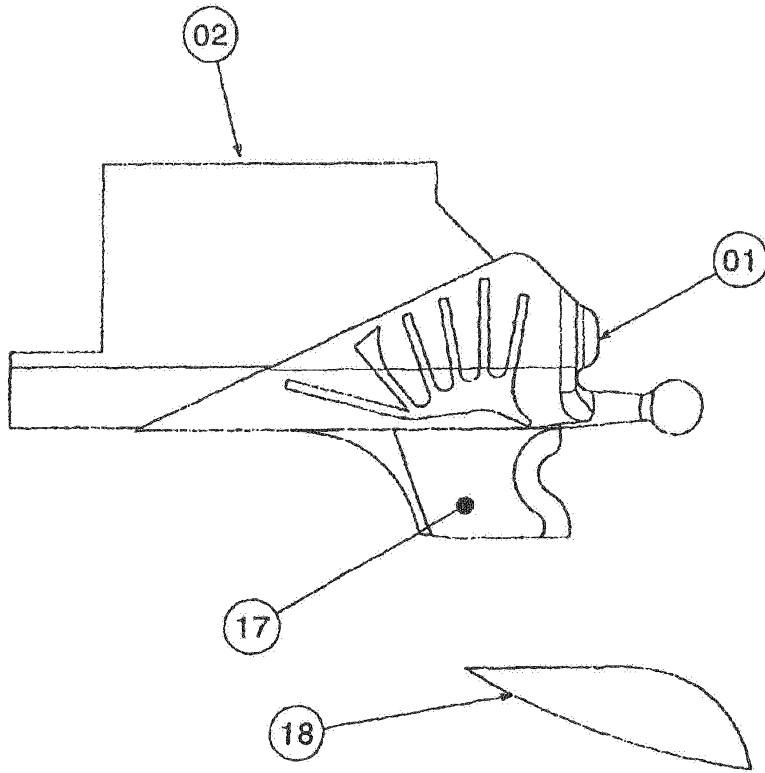


Fig. 12