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CONTAINER FOR SLICED FOOD PRODUCTS

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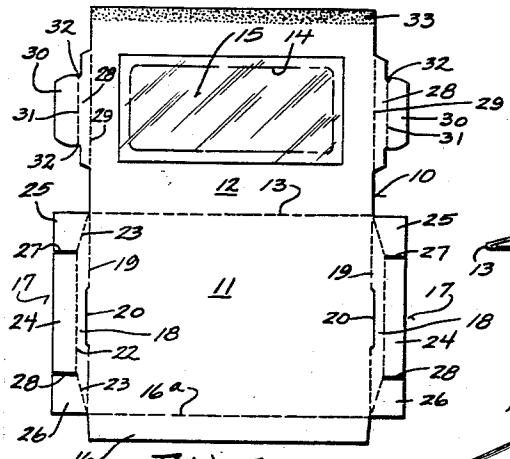


Fig. 1

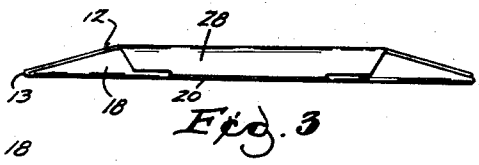


Fig. 3

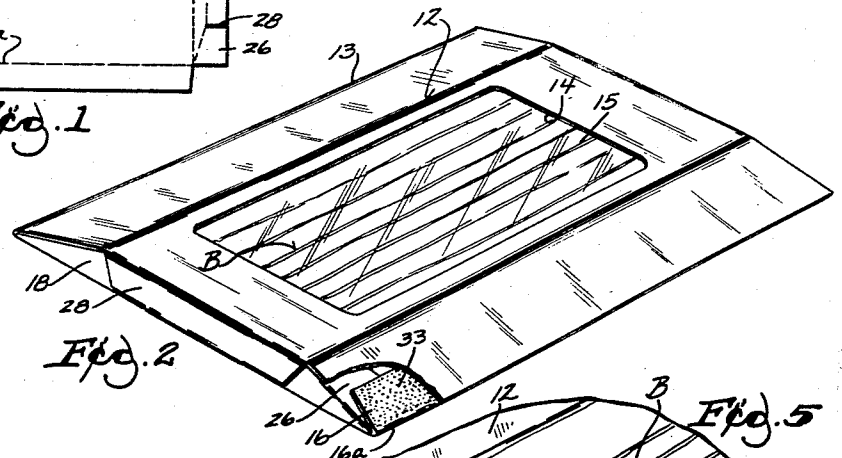


Fig. 2

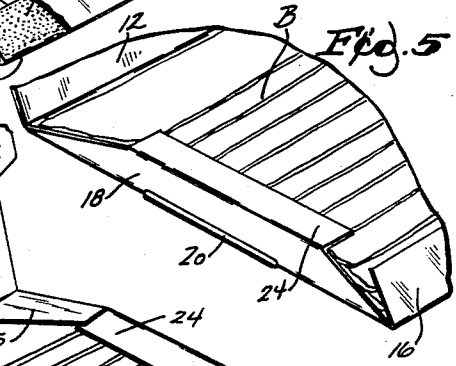


Fig. 5

Fig. 4

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CONTAINER FOR SLICED FOOD PRODUCTS

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This invention relates generally to packaging and more particularly to improvements in that type of package which is used for sliced food products, such as bacon.

In packages of this nature, the slices of bacon are arranged in overlapping relation to form a mass of rectangular outline which is thickest in the center and tapers to a thin edge along the longitudinal sides. The mass has a cross-section of flat trapezoidal shape; that is, with a central portion of substantial thickness and a flat top and tapering ends. Although the food product is soft and pliable, it is desirable to provide a package that will protect the product and to a certain extent prevent the food mass from excessive deformation.

It is also desirable to display a portion of the product to the prospective purchaser without the necessity of unwrapping the product. Furthermore, Food and Drug laws require the package to be tightly closed for sanitary reasons. Many conventional packages provide for these two requirements by means of a transparent overwrap which seals the entire package. This overwrapping, of course, adds considerably to the ultimate cost of the product and it is preferable when possible, to use a package which does not require overwrapping.

Because of the peculiar shape of a mass of slices of overlapping product, it has heretofore been difficult to provide a package of desired shape that had sufficient rigidity to protect the product, enabled the product to be displayed without opening the package, covered the product sufficiently so as to eliminate the need for overwrapping, and which could be produced economically and assembled readily by automatic machinery. The present invention provides such a package.

The invention further contemplates a package of the above type in which end walls are provided that completely enclose the ends of the product mass, conform in shape thereto, and are locked in tightly assembled relationship. More specifically, it is an object of the invention to provide a display package for sliced food products, which package has top and bottom panels and end walls which tightly close the package. The invention further provides reinforcing portions for the end walls which form a particularly rigid package, which portions furthermore carry locking means by which the package is tightly assembled.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will appear hereinafter as this disclosure progresses, reference being had to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view, of a blank made in accordance with the present invention, showing it in the unfolded position or as it is formed from a sheet of paperboard;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a package formed from the blank shown in Figure 1 and filled with a product;

Figure 3 is an end view of the completed package shown in Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a fragmentary perspective view of the package shown in Figure 2 but in the partially assembled position; and

Figure 5 is a fragmentary perspective view showing a modificaiton of the invention.

Referring in greater detail to Figure 1, a paperboard blank 10 is shown in the unfolded or flat position and comprises a generally rectangular bottom panel 11 and a similar top panel 12 foldable thereover along the longitudinal score line 13. The top panel has a window 14 cut therein which is covered with transparent sheeting 15. A narrow longitudinal side flap 16 is also foldable over the bottom along the score line 16*a*.

The slices of the product, shown here as bacon B, are arranged in overlapping relation on the backing 11 to form a generally flat rectangular shape having substantial thickness throughout the center portion and which tapers to a thin edge along the longitudinal margins. A mass of this shape presents difficulty in packaging so as to snugly hold the slices in their overlapped relation and prevent damage or disarrangement to the ends and sides thereof.

A rectangular end flap 17 is defined at each end of the bottom panel 11 by the score lines 19 and locking slits 20 extending transversely of the bottom panel.

The slits 20 are offset slightly from alignment with the score lines 19 so that, when the end flaps are folded at approximate right angles to the bottom panel, an opening will be formed for the reception of locking members as will appear later.

The end walls 18 are defined at their outer or top edges by the top or intermediate score line 22 and the tapered end score lines 23 along which are foldable, respectively, the top end flap 24 and inclined end flaps 25, 26. Slits 27, 28 separate the flap 24 from flaps 25, 26 and permit individual folding of the flaps. In this manner, the end walls 18 are of the same configuration as the cross-sectional shape of the mass of bacon. The inclined flaps 25, 26 may overlap the flap 24 slightly, as shown in Figure 4, or the cut slits 27, 28 may be replaced by triangular cut-outs so that the edges of the top flap 24 and the adjacent edges of the respective flaps 25, 26 do not overlap but merely abut each other when folded over the product. In either case, the flap 24 and the end flaps 25, 26 cooperate to conform to the contour and fold snugly over the top side of the bacon mass.

The end walls 18 are relatively narrow and when folded at right angles to the bottom panel 11 have considerable rigidity. As a result the inclined end flaps 25, 26 may be dispensed with, as shown in Figure 5, and the ends of wall 18 will find sufficient support from the wall 18 proper to close the end of the package completely when the package is assembled. The flaps 25, 26, however, have been found to be desirable and do provide a certain amount of reinforcement and sealing action.

End wall reinforcing and locking means are provided as follows.

The end walls 18 of the package are reinforced by extensions 28 which are foldable along score lines 29 at each side of the top panel 12. Score lines 19 and 29 are in alignment with one another and are actually formed as a single score line. A locking tab 30 is joined at score line 31 to the extension 28 and this tab is adapted to slip into locking slit 20 when the package is assembled as shown in Figure 2 and be held captive therein by the notches 32 which engage the ends of the slit. Thus the end walls of the completed package are of double thickness for the major portion of their length. A strong and rigid package is thus provided which can withstand rough handling and lends itself to convenient stacking.

The flap 16 and/or the inner edge of the top panel 12 may contain an adhesive or a heat sealable material 33 that provides a seal between and along the sides of these parts when pressed or heat sealed together. As an alter-

native however, the top panel **12** and flap **16** may be provided with other closing means such as a mechanical locking means, or the panel **12** may be extended to fold under the panel **11** and be locked or secured thereto in a suitable manner.

The unfolded blank shown in Figure 1 is substantially rectangular in shape and little material need be cut away from the stock sheet in forming the blank, thus holding waste to a minimum.

By means of the present invention a rigid display package has been provided which requires no overwrap, protects the product, facilitates stacking of the packages, is economical to produce and can be easily opened and resealed after partial use of the product.

Various modes of carrying out the invention are contemplated as being within the scope of the following claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which is regarded as the invention.

I claim:

1. A paperboard blank for wrapping an assembly of overlapping thin food slices, said blank being generally rectangular and scored thereacross to define a bottom and a top panel foldable over one another, one of said panels at each end having a transverse score line and locking slit to define end flaps foldable generally at right angles thereto, each of said flaps containing an intermediate score line spaced outwardly from said locking slit and terminating in tapered end score lines joining the ends of said transverse score line to define a trapezoidal-shaped end wall conforming generally to the end shape of the said assembly, said flaps also containing slits extending outwardly from said end wall to form a top flap and inclined flaps foldable generally at right angles to said end wall to conform to the contour of said assembly, said other panel having a reinforcing extension at each of its ends and foldable along a transverse score line to thereby be abuttable against said end wall, and a locking tab carried by said extension and foldable for locking engagement in said locking slit.

2. A paperboard blank for wrapping an assembly of overlapping thin food slices, said blank being generally rectangular and scored thereacross to define generally rectangular bottom and top panels foldable over one another and generally of similar size, one of said panels at each end having a transverse score line and locking slit defining end flaps foldable generally at right angles thereto, each of said flaps containing an intermediate score line substantially parallel to and spaced outwardly from said transverse score line and also containing tapered end score lines extending from said intermediate score line to the corresponding ends of said transverse score line to define a trapezoidal-shaped end wall conforming generally to the end shape of the said assembly, said flaps also containing slits extending outwardly from said end wall to form a top flap and inclined flaps foldable individually and generally at right angles to said end wall to conform to the contour of said assembly, said other panel having a reinforcing etxension at each of its ends and foldable along a transverse score line to thereby be abuttable against said end wall, and a locking tab carried by said extension and foldable for locking engagement in said locking slit.

3. A paperboard blank having a transparent display window for wrapping an assembly of overlapping thin food slices, said blank being generally rectangular and scored thereacross to define a bottom and a top panel foldable over one another and generally of the same size and shape, one of said panels at each end having a transverse score line and locking slit to define end flaps foldable generally at right angles thereto, each of said flaps containing an intermediate score line spaced outwardly from said locking slit and tapered end score lines extending to the ends of said transverse score line to define a trapezoidal-shaped end wall conforming generally to the

end shape of the said assembly, said flaps also containing slits extending outwardly from said end wall to form a top end flap and inclined end flaps foldable generally at right angles to said end wall to conform to the contour of said assembly, said other panel having a reinforcing extension at each of its ends and foldable along a transverse score line to thereby be abuttable against said end wall, a locking tab carried by said extension and foldable for locking engagement in said locking slit, and a side panel foldable along the side of one of said panels and having means for attachment to the other of said panels.

4. A food package comprising, an assembly of overlapping thin food slices between a bottom and a top panel folded over one another, one of said panels at each end having a transverse score line and locking slit to define end flaps, each of said flaps containing an intermediate score line spaced from said locking slit and tapered end score lines joining the ends of said intermediate and transverse score lines to define a trapezoidal-shaped end wall folded generally at right angles to said panels and conforming to the end shape of the said assembly, said flaps also containing slits extending outwardly from said end wall to form an intermediate flap and inclined flaps folded generally at right angles to said end wall to conform to the contour of said assembly, said other panel having a reinforcing extension at each of its ends and folded along a transverse score line to abut against its respective end wall, and a locking tab carried by said extension and folded in locking engagement with said locking slit.

5. A food package comprising, an assembly of overlapping thin food slices between a bottom and a top panel of similar size and shape folded over one another, one of said panels at each end having a transverse score line and locking slit to define end flaps, said flaps each being cut and containing a top score line parallel to and spaced from said locking slit so as to define a trapezoidal-shaped end wall which is folded generally at right angles to said panels and conforms to the end shape of the said assembly, said end flaps also including an intermediate flap folded along said top score line and generally at right angles to said end wall and over said assembly, said other panel having a reinforcing extension at each of its ends and folded along another transverse score line and abutting in supporting relationship against its respective end wall, and a locking tab carried by said extension and folded in locking engagement with said locking slit.

6. A paperboard blank for wrapping an assembly of overlapping thin food slices, said blank being generally rectangular and scored thereacross to define a bottom and a top panel foldable over one another, one of said panels at each end having a transverse score line to define end flaps foldable generally at right angles thereto, said flaps containing an intermediate score line parallel to and spaced outwardly from said transverse score line, the corresponding ends of said intermediate and transverse score lines being joined by tapered end score lines which define a trapezoidal-shaped end wall conforming generally to the end shape of the said assembly, said flaps also containing slits extending outwardly from said end wall at the junction of said intermediate and tapered score lines to form a plurality of adjacent top flaps foldable generally at right angles to said end wall to conform to the contour of said assembly, said other panel having a reinforcing extension at each of its ends and foldable along a transverse score line to thereby be abuttable against said end wall, and means for locking said panels, flaps and extensions in assembled condition.

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