Jan. 8, 1952 V. A. AMORINO ET AL 2,581,745

CULINARY IMPLEMENT FOR APPLYING SPREAD TO FOODSTUFFS

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Fig. 1.

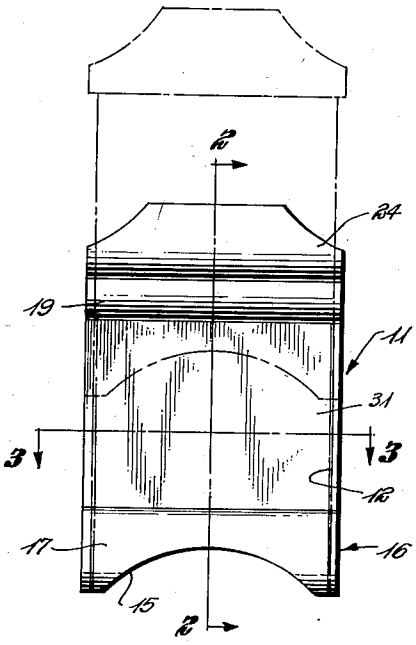


Fig. 2.

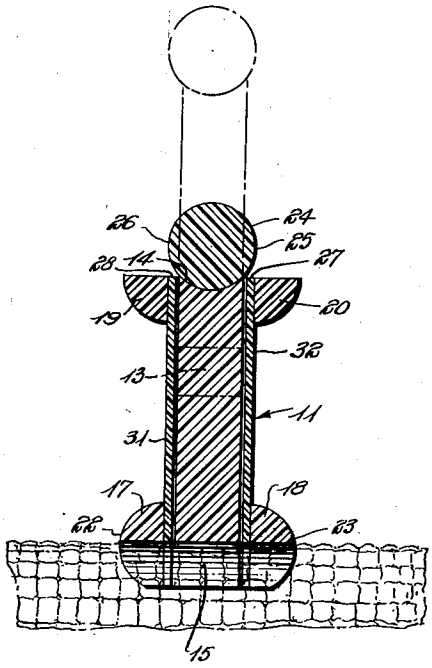


Fig. 3.

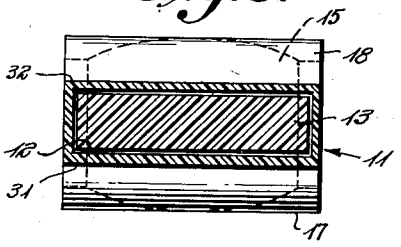
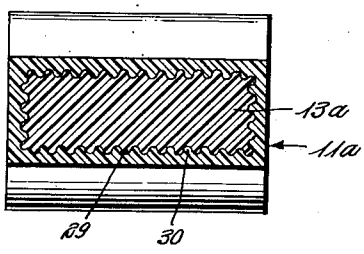


Fig. 5.



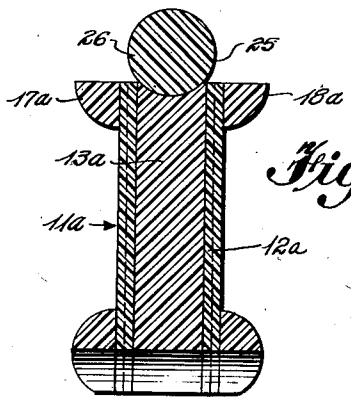


Fig. 4.

INVENTOR
Leo C. Bizzarro and
Victor A. Amorino

BY Jewett, Mead & Browne
ATTORNEYS

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CULINARY IMPLEMENT FOR APPLYING SPREAD TO FOODSTUFFS

Victor A. Amorino, West New York, and Leo C. Bizzarro, Long Branch, N. J.

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5 Claims. (Cl. 65—12)

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The present invention relates generally to culinary implements and more particularly to an improved device for spreading a somewhat plastic condiment such as butter, margarine or the like on foodstuffs. In its more specific aspects, the invention pertains to novel features of construction embodied in a handy new, ornamental and useful implement for buttering corn-on-the-cob or other food having a substantially arcuate surface to which the spread is applied.

A modern, complete place setting requires an implement of the character described, as it is an article that has come to be regarded as indispensable to the gracious eating of corn-on-the-cob. Many different devices have been designed to achieve some of the well-known advantages of mechanical spreaders, namely, convenience, ease in application and cleanliness; but it has been difficult to provide a device that performs in the desired efficient and fool-proof manner so as to eliminate the messy and troublesome operations usually associated with the conventional methods of spreading butter, margarine or the like on the kernels, and yet is adaptable to be made in large quantities by modern mass production methods. This is particularly true of implements designed to be made of synthetic plastic material, for example, by extruding, casting or molding, which provide an inexpensive and ornamental article which is durable and yet simple to keep clean.

As will appear in detail hereinafter, the present invention provides a simple, easily assemblable and inexpensive structure which overcomes the objectionable features of known butter-spreading implements and, in fact, is an improvement upon devices heretofore recommended for applying butter, margarine or other semi-solid spread to an ear of corn.

It is an object of the present invention, therefore, to provide a new and improved culinary implement.

It is a further object of the invention to provide an implement of the character described hereinafter having new and novel structural features.

It is a still further object to provide an implement of the character hereinafter described which is fool-proof in operation, ornamental in appearance, and adaptable to be made at low cost of plastic material under modern mass production techniques.

Other objects will be apparent from the embodiment of the invention as set forth in the following description and in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

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Fig. 1 is a front elevation of a device embodying the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a sectional elevation of the device shown in Fig. 1 as seen from line 2—2 of that figure;

Fig. 3 is a cross-section of the device, in plan, through line 3—3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a sectional elevation of an alternative embodiment of the present invention, corresponding generally to the view shown in Fig. 2; and

Fig. 5 is a cross-section of the embodiment shown in Fig. 4.

In the embodiment of the present invention as illustrated in Figs. 1 to 3, inclusive, the culinary implement comprises an elongated hollow casing or body 11 made of a suitable plastic material or the like. Body 11 is provided with a substantially rectangular bore 12 into which a plunger member 13 is adapted to be inserted in the manner described in greater detail hereinafter. Bore 12 is made in substantially rectangular cross-sectional configuration for the purpose of receiving a charge of butter. Preferably the cross-sectional dimensions of the rectangular bore, in elevation, correspond to the dimensions and the width of a standard slice or pat of butter cut from a commercial quarter-pound "stick," the width usually being about $1\frac{5}{16}$".

In the operation of the device, a chip or pat of butter, margarine or the like, cut from a standard quarter-pound "stick" is inserted edgewise in orifice 14 at the uppermost end of rectangular bore 12 and, thereupon, plunger member 13 is inserted in the uppermost end of said bore 12 and, by applying pressure downwardly on the plunger member, the butter slice is moved into a position with its lowermost edge flush with orifice 15 at the lowermost end of bore 12 in casing 11.

Plunger member 13, as illustrated in Figs. 1 to 3, inclusive, is formed to reciprocate relatively freely within bore 12, cooperating therewith for gradually forcing the butter downwardly within the bore toward the orifice 15 at the open bottom thereof. One of the salient features of the present invention resides in the fact that the dimensions of orifice 15 correspond to the dimensions of the bore 12, in cross-section, thereby providing an "open bottom" in the device. The advantages of this construction will be pointed out in greater detail hereinafter. Base 16 of body 11 is arcuately formed in a concave manner so as to conform to a convex, arcuate surface of the substantially cylindrical shape of an ear of corn. At each side of base 16, bear-

ing elements 17 and 18 are disposed in such a manner that they serve as bearing devices as the implement is moved along the longitudinal axis of an ear of corn. Flanges 19 and 20 are provided at the upper end of casing 11 adjacent the orifice 14 at the top thereof. The flanges provide means for grasping and holding the casing firmly in the hand, usually between the thumb and second finger of the hand of the user, or, alternatively, as shoulders against which the thumb and second finger bear if the casing is grasped intermediate the ends thereof.

As may be seen by referring to the illustrative embodiment in Fig. 2, the bearing elements 17 and 18 may be formed of plastic or the like and may either be formed integrally with the casing or secured by adhesive or similar means to the front and rear walls, respectively, of casing 11. As illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2, the bearing elements 17 and 18 extend transversely of casing 11 adjacent the orifice 15 at the bottom edge thereof, and constitute widened surfaces for bearing on the ear of corn so as to provide smooth operation of the implement as it passes over the kernels of the ear of corn. Unevenness of the surface of the ear, caused by protruding kernels, or by kernels of unusual size, it has been found, ordinarily hinders smooth, easy operation of known devices of the general character described. The widened bearing surfaces of the present device permit the implement to slide more easily as it is moved along the length of the ear in contact with the kernels of corn, by presenting this bearing surface to any irregularities present on the surface of the ear and causing the device to ride smoothly over the kernel and thereby effect more even distribution of the butter or spread over the surface of the ear of corn.

In addition, because of the presence of bearing elements 17 and 18, the device has a broader bottom, and it may be placed in an upright position on a supporting surface without the aid of auxiliary supporting means and will remain in this position ready and available for use, without allowing the spread to come into contact with the supporting surface. The bearing elements, extending some distance laterally of the body 11, also prevent the body of the casing from coming into contact with the table on which the implement may be laid on its side during a meal, thereby minimizing the possibility of picking up dirt which would be transferred to the fingers of a person using the device.

In an implement of the type illustrated in the drawings, it is desirable to provide means aiding easy manipulation thereof. The present structure includes the aforementioned flanges 19 and 20 which provide finger grasping means permitting the device, when used, to be held between the thumb and the middle finger, the ribs enabling the implement to be grasped while the plunger element 13 is forced downwardly within bore 12 by pressing the index or forefinger on the enlarged head or handle portion 24.

It will be apparent that the implement is moved axially of the ear of corn in a reciprocatory manner as the ear of corn is rotated, to spread the butter evenly over the kernels. Due to the fact that orifice 15 is of substantially the same dimensions as the cross-section of bore 12, a greater area of contact between the butter and the ear of corn is made possible. Moreover, the "open bottom" feature enables the user of the implement to force the butter into contact with the corn by applying to plunger 13 only enough pressure to overcome the frictional resistance between the butter and the inside walls of bore 12, which resistance also prevents the butter from falling out through the open bottom (of its own weight) when the implement is held in an upright position with orifice 15 lowermost.

The handle 24 of plunger or ram 13 is provided with shoulder portions 25 and 26 at the outboard sides thereof, which shoulder portions cooperate with the upper edges 27 and 28, respectively, of casing 11 and serve as stops to prevent movement of the plunger 13, as a whole, beyond the end of the ram stroke, the length of the stroke being equal to the length of bore 12. The end of plunger 13 is arcuately formed in the same manner as the base of the casing 11 so as to conform substantially to the curvature of the sides adjacent orifice 15. This permits most efficient use of the butter contained within the bore 12 inasmuch as the plunger completely fills the bore from orifice 14 to orifice 15.

The bore 12 in the embodiment of the invention shown in Figs. 1 to 3, has been described as having a smooth internal surface. An alternative embodiment, however, is illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5, wherein the cooperating surfaces of the plunger body 13*a* and bore 12*a* are formed with lands and grooves or complementary corrugations 29 and 30, respectively. These lands and grooves provide means preventing wobble or lateral play of the plunger as it slides within bore 12*a* and, in addition, they aid in retention of the butter charge within the cylinder bore. Figs. 4 and 5 show in cross-section the plunger and casing structure of this proposed modification and reveal in detail the manner of cooperation between the grooved surfaces.

The size of the bore is preferably of a character that will retain the conventional pat of butter. However, if the embodiment shown in Figs. 4 and 5 is used, it is clear that there can be substantial variations in the dimensions of the pat of butter inasmuch as the bore 12*a* is adapted to receive smaller or larger cubes, the limit of larger dimensions being determined by the distance between the grooves in the opposite walls of bore 12*a* and the limit of smaller dimensions being determined by the distance between the lands on opposite walls of bore 12*a*.

When either of the illustrated devices is to be used, the plunger is removed from the bore, a pre-formed pat of butter or spread is inserted in the bore and the plunger is slid into the bore in contact with the upper edge of the pat of butter and is pushed downwardly until the butter begins to barely emerge from the open bottom of the bore-provided casing. As above described, the implement may be grasped between the thumb and middle finger with the index finger on the piston and slight pressure is applied to the plunger as the device is manipulated on the ear of corn to spread the slowly exuded butter evenly over all the kernels directly beneath orifice 15. As the butter is melted by the hot corn the pressure necessary is very slight, it being in the nature of a mere "painting" or "swabbing" operation that is accomplished by the user of the device. The ram forces substantially all the butter from within the bore as the arcuate end of the plunger conforms substantially to the surface of the cylindrical ear, thereby eliminating waste of the butter, permitting the aforementioned most efficient use of the charge contained and providing a sanitary and practical device.

As will be apparent from study of the struc-

ture of the device, as illustrated, it is adapted to be formed by conventional methods of manufacturer from any one of a variety of available materials. The casing element may be made of transparent synthetic plastic, for example by extruding the main body portion and affixing thereto the rib and bearing elements. The plunger can be made in a similar manner by forming the ram portion and affixing thereto the shoulder stop portion. It is clear that the plunger and casing could also be cast or molded as single units, if desired, depending upon the materials used and the equipment available.

It is contemplated that the device may be provided with ornamentation on surfaces 31 and 32 with intaglio or relief design and if desired the plunger head may be provided with an ornamental handle, a figure or the like. Alternatively, ornamentation may be embedded in the transparent plastic members to enhance the attractiveness of the article. Various other modifications may be effected without departing from the spirit of the invention.

It is intended, therefore, that the patent shall cover, by suitable expression in the appended claims, whatever features of patentable novelty reside in the invention.

We claim:

1. A corn buttering implement comprising: a vertically elongated butter-receiving casing of rectangular cross-section having a concave bottom adapted to conform generally to the transverse curvature of the surface of an ear of corn and provided with an open-ended bore of substantially rectangular cross-section; flange-like rib elements at the top of said casing adapted to be grasped between the fingers of the user; widened surfaces for bearing on said ear of corn, said widened surfaces extending transversely of said casing adjacent the bottom edge thereof and concavely arched to conform substantially to the curvature of said bottom to provide smooth operation of the implement as it passes over the kernels of the ear of corn; and a plunger for said bore having shoulder stops at the top of said plunger.

2. A corn buttering implement comprising: a vertically elongated butter-receiving casing of rectangular cross-section having a concave bottom adapted to conform generally to the transverse curvature of the surface of an ear of corn and provided with an open-ended bore of substantially rectangular cross-section; flange-like rib elements at the top of said casing adapted to be grasped between the fingers of the user; widened surfaces for bearing on said ear of corn, said widened surfaces extending transversely of said casing adjacent the bottom edge thereof and concavely arched to conform substantially to the curvature of said bottom to provide smooth operation of the implement as it passes over the kernels of the ear of corn; and a plunger for said bore having shoulder stops at the top of said plunger, said plunger being of substantially the same length as said bore.

3. A corn buttering implement comprising: a vertically elongated butter-receiving casing of rectangular cross-section having a concave bottom adapted to conform generally to the transverse curvature of the surface of an ear of corn and provided with an open-ended bore of substantially rectangular cross-section; flange-like rib elements at the top of said casing adapted to be grasped between the fingers of the user; widened surfaces for bearing on said ear of corn, said widened surfaces extending transversely of said casing adjacent the bottom edge thereof and concavely arched to conform substantially to the curvature of said bottom to provide smooth operation of the implement as it passes over the kernels of the ear of corn; and a plunger for said bore having shoulder stops at the top of said plunger, said plunger being of substantially the same length as said bore and having the bottom end of said plunger concavely arched to conform substantially to the curvature of said widened surfaces.

4. A corn buttering implement comprising: a vertically elongated, rectangular casing having a rectangular bore of substantially uniform cross-section throughout its length and having a substantially rectangular, concave open bottom at the discharge end of said bore adapted to conform generally to the transverse curvature of the surface of an ear of corn; widened surfaces for bearing on the surface of said ear of corn extending transversely of said casing adjacent opposite sides of said bottom, said widened surfaces being concavely arched to conform substantially to the curvature of said bottom to provide smooth operation of the implement as it passes over the kernels of the ear of corn; and a plunger for said bore, said plunger having shoulder stops at the top of said plunger.

5. A corn buttering implement as set forth in claim 1 wherein said bore is grooved along its longitudinal axis and said plunger is grooved on the surface thereof and cooperates with the grooves in said bore during passage of the plunger through said bore.

VICTOR A. AMORINO.
LEO C. BIZZARRO.

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