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(54) **PET FOOD PACKAGE**

LEBENSMITTELPACKUNG FÜR HAUSTIERE

EMBALLAGE POUR ALIMENTS POUR ANIMAUX DOMESTIQUES

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**WO-A-92/09498** **US-A- 5 007 231**  
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**Description**Field of the Invention

**[0001]** This invention relates to a pet food package containing one or more easily openable pet food cans and a carrier for the cans.

Background of the Invention

**[0002]** Traditionally pet food cans have been sealed by sheet metal lids which are secured to the can by a seam. The function of these lids is to protect adequately the contents of the can during retorting and later storage. However, these sheet metal lids require a can opener or other appropriate means to open them, which may be inconvenient for the user. Further, the can opener may not cut cleanly, leaving behind sharp edges which may present a hazard to a person opening the can.

**[0003]** Pet food cans may also have lids which contain sheet metal pull-tab closures. Although these lids are more convenient for the consumer than sheet metal lids, they require a moderate amount of force to be opened. Also, consumers may have difficulty prying loose the tab portion of the closure. This is especially the case for elderly consumers. Further, removal of the closure may leave sharp edges which may present a hazard to a person opening the can.

**[0004]** Pet food is also available in flexible containers such as sachets and plastic trays. These containers usually require no apparatus for opening, but may be subject to tearing or breakage.

**[0005]** Therefore, there remains a need for a package for wet pet foods which is relatively easy to open but which is also relatively robust and easy to handle.

Summary of the Invention

**[0006]** Accordingly, this invention provides a pet food package comprising a can with a single flexible, peelable lid which comprises a metal foil and which is easily pulled from the can; and a fiber-based carrier which is folded around the can to hold the can and protect the lid of the can, the carrier releasably holding the can to permit the removal of the can from the carrier.

**[0007]** The package provides the pet food in a form where the protection for the food is robust yet relatively easily openable. Further, the flexible, peelable lid, requires relatively small force in order to be removed while greatly reducing the risk of injury from sharp or jagged edges.

**[0008]** The lid is preferably a composite made from a metal foil coated with a polymer.

**[0009]** The fiber-based material is preferably cardboard. Further, the carrier preferably has slots in it so that when it is folded around the can, the top seam of the can fits into the slots to releasably hold the can.

**[0010]** The package may contain more than one can.

**[0011]** The invention extends to a method of helping to avoid flavour fatigue in a pet and includes the step of providing a fibre based carrier capable of holding a plurality of petfood containers sized for single servings, selecting a set of containers each filled with petfood of a different flavour, charging the carrier with the containers and releasably locking the carrier around the containers.

10 Brief Description of the Drawings

**[0012]** Embodiments of the invention are now described, by way of example only, with reference to the drawings in which:

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Figure. 1 is a top view of an unfolded carrier designed to carry three pet food cans;

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Figure 2 is a side view of the carrier wrapped around a can with the top seam of the can fitted into slots in the carrier; and

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Figure 3 is a view of the top of the can without lid.

Detailed Description of the Embodiments of the Invention

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**[0013]** This invention is a pet food package comprising one or more pet food cans in a carrier. Each can has an easily removable, flexible lid. The carrier allows for the carrying of multiple cans and protects the lids of the cans.

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**[0014]** The pet food can may be any suitable can which has an easily removable lid. In one example illustrated in Figure 3, the top of the can 50 has a rim 52 which extends a short distance towards the center of the can from its sidewalls. For example, the rim 52 extends inwards less than about 20% of the radius of the can 50. The rim 52 serves as a base for the lid of the can 50. The rim 52 is coated by a polymer, preferably polypropylene but other suitable polymers may be used. When the polymer is heated, it enables the attachment of the lid to the rim 52. The edge 54 of the rim 52 is rounded and blunt, therefore the person opening the can 50 is not in serious danger of being cut by the rim 52. The opening 56 encircled by the rim 52 provides access to the contents of the can 50. The can 50 may be produced using conventional processes.

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**[0015]** In order to protect the contents of the can 50, the opening 56 is covered by a lid (not shown). The lid is comprised of a relatively thin, flexible material; preferably a composite. The composite is preferably a sheet of metal foil coated with a polymer. For example, the metal foil may be aluminum. The polymer is preferably polypropylene although other suitable plastic polymers may be used. The polymer is coated onto the inner face of the metal foil. Suitable composites which may be used as the lid are commercially available. The lid is sealed onto the rim 52 by fusing the polymer layers using conventional thermal means. The lid has a tab which juts

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out from the circumference of the lid. The tab is of a size which permits it to be easily gripped to allow for ease in opening the can 50. The person opening the can 50 uses a relatively small amount of force to pull the tab up and across the can 50, thus exposing the opening 56. The lid has reduced ability to cut a person's skin because the lid is relatively flexible, similar to aluminum foil. The lid, however, has sufficient mechanical strength to remain tight during the retorting of the can 50.

**[0016]** The carrier is comprised of a relatively thin, fiber-based material. Preferably the carrier is comprised of cardboard. The carrier may be substantially rectangular or any other suitable shape. One suitable example of a carrier is illustrated in Figure 1 in unfolded form and Figure 2 in folded form. This carrier is a substantially rectangular board 10. The board 10 has four creases, two inner creases 44, 46 and two outer creases 42, 48 which extend from one long end of the board 10 to another.

**[0017]** The creases 42, 44, 46, 48 divide the board 10 into five sections 12, 20, 30, 32, 40. A first locking section 12 is at one end of the board 10. This locking section 12 has two tabs 14 within it near the free end 13 of locking section 12. The tabs 14 are cut out from the fiber-based board 10. The tabs 14 are shaped like wide arrowheads. The base 16 of each tab remains connected to the board 10. In this way, the tabs 14 may be bent out of the plane of the board 10.

**[0018]** A second locking section 20 is at the opposite end of the board 10. This locking section 20 has two locking holes 22 cut into it adjacent to the outer crease 48. The locking holes 22 are sized to be slightly smaller than the tabs 14. When the carrier is folded, the tabs 14 may be pushed into the locking holes 22 to lock together the two locking sections 12, 20. Because the locking holes 22 are smaller than the tabs 14, the tabs 14 are prevented from being easily released.

**[0019]** A first side section 30 is separated from the first locking section 12 by the outer crease 42. A second side section 32 is separated from the second locking section 20 by the outer crease 48. Each side section 30, 32 has a width substantially equal to the height of the cans. When the board 10 is folded, these side sections 30, 32 form the sides of the carrier. Substantially rectangular slots 34 are cut into each side section 30, 32 adjacent to the inner creases 44, 46. The number of slots 34 per side section 30, 32 corresponds to the number of cans the carrier is designed to hold. When folded, the top seam 58 of the can 50 fits into these slots 34 to releasably hold the can 50 in place.

**[0020]** A top section 40 is between both side sections 30, 32. The top section 40 has a width substantially equal to the diameter of the cans and is separated from the side sections 30, 32 by the inner creases 44, 46. When the board 10 is folded, this top section 40 forms the top of the carrier.

**[0021]** The carrier may be produced by suitably punching the boards from cardboard sheet according to processes well known in the art.

**[0022]** The package may be constructed in any suitable manner. For example, when combining the pet food can 50 with the carrier to form the pet food package, the can 50 is placed top down onto the top section 40 of the carrier. The can 50 is centered between the slots 34 so that when the side sections 30, 32 are folded up, the top seam 58 of the can 50 is held by the slots 34. When the can is properly placed on the top section 40, the side sections 30, 32 are folded up. The locking sections 12, 20 are folded onto the bottom of the can with the first locking section 12 on top of the second locking section 20. The arrow-shaped tabs 14 are then driven into the locking holes 22. The carrier is now releasably locked around the pet food can. In an industrial process, the construction of the package may be automated as is conventional.

**[0023]** There are at least two advantages of the carrier. First, it protects the flexible lid of the pet food can from relatively sharp objects which, when applied with enough force, may pierce the lid and expose the contents. Second, the carrier allows multiple cans to be carried as one package. Thus the pet food package provides a relatively easy-to-open container for wet pet foods, which is also relatively robust and easy to carry. In addition, the cans may be sized to provide single servings. Each serving may comprise food of a different flavour. By retaining the remaining containers in the carrier, the pet owner is easily able to avoid repeating flavours at consecutive servings, thus assisting in avoiding taste or flavour fatigue.

**[0024]** It will be appreciated that numerous modifications may be made to the embodiments described above without departing from the scope of the invention as claimed.

### Claims

1. A pet food package comprising
  - a can (50) with a single flexible, peelable lid which comprises a metal foil and which is easily pullable from the can to expose an opening (56); and
  - a fibre-based carrier which is folded around the can (50) to hold the can and protect the lid of the can, the carrier releasably holding the can to permit the removal of the can from the carrier.
2. A pet food package according to claim 1 in which the opening (56) of the can (50) is circumscribed by a rim (52) extending inwardly from side walls of the can towards the center of the can, the rim being coated with a polymer.
3. A pet food package according to claim 1 or claim 2 in which the lid of the can is a composite of a sheet of metal foil coated with a polymer.
4. A pet food package according to claim 3 in which

the composite is an aluminum foil coated with polypropylene.

5. A pet food package according to any of claims 1 to 4 in which the lid of the can is heat-sealed to the can.
6. A pet food package according to any of claims 1 to 5 in which the carrier has slots (34) cut into it to receive an upper seam (58) of the cans.
7. A pet food package according to any of claims 1 to 6 wherein the carrier holds a plurality of cans, each can being sized to provide a single serving of pet food.
8. A pet food package according to any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein the carrier holds a plurality of cans, at least two of the cans containing pet food of different flavours.
9. A method of helping to avoid flavour fatigue in a pet including the step of providing a fibre based carrier capable of holding a plurality of petfood cans sized for single servings, selecting a set of cans (50) each filled with petfood of a different flavour, charging the carrier with the cans and releasably locking the carrier around the cans to permit the removal of the cans from the carrier, each can having a single flexible, peelable lid which comprises a metal foil and which is easily pullable from the can to expose an opening (56).

#### Patentansprüche

1. Haustierfutterpackung, die eine Dose (50) mit einem einzelnen flexiblen abziehbaren Deckel, der eine Metallfolie aufweist, und der leicht von der Dose abziehbar ist, um eine Öffnung (56) freizulegen: und einen Träger auf Faserbasis umfaßt, der um die Dose (50) gefaltet ist, um die Dose zu halten, und den Deckel der Dose zu schützen, wobei der Träger die Dose lösbar hält, um das Entfernen der Dose aus dem Träger zu ermöglichen.
2. Haustierfutterpackung nach Anspruch 1, bei der die Öffnung (56) der Dose (50) durch einen Rand (52) umschrieben wird, der sich von Seitenwänden der Dose in Richtung der Mitte der Dose nach innen erstreckt, wobei der Rand mit einem Polymer beschichtet ist.
3. Haustierfutterpackung nach Anspruch 1 oder Anspruch 2, bei der der Deckel der Dose ein Verbund aus einer Metallfolienlage ist, die mit einem Polymer beschichtet ist.

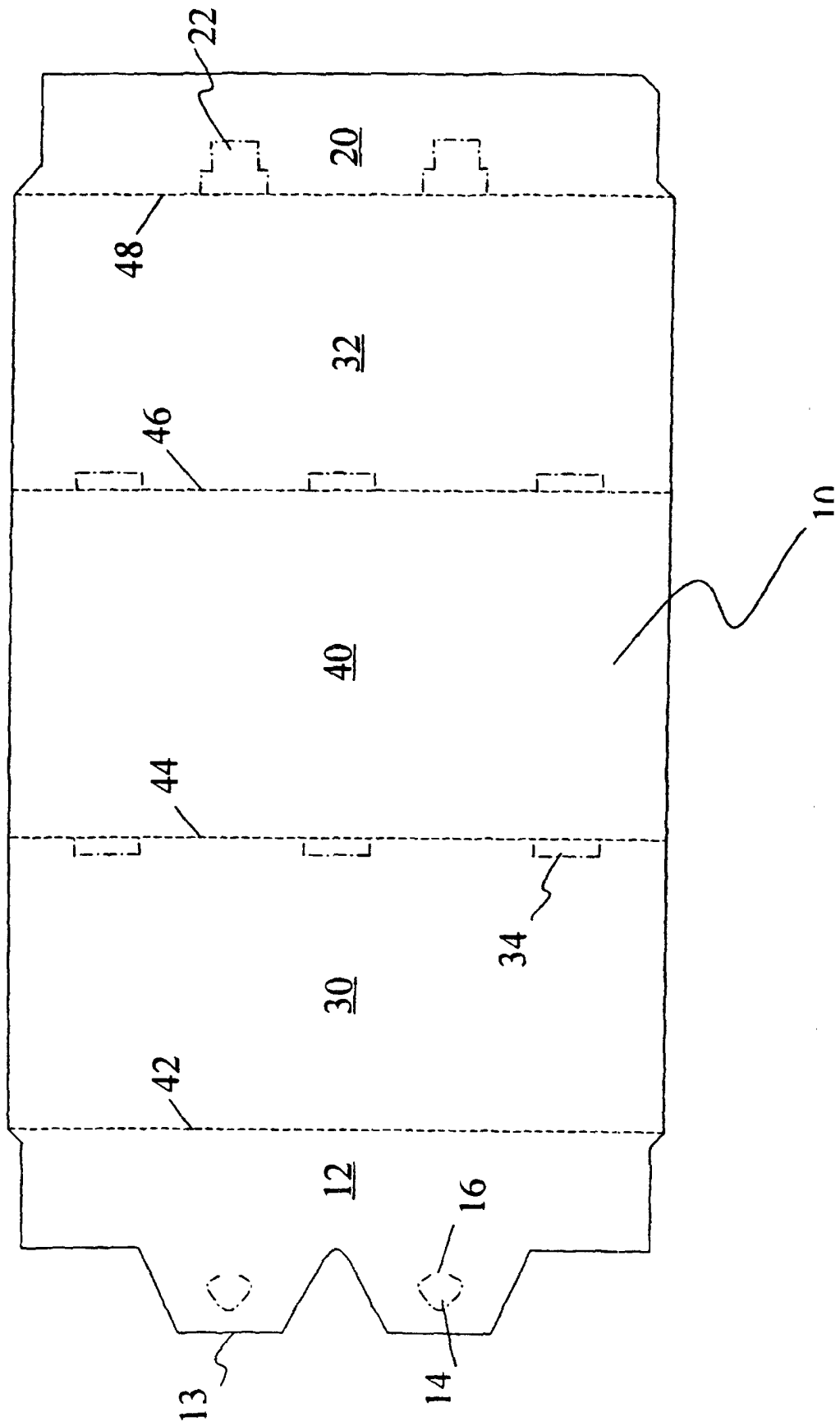
4. Haustierfutterpackung nach Anspruch 3, bei der der Verbund eine Aluminiumfolie ist, die mit Polypropylen beschichtet ist.
5. Haustierfutterpackung nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, bei der der Deckel der Dose auf die Dose heißgesiegelt ist.
6. Haustierfutterpackung nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, bei dem der Träger Schlitze (34) aufweist, die in ihn geschnitten sind, um eine obere Naht (58) der Dosen aufzunehmen.
7. Haustierfutterpackung nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 6, bei der der Träger eine Vielzahl von Dosen enthält, wobei jede Dose abgemessen ist, um eine einzelne Mahlzeit Haustierfutter bereitzustellen.
8. Haustierfutterpackung nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 7, bei der der Träger eine Vielzahl von Dosen enthält, wobei zumindest zwei der Dosen Haustierfutter unterschiedlicher Geschmacksrichtung enthalten.
9. Verfahren, um dabei zu helfen, eine Geschmacksermüdung bei einem Haustier zu vermeiden, mit dem Schritt des Bereitstellens eines Trägers auf Faserbasis, der fähig ist, eine Vielzahl von Haustierfutterdosen zu halten, die für einzelne Mahlzeiten bemessen sind, Auswählen eines Satzes von Dosen (50), die jeweils mit einem Haustierfutter unterschiedlicher Geschmacksrichtung gefüllt sind, Laden des Trägers mit den Dosen und lösbares Sichern des Trägers um die Dosen, um das Entfernen der Dosen aus dem Träger zu ermöglichen, wobei jede Dose einen einzelnen flexiblen, abziehbaren Deckel aufweist, der eine Metallfolie umfaßt, und der leicht von der Dose abziehbar ist, um eine Öffnung (56) freizulegen.

#### Revendications

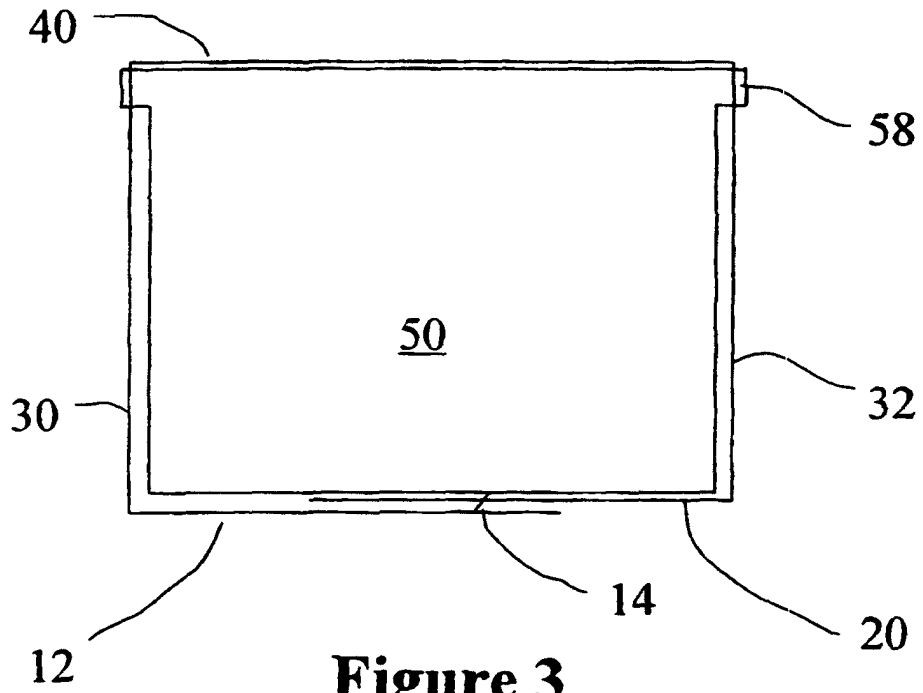
1. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques comprenant :  
 une boîte (50) comportant un seul couvercle flexible détachable qui comprend une feuille de métal et qui peut être facilement enlevé de la boîte par traction pour mettre à découvert une ouverture (56) ; et  
 un support à base de fibres qui est plié autour de la boîte (50) pour retenir la boîte et protéger le couvercle de la boîte, le support retenant la boîte avec possibilité de libération de manière à permettre l'enlèvement de la boîte du support.

2. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques selon la revendication 1, dans lequel l'ouverture (56) de la boîte (50) est circonscrite par un rebord (52) s'étendant vers l'intérieur depuis les parois latérales de la boîte vers le centre de la boîte, le rebord étant revêtu d'un polymère. 5
3. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques selon la revendication 1 ou la revendication 2, dans lequel le couvercle de la boîte est un composite d'une feuille de métal revêtue d'un polymère. 10
4. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques selon la revendication 3, dans lequel le composite est une feuille d'aluminium revêtue de polypropylène. 15
5. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel le couvercle de la boîte est thermoscellé à la boîte. 20
6. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, dans lequel le support comporte des fentes (34) découpées en son sein pour recevoir une soudure supérieure (58) des boîtes. 25
7. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 6, dans lequel le support contient une pluralité de boîtes, chaque boîte étant dimensionnée pour fournir une portion individuelle d'aliments pour animaux domestiques. 30  
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8. Emballage pour aliments pour animaux domestiques selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 7, dans lequel le support contient une pluralité de boîtes, au moins deux des boîtes contenant des aliments pour animaux (domestiques de goûts différents). 40
9. Méthode pour éviter, chez l'animal domestique, la perte d'appétence pour une même saveur, comprenant la fourniture d'un support à base de fibres adapté à contenir une pluralité de boîtes d'aliments pour animaux domestiques dimensionnées pour une portion individuelle, la sélection d'un ensemble de boîtes (50) remplies chacune d'aliments de goût différent, le chargement des boîtes dans le support et le verrouillage, avec possibilité de libération, du support autour des boîtes de manière à permettre l'enlèvement des boîtes du support, chaque boîte comportant un seul couvercle flexible détachable qui comprend une feuille de métal et qui peut être facilement enlevé de la boîte par traction pour mettre à découvert une ouverture (56). 45  
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**Fig 1**



**Fig 2**



**Figure 3**

