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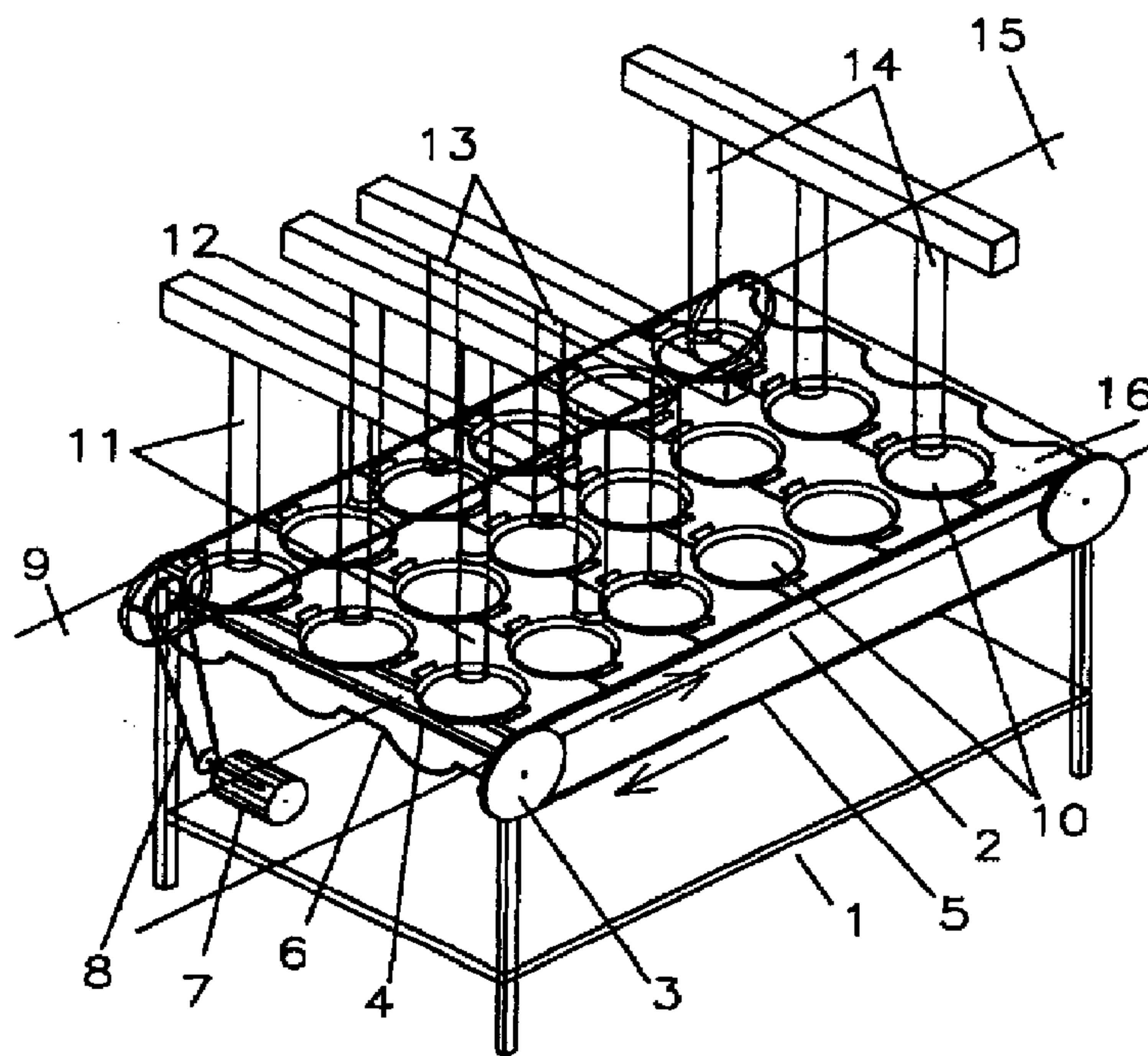
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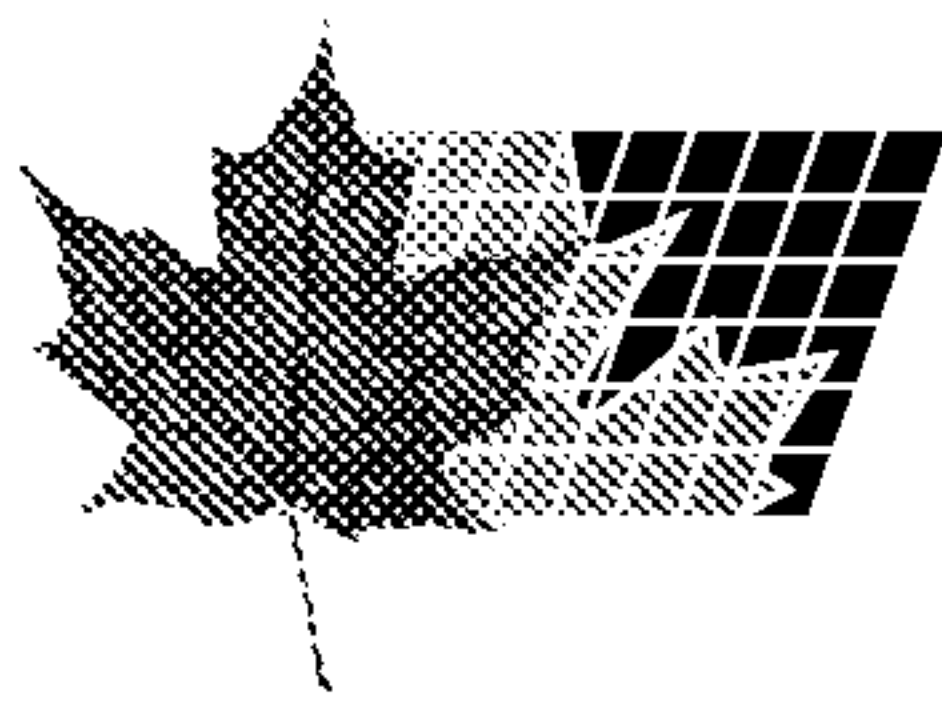
(54) **PROCEDE ET MACHINES PERMETTANT DE FABRIQUER DES
PLATS CUISINES ET SEMI-CUISINES**

(54) **PROCESS AND CORRESPONDING MACHINES FOR THE
PREPARATION OF READY-COOKED AND SEMI-COOKED
DISHES**



(57) L'invention concerne un procédé et des machines permettant de fabriquer des plats cuisinés et semi-cuisinés. Le procédé consiste à fabriquer des plats sur un récipient de cuisson dans lequel on insère tous les ingrédients, de préférence, de manière automatique, y compris le brassage des ingrédients, comme par exemple pour des plats nécessitant une préparation artisanale. La machine est constituée d'une surface chauffante sur laquelle on dispose un ensemble de récipients destinés à une utilisation ou consommation individuelle, ladite surface étant entraînée par un mécanisme d'entraînement temporisé. Ladite machine comprend également des

(57) Process for the preparation of dishes on a cooking recipient into which are incorporated all the ingredients, preferably automatically, including mixing of the ingredients just as for an artisanal preparation. The machine comprises a heating surface on which are placed receptacles for individual use, said surface being driven by a timed driving system. The machine also comprises food supply devices which supply the food according to the timing of said driving system. Finally, the dishes can be consumed, preserved or frozen. It is also possible to interrupt the cooking in order to separate the solids from the liquid which can be preserved or frozen. The final



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systèmes d'approvisionnement en aliments qui sont acheminés selon les phases temporisées de l'entraînement. Il faut ensuite effectuer l'étape finale en vue d'une consommation, conservation ou surgélation ultérieures. Il faut aussi interrompre la cuisson en séparant la matière solide de la matière liquide qui se conserve ou se surgèle. L'étape finale dans ce cas, peut être effectuée dans une machine possédant une résistance et un support de récipient, la résistance pouvant se séparer du récipient une fois la durée de cuisson écoulée. L'invention se prête à la fabrication de plats cuisinés et semi-cuisinés.

phase in this case can be carried out in a machine which has a resistance and a receptacle support, one of the two being separable from the other after a delay. Application to the preparation of ready-cooked and semi-cooked dishes.



PCT
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| <p>(54) Title: PROCESS AND CORRESPONDING MACHINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF READY-COOKED AND SEMI-COOKED DISHES</p> <p>(54) Título: METODO Y MAQUINAS CORRESPONDIENTES PARA LA FABRICACION DE PLATOS COCINADOS Y SEMICOCINADOS</p> | | |
| <p>(57) Abstract</p> <p>Process for the preparation of dishes on a cooking recipient into which are incorporated all the ingredients, preferably automatically, including mixing of the ingredients just as for an artisanal preparation. The machine comprises a heating surface on which are placed receptacles for individual use, said surface being driven by a timed driving system. The machine also comprises food supply devices which supply the food according to the timing of said driving system. Finally, the dishes can be consumed, preserved or frozen. It is also possible to interrupt the cooking in order to separate the solids from the liquid which can be preserved or frozen. The final phase in this case can be carried out in a machine which has a resistance and a receptacle support, one of the two being separable from the other after a delay. Application to the preparation of ready-cooked and semi-cooked dishes.</p> | | |
| <p>(57) Resumen</p> <p>Método y máquinas correspondientes para la fabricación de platos cocinados y semicocinados. Consiste en un método por el cual se desarrolla la fabricación de platos sobre un recipiente de cocción al que se incorporan todos los ingredientes, preferentemente de modo automático, incluido el volteo de los ingredientes, tal como una realización artesanal. La máquina consiste en una superficie de aporte de calor en la que se dispone un conjunto de recipientes para uso o consumo individual a lo largo de un arrastre temporizado y unos suministros de condumio que se aportan de acuerdo con la fase temporizada de dicho arrastre; cabe la terminación para su consumo, conservación o congelación. Igualmente cabe interrumpir la cocción separando la materia sólida de la líquida la cual se conserva o congela. La terminación en este caso puede llevarse a cabo en una máquina que posee una resistencia y un soporte de recipiente, uno de ambos separable del otro mediante un temporizado. De aplicación en la fabricación de platos cocinados y semicocinados.</p> | | |
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Method and corresponding machines for making pre-cooked and semi-pre-cooked meals.

The sector involved in this patent's technique is that of making ready-to-serve food.

5 Statement of the prior state of the art. The industry making ready-to-serve food is well known and increasingly well-developed. Apart from this the ready-to-serve meals trade is also increasingly well-developed. Both businesses form a partnership in towns and cities to solve the cooking problem at homes at which all the members are at work or otherwise busy.

ES2116236 consists of a procedure for pre-cooking ingredients for a rice paella, 10 in which a conventional pre-cooking process is carried out in a recipient and the contents and its recipient are inserted into a bag in which a vacuum is formed. This is sterilised, stored and distributed.

ES2121692 is a process for pre-cooking rice paellas, which, as compared with the one described in the previous case, adds the fact that the paella dish is cooled prior to 15 fully removing its contents, to be inserted in the bag.

ES2096530 is a procedure for preparing pre-cooked paellas, which consists in preparing a lightly-fried base in which to fry the ingredients of the paella except for the rice, which is deep-frozen and supplied in solid form with the contents frozen.

ES2032704 covers a procedure for preparing a rice-based pre-cooked meal, 20 which includes the preparation of the lightly fried base in large quantities and separately frying all the ingredients with parts of said fried base, being deep frozen and served ready to eat except for cooking the rice.

ES2048112 is a procedure for preparing a pre-cooked rice-based meal, which includes a large capacity recipient in which a lightly fried base is prepared, which is then put 25 into separate smaller pans in which the rest of the food is prepared, and then frozen to be marketed.

ES2035769 covers a procedure for preparing frozen cooked paella, in which a flat recipient is used to prepare a meal based on rice and water with an oil-fried base, tomato, chicken and rabbit pieces, saffron, salt, greens and optionally snails, in which these items are 30 cooked except for the rice, which is added one hour afterwards, later being cooled for 2-4 hours and the recipient wrapped in shrink-wrap plastic and deep-frozen.

Nevertheless, there are types of pre-cooked food which can only be made by experts, or have been considered as such. This is in particular the problem with paella. The

paella, a meal which originated in Valencia and has spread widely all over the world, nevertheless involves the problem of its home-made style of cooking. It is not enough to supply the ingredients, but the way this is cooked has such a great influence on the results that, even with the same content, two dishes can be enormously different if these are made
5 by different cooks. This problem is heightened when this is cooked in so-called industrial recipients containing hundreds or thousands of portions. Furthermore the presence of an individual paella, or pan of paella, just as this has been cooked, has a much better appearance than a portion of the same dish served on a plate, since the Valencian tradition is to eat from the paella cooking pan itself without transferring this to an individual plate.

10 This invention puts forward a method and corresponding machines for making pre-cooked and semi-pre-cooked meals, whose basic characteristic is to allow the possibility of developing an industry based on producing ready-to-serve meals made one by one in individual portions.

In accordance with a preferential embodiment a method is described for making
15 pre-cooked dishes in a cooking recipient, in which the respective ingredients are added, preferably automatically, in the pre-set cooking stage, as well as being turned over, to simulate a home-made cooking process.

To make rice paellas, and more specifically the Valencian paella, a lightly fried base has to be made in which certain ingredients are gradually added, depending on how far
20 the cooking process has gone, these ingredients being basically chicken and rabbit, greens and tomato, all of this in an oil base. The method described thus involves automatically turning over the meat and greens, in order to be cooked on both sides for the pre-set times, adding the liquid base for cooking (preferably water, but also stock), also rice, and cooking the rice in the stock produced by the other ingredients.

25 A second form of embodiment, as compared with the previous method, involves partially cooking the rice, by removing the liquid base, for this to be separately provided so that in the last cooking stage this is again combined in order to be completely cooked with only a few minutes' exposure to a heat source. Said method allows completing the cooking at a time and in a place other than those in which it was prepared, but whilst keeping the
30 characteristics of a "recently made" meal.

According to either of the previous embodiments, the cooked or partially cooked product can be frozen or cooled for its distribution, and heated up or its cooking completed after mixing the solid or liquid parts at the place where this is to be consumed.

Furthermore the machines which carry out this process mean that pre-cooked or semi-pre-cooked paellas can be made profitably, either ready to eat or ready to be finished, without requiring any expertise to do so.

In order to make the following explanation clearer, three sheets of drawings are enclosed, which represent the essence of this invention in six figures.

Figure 1 shows a schematic perspective view of a linear machine for making pre-cooked meals.

Figure 2 shows a schematic view of a circular machine with a fixed base.

Figure 3 shows a schematic view of a circular machine with a moving base.

Figure 4 shows a perspective view of a heating or cooking completion column for pre-cooked meals.

Figure 5 shows a perspective view of the recipient holder on the heating column.

Figure 6 shows a perspective view of a layout of the heating ring on the column.

Figure 7 shows a schematic view of the stirring device over the recipient.

Figure 8 shows a top view of the stirring action over the recipient, according to a possible concentric movement or circular travel.

Figure 9 shows a schematic view of the meat or fish feeder formed of a hopper and a vane extractor.

In these figures 1 represents the frame of the linear machine, 2 being the rod conveyor belt or feed belt for moving the rods, 3 being the pulley wheel for said movement, 4 being the pulley wheel axle, 5 the return belt, 6 the pull rods for the recipients, which can have means to hook the recipients onto the rods, 7 the motor reduction unit, 8 the belt or chain for motor transmission, 9 being the table for supplying recipients or automatic recipient-supply devices, 10 being the recipients themselves, 11 being the food I supply pipes, 12 the pipes for proportioning portions of food II, 13 the pipes for proportioning portions of food III, 14 the pipes for proportioning portions of food IV, 15 the outlet table or conveyor belt which takes the recipients of already cooked or semi-cooked food, 16 being the surface for providing the heat on the longitudinal machine and the fixed heating ring on the circular machine with rotating drive, 17 being the rotating ring in the rotating circular machine, 18 the rotating axis, 19 the heating column, 20 the timer for triggering off the distancing of the heating ring from the recipient, 21 the moving arm for holding the recipients, 22 the recipient holding ring, 23

the heating ring, 24 the electrical resistances, 25 the fixed heating ring-holding arm, 26 being the lifting/lowering travel of the arm 21, 27 being the base of the heating column, 28 the arms for holding the recipient according to the tilting embodiment of figure 5, 29 being the fixed recipient holding arm according to the embodiment in figure 6, with 30 being the arm for holding the moving heating ring, 31 being the lifting/lowering travel of the moving heating ring, 33 the range of travel of the stirring assembly, 34 being the axle of the blade 37, 35 the axle of the blade 36, 36 being the upper blade, 37 the lower blade, which travels across the bottom of the recipient, 38 being the tilting hanging strips held by blade 36, 39 the hooks fitted on the hanging strips, 40 being the rings or bushes for securing the hanging strips to the blade 36 in a tilting sense, 41 being the area swept by the stirring device, 42 the feed hopper, 43 the wall with a slot for letting the vane through, 44 the axle of the vanes 45 fitted with a punch 46, 47 the pieces of meat or fish which are to be supplied by the turning vanes 45.

The drive rods 6 can where applicable be hooked onto the recipients. The recipients used can be of the disposable type or the traditional variety, recoverable for later use. Said recipients should preferably be of the type that can be used in micro-wave ovens.

For overall understanding purposes, the cooking base is taken to be the oil, grease, fat or butter, vegetable mixes, in which the food is cooked. Semi-cooked is the term given to define an incomplete cooking process, which is broken off, and can be completed at another time. Cooked is the term for defining full cooking until completion. The heating surface is one with resistances, heated by flames, radiation or other means which are transferred to the recipient. Hooked refers to any movable but firm securing device. Cooked dish is the practical embodiment of a meal. Food is any of the ingredients which form a dish. Lightly fried base is the term used to define the substrate formed by oil or fried fats containing, for example, tomato purée, pepper, onion, etc.

The pre-cooked dishes are produced as follows: each of the recipients known in Valencia as "paellas", which have lent their name to the cooked content, is placed at the starting point on the corresponding machine. They can be automatically arranged by a suitable feed mechanism or manually set out. A detector verifies the position of the recipient at each ingredient insertion point, with each recipient being on an intense heat-providing surface throughout the process. After checking the starting position, the ingredient feeder places the oil inside, and then quickly adds the corresponding meat (chicken and rabbit) or fish, which is stirred up by automatic stirring devices located over each recipient in the place corresponding to the cooking time, and thereafter the tomato and greens, then the pepper, the

water, the colouring agent or saffron when the water boils, and then the rice or noodles.

The stirring devices 34-40 have the task of turning the meat or fish over in the initial cooking process, which is done only in oil. Since the problem that may arise is that the meat or fish sticks to the bottom of the recipient, the aforementioned stirring devices are fitted
5 with two concentric contra-rotating axles 34 and 35, each being joined to a blade. The lower blade 37 sweeps the bottom of the recipient, preferably without touching this. The upper blade 36 has hanging strips 38 fitted with protuberances or hooks 39, that can pull the pieces of meat or fish 47 after these have been moved away from the bottom by the blade 37. Their advance motion can be concentric or in a circular movement over the bottom of the recipient.

10 At this point two alternatives are possible.

The first of these involves breaking off the boiling process half way through, and separating the stock from the other components at this point, with said components being left in the recipient, practically dry, and reserving the stock in a separate recipient at the same time. Both are properly sealed and cooled. Later on they are again combined at the right time
15 to complete the cooking process in a few minutes.

The second alternative is that of total cooking. In this case, the cooking process is not interrupted, and after completion the dish is separated from the heat to be cooled and will later have to be heated up on proper means for consumption. It can be taken out of the recipient and installed in a plastic recipient, for example, for heating in a microwave oven.

20 Either of these embodiments allows the contents to be frozen, with the drop in quality that this entails.

The machine which carries out this process requires one space for inlet and another for the outlet of the recipients, and according to said space, the machine can be linear or circular, without this modifying the objective conditions of its structure and function.

25 The advance motion of the recipients is preferably uniform; stops can nevertheless be envisaged, with a consequently non-uniform advance, and resulting in a reduction in length of the machine.

In the case of the linear machine, there is an inlet for recipients, and feeders of oil, tomato purée, greens, vegetables, and all the ingredients. It would be suitable for said
30 feeders to act only once for each recipient, meaning that in each position each feeder always supplies the same product in the same quantities for each recipient. The advance motion of the recipients along the machine is according to time; for this reason, when the distance travelled is complete, the dish is ready. The position for inserting ingredients thus depends on

the total advance distance, on the total cooking time and on the particular individual times. The temperature of the heat-providing surface can be different in each stage according to the advance motion of the recipients.

This essential arrangement can be made by means of a circular instead of a
5 longitudinal machine.

Each machine's yield per time in dishes directly depends on the effective recipient-holding surface area that such machines have.

In the case of production by the interrupted process, the remaining cooking can be done by traditional means at each home; nevertheless, for industrial application the use of
10 a timed heater is envisaged. This is the arrangement on a support fitted with a timer and joined to the heating machine and a separator, also timed, to distance the heat-providing surface. This type of heater entails the advantage that in high production-rate situations, such as restaurants or house-to house delivery to order businesses, the recipient is placed on the heater and timed. After the time required elapses the heat-providing surface is separated from
15 the recipient, being left close to this, so that apart from not continuing with cooking the recipient is kept hot, without this starting to cool quickly.

In any case, the basic procedure can have a cooling or freezing chain provided as a continuation or joined to this.

To sum up it should be stated that the protection afforded by this patent will
20 specifically cover a method and corresponding machines for making pre-cooked and semi-pre-cooked dishes, characterised in that it consists of a series of operations based on providing the different ingredients, on the different cooking stages with pre-set times, development, adding ingredients, stirring times and obtaining the result, carried out on machines which undertake the semi-cooking and full cooking process in stages that are either alternating or continuous;
25 in which the semi-cooking process consists of the operations of initially heating up each recipient, providing the cooking base with oil or similar fat and developing this, supplying the ingredients in accordance with the phases and corresponding times through the corresponding proportioners up to a partial cooking point; and in which the semi-cooked alternative involves interrupting the cooking process in the partial system, extracting the liquid from the
30 corresponding solid part, with each portion, solid or liquid, being separated and properly preserved for future completion; and proceeding to cool and/or freeze the previously semi-cooked separated ingredients, the solid part in the recipient, and the liquid part in a suitable container.

Furthermore, in the continuous cooking operation, this works by means of continuous and uninterrupted semi-cooking and cooking operations in which the sequence for carrying out the whole process is done by automatically supplying or proportioning ingredients to form a dish which can then either be consumed or kept by cooling and/or freezing the finished food as this was cooked and placed in its recipient, all of this being done on a machine for cooking which consists of a machine strictly speaking formed of:

A heat-providing surface 16, 17, whose temperature is that of the heat provided for cooking the relevant dish.

A timed constant-speed drive-pulling system 6, along or over the aforementioned heat-providing surface.

Proportioners 11, 12, 13, 14 of ingredients or food for each type of dish and proportioning nozzles for supplying the right ingredients for the particular dish positioned in the corresponding space/time.

A device for suction or extraction of the cooking liquid and storing this in a separate tank or container; this machine has stirring devices which drop over each recipient at the proper time, turning the food over and distributing this as required and according to what stage of cooking this is in, with the recipients being supplied by a supply table 8 and placed when completed on an outlet or finishing table 15, with a cooking process that can be performed in a longitudinal or circular direction.

On the circular machine the cooking process can be carried out through rotation of the heat supplying surface 17 which holds the recipients.

The unit for finishing the cooking is made up of an assembly which holds at least one recipient 10, and is fitted with a mobile support arm 21 which has a timed raising position for the recipient 10 from contact with an electrical resistance 23, 24, by means of which the cooking process is carried out, so that after the cooking time is over and the timer has triggered off, it is raised a few centimetres away from said resistance. This assembly can be formed of at least one set of securing arms 28 for at least one recipient 10 in respect of a support which has the recipient 10 lifting position timed in contact with an electrical resistance 23, 24 by means of which the cooking process is carried out, so that, after the cooking time is over and the timer has triggered, it is moved a few centimetres away from said resistance. Said unit for completing the cooking can also be formed of an assembly which holds at least one recipient 10 on a support under which there is an electrical resistance held by an arm 30 by means of which the cooking process is carried out, so that when the cooking

time is over and the timer triggers, said electrical resistance 23, 24 drops, the recipient being left at a distance of a few centimetres from said resistance.

This is for industrial application in making cooked and semi-cooked dishes.

CLAIMS

- 1.- Machine, characterised in that this includes a cooking unit, and a finishing unit; the cooking unit includes:
- 5 a heat-providing surface (16, 17) for cooking the corresponding dish;
 a timed drive-pulling device (6) along or over the heat-providing surface;
 proportioners (11, 12, 13, 14) for the particular ingredients or food for each type of preparation and positioned at the corresponding space/time set on the ingredient proportioning and supply nozzles for the required dish;
 and stirring devices (34-40) that can drop over each recipient (10) at the proper
 10 time, for turning over and spreading out the food.
- 2.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised by having a cooking liquid suction or extraction device and for storing this in a separate tank or container.
- 3.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the finishing unit is
 15 securely joined to the cooking unit so that there is continuity between the semi-cooking and the cooking processes.
- 4.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the recipients are fed
 20 to the surface of the machine by means of an automatic supply table (9) and are placed, after completion, on an outlet or finishing table (15).
- 5.- Machine, according to any of claims 1 to 4, characterised in that the
 20 machine carries out the cooking process in a longitudinal arrangement.
6. Machine, according to any of claims 1 to 4, characterised in that the machine carries out the cooking process in a circular arrangement.
- 7.- Machine, according to any of claims 1 to 4 and 6 characterised in that the
 25 circular machine carries out the cooking process by rotating the heat-providing surface (17) which holds the recipients.
- 8.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the finishing unit is
 30 made up of at least one assembly which holds at least one recipient (10) and is fitted with a moving support arm (21) for said recipient, which has a timed (20) separation between the cooking recipient (10) and an electrical resistance (23, 24) by means of which the cooking is carried out, so that, when the cooking time is over and the timer triggers off, this resistance is left a few centimetres away from the cooking recipient.
- 9.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the finishing unit consists of a set of at least a pair of arms (28) for holding at least one recipient (10) in respect

of a support which has a timed lifting position for the recipient (10) in contact with an electric resistance (23, 24) by means of which the cooking process is carried out, so that after the cooking time has elapsed and the timer has triggered, this is moved several centimetres away from said resistance.

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 10.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the finishing unit consists of an assembly which holds at least one recipient (10) in a support under which there is an electrical resistance held by an arm (30) by means of which the cooking process is carried out in such a way that, when the cooking time is over and the timer has triggered off, said electrical resistance (23, 24) drops, the recipient thus being left at a distance of a few centimetres from said resistance.

11.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the heat-providing surface has different temperatures corresponding to different cooking stages.

12.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the recipients are pulled along at a uniform rate.

15
 13.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the recipient pulling rate is not uniform, with slow advances or stops along its travel being planned.

16
 17
 14.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the stirring device consists of a set of two blades, an upper horizontal one (36) turning in one direction, fitted with hanging strips (38) which are tilting and held by the upper blade (36) and fitted with hooks (39), and a lower blade (37) contra-rotating in respect of the previous one, which travels across the bottom of the recipient, both of these being joined to a part with a double vertical and concentric shaft (34, 35).

18
 15.- Machine, according to claim 14, characterised in that the stirring device shaft has a circular movement concentric to the shaft of the recipient.

25
 16.- Machine, according to claim 14, characterised in that the shaft of the stirring device has a circular displacement.

26
 17.- Machine, according to claim 2, characterised in that one of the proportioners is a device for supplying pieces of meat or fish, which consists of a hopper set out beside a rotating shaft fitted with at least one arm with a punch at its end, the hopper having a slot 43 in one of its walls so that the rotation of said arm punches a single piece, which it takes out of said hopper to the outlet nozzle.

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 18.- Machine, according to claim 1, characterised in that the recipients are hooked onto the pulling mechanism (6).

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19.- Machine, according to claims 1 to 18, characterised in that this carries out the cooking or semi-cooking processes of dishes formed by a substrate or lightly fried base, by successively partially cooking meat or fish, greens or pulses in this base, fully cooking said greens and pulses in stock and fully or partially cooking rice or noodles.

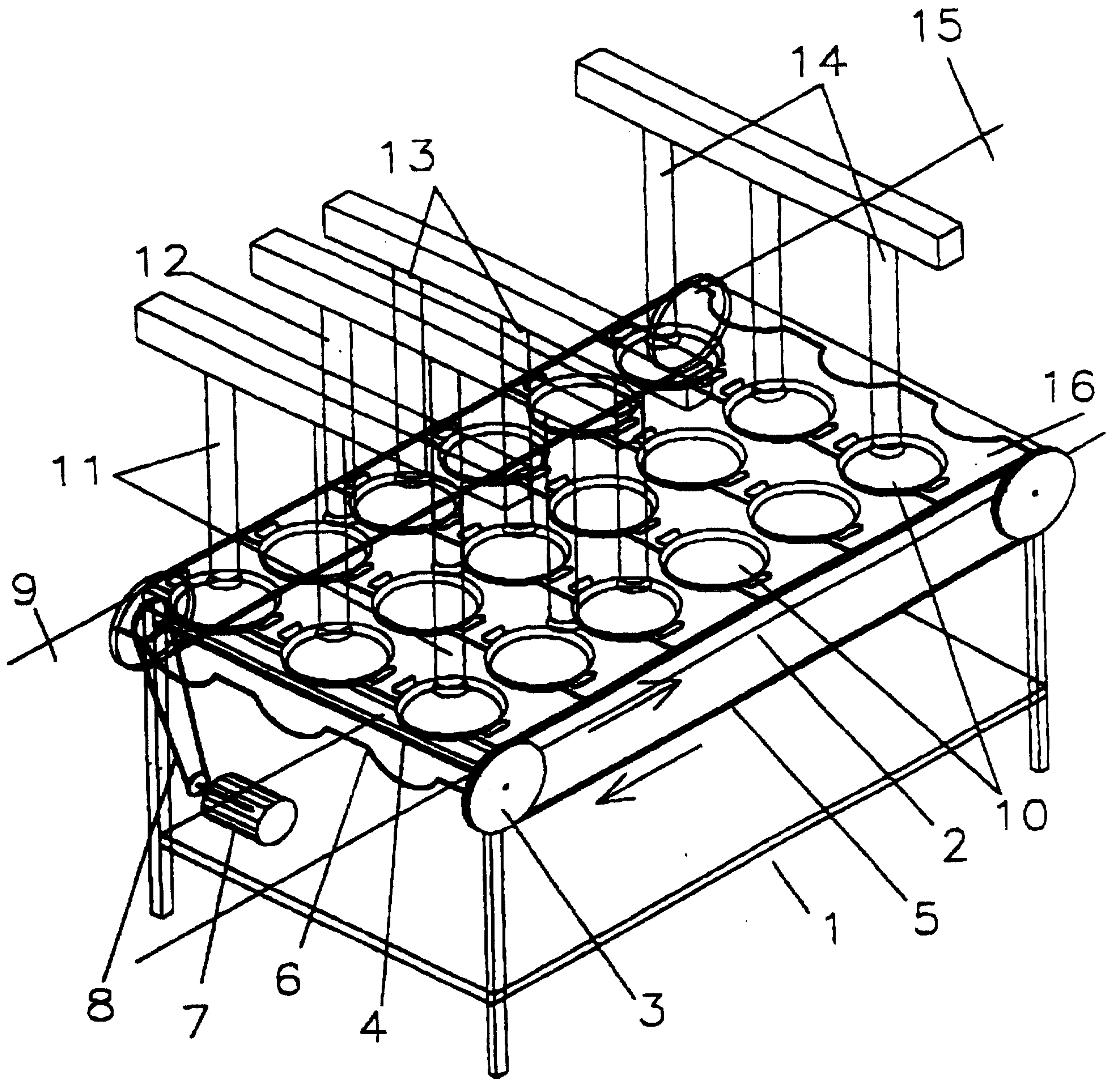


FIG. 1

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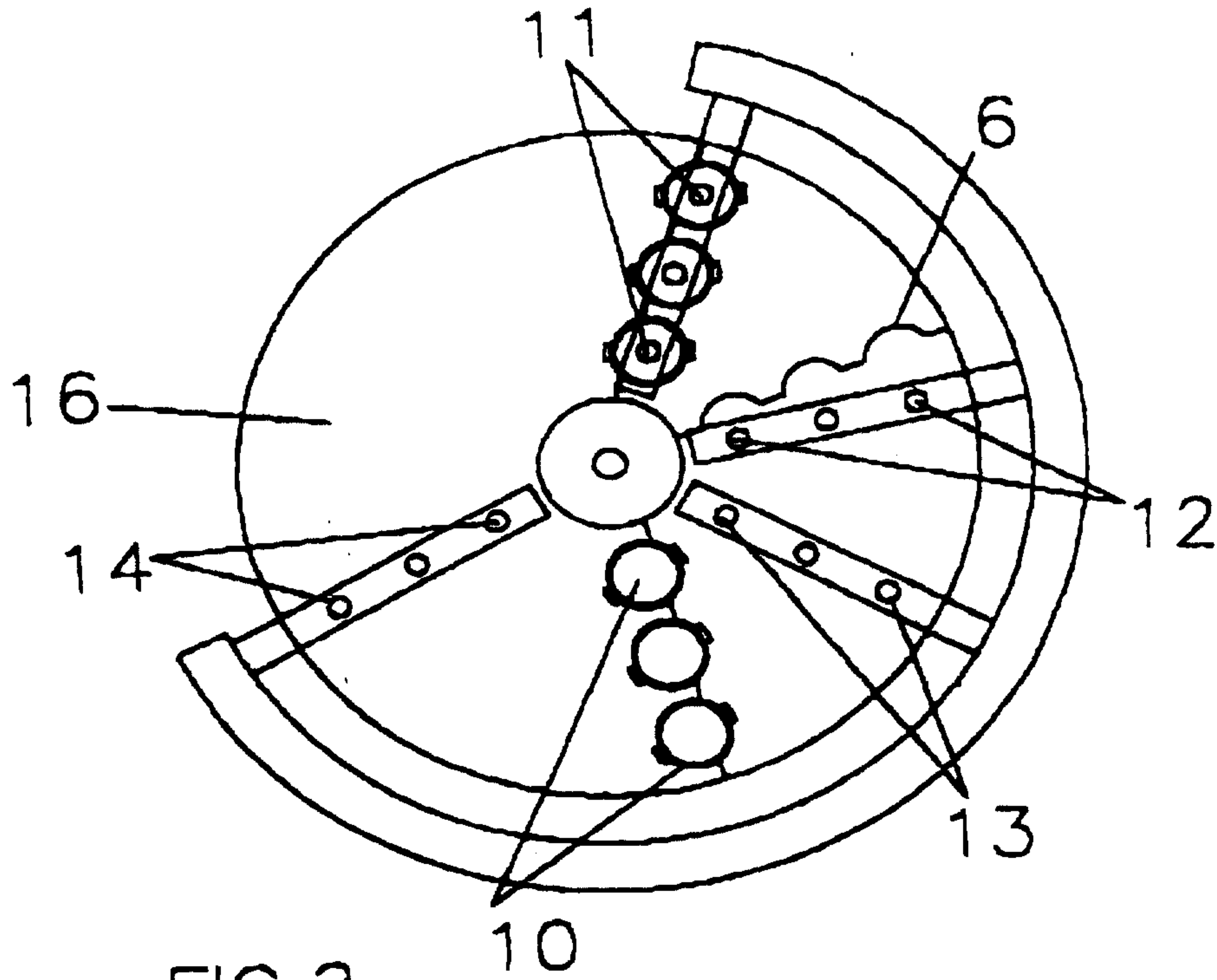


FIG. 2

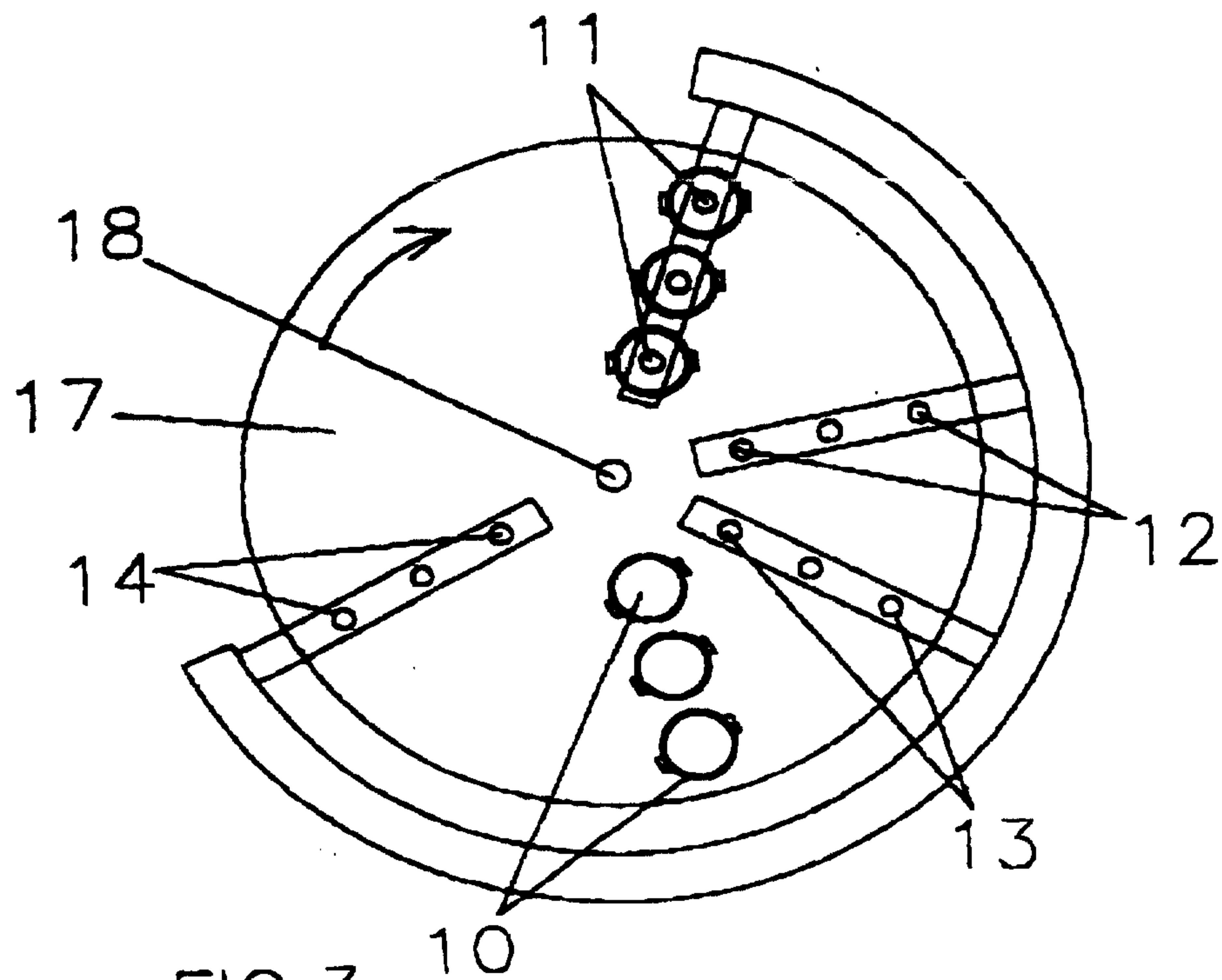


FIG. 3

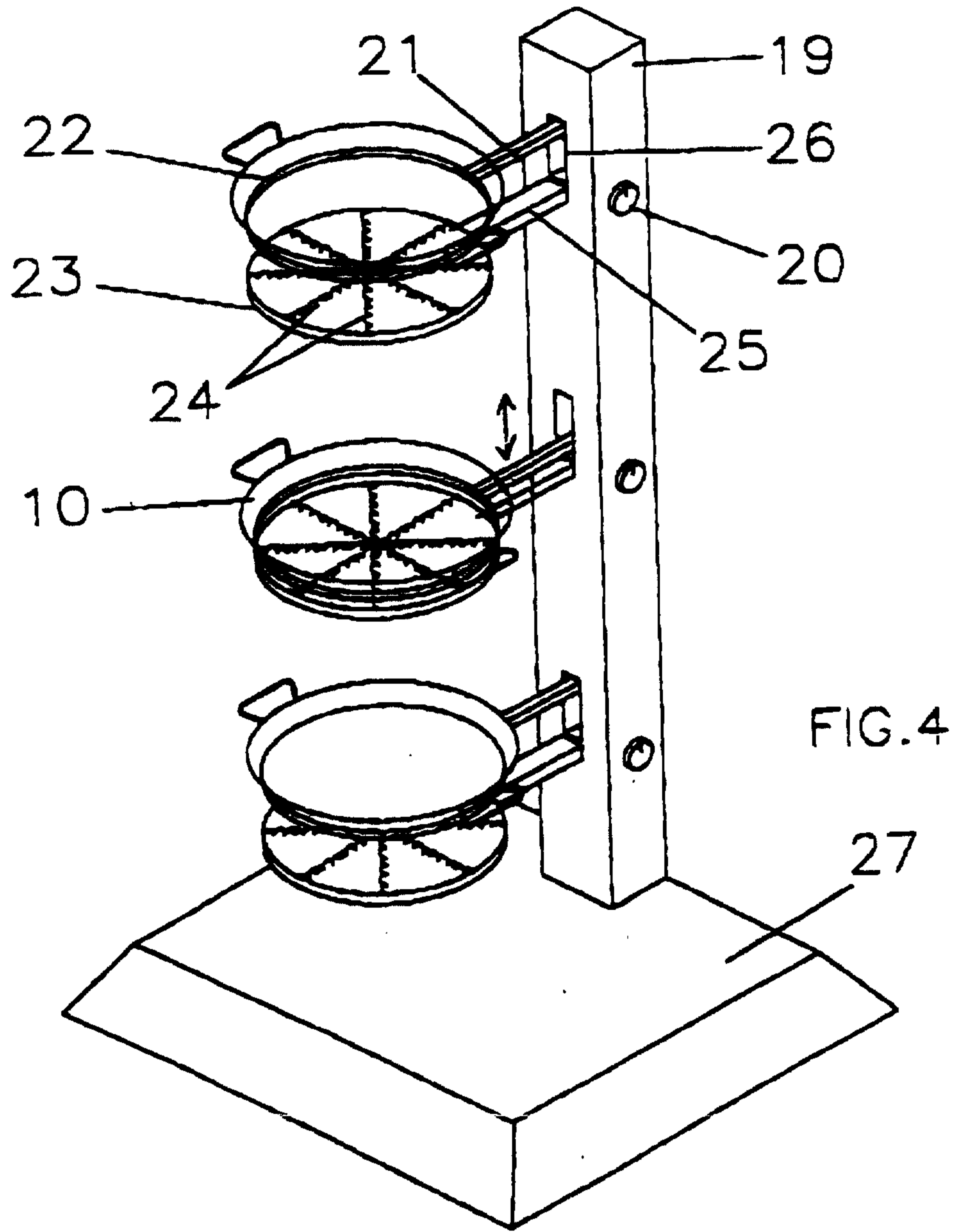


FIG. 4

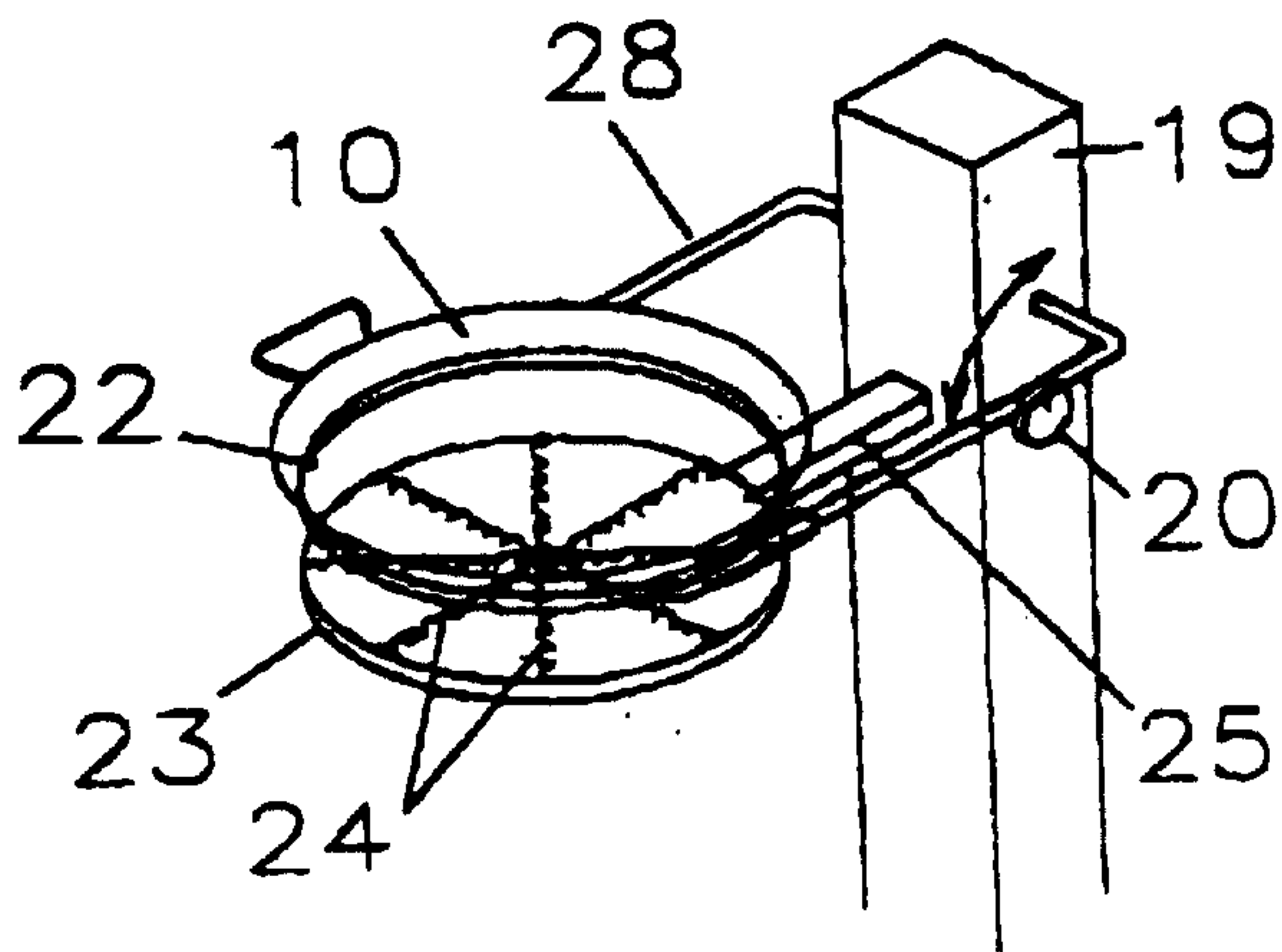


FIG. 5

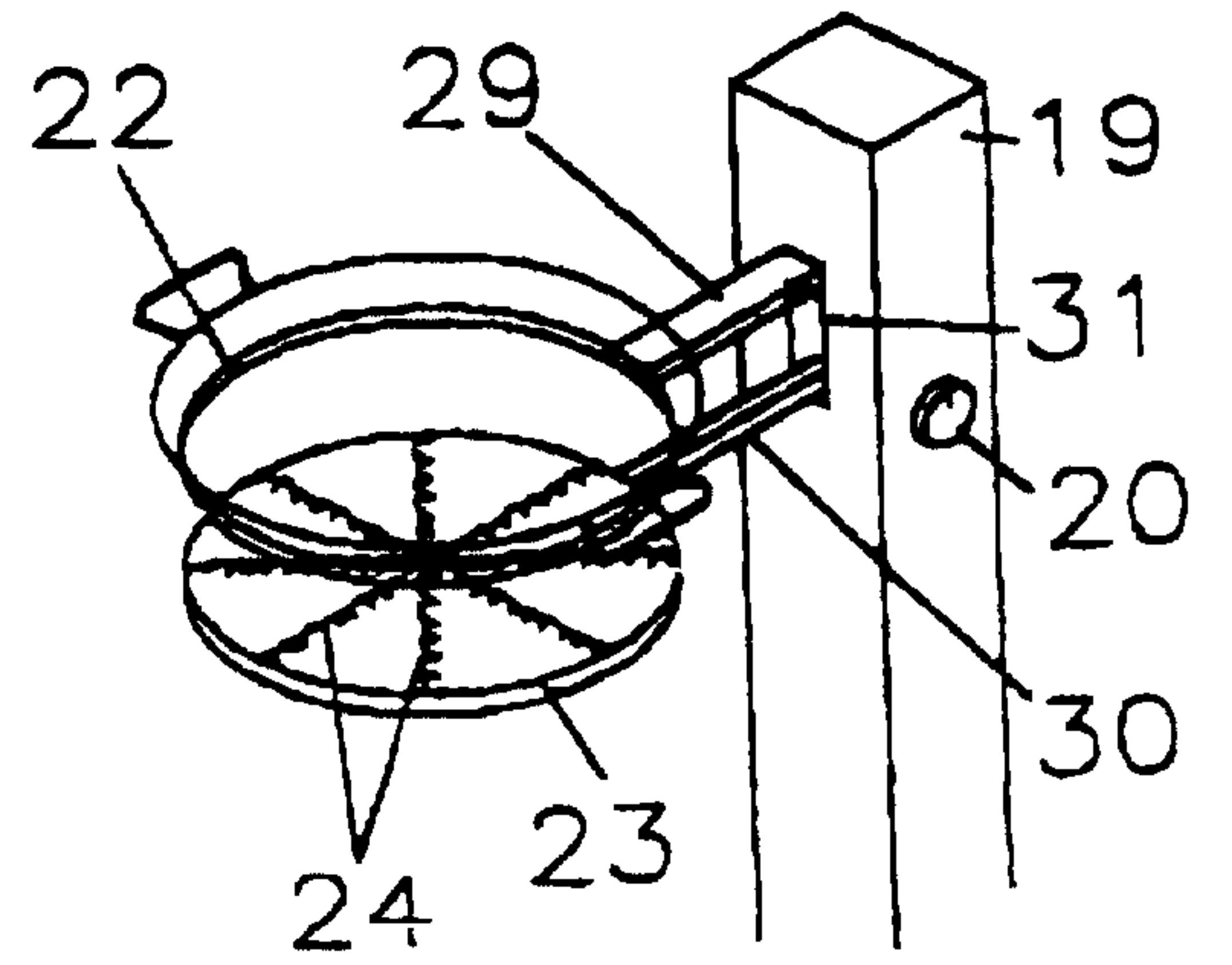
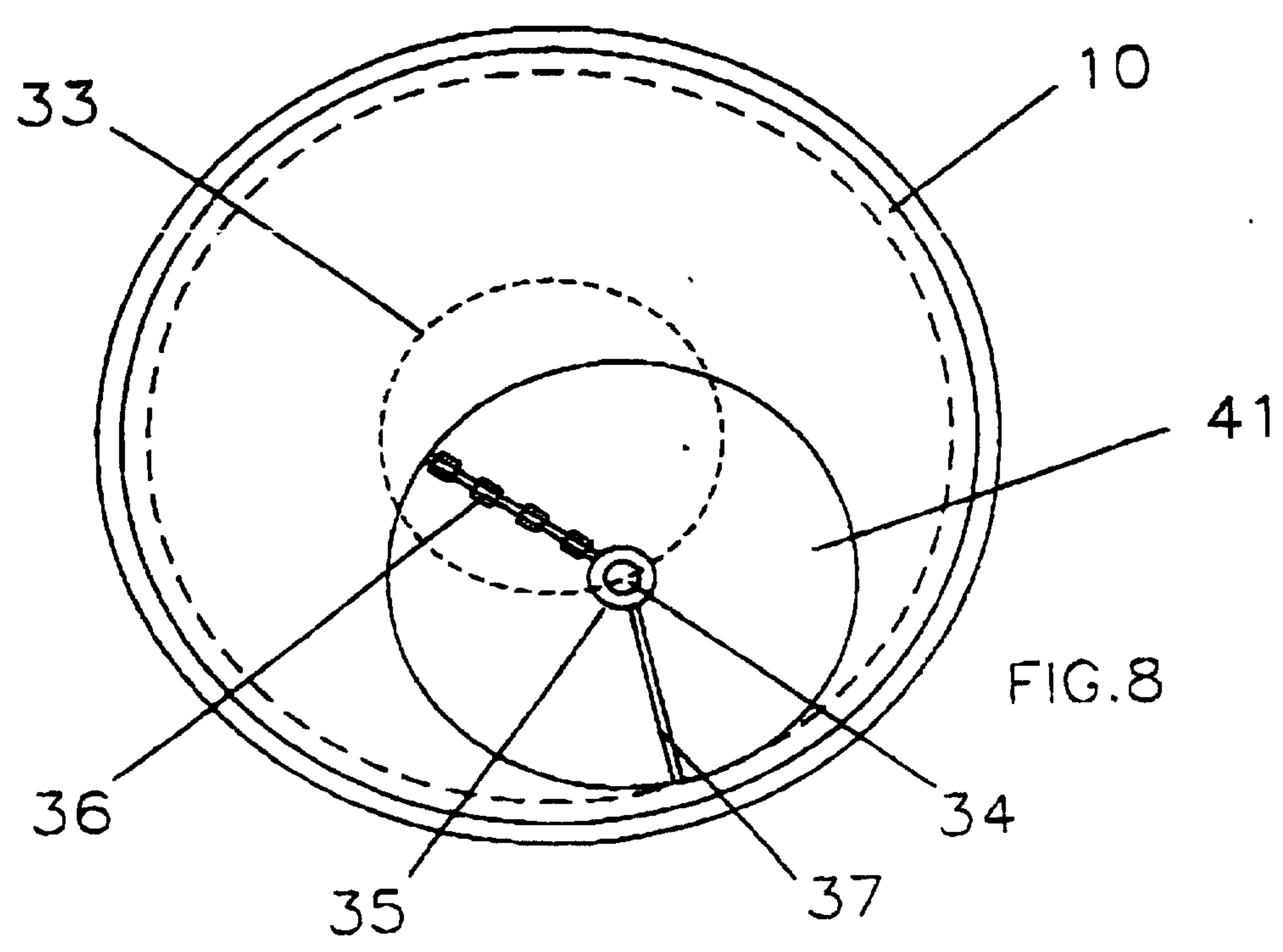
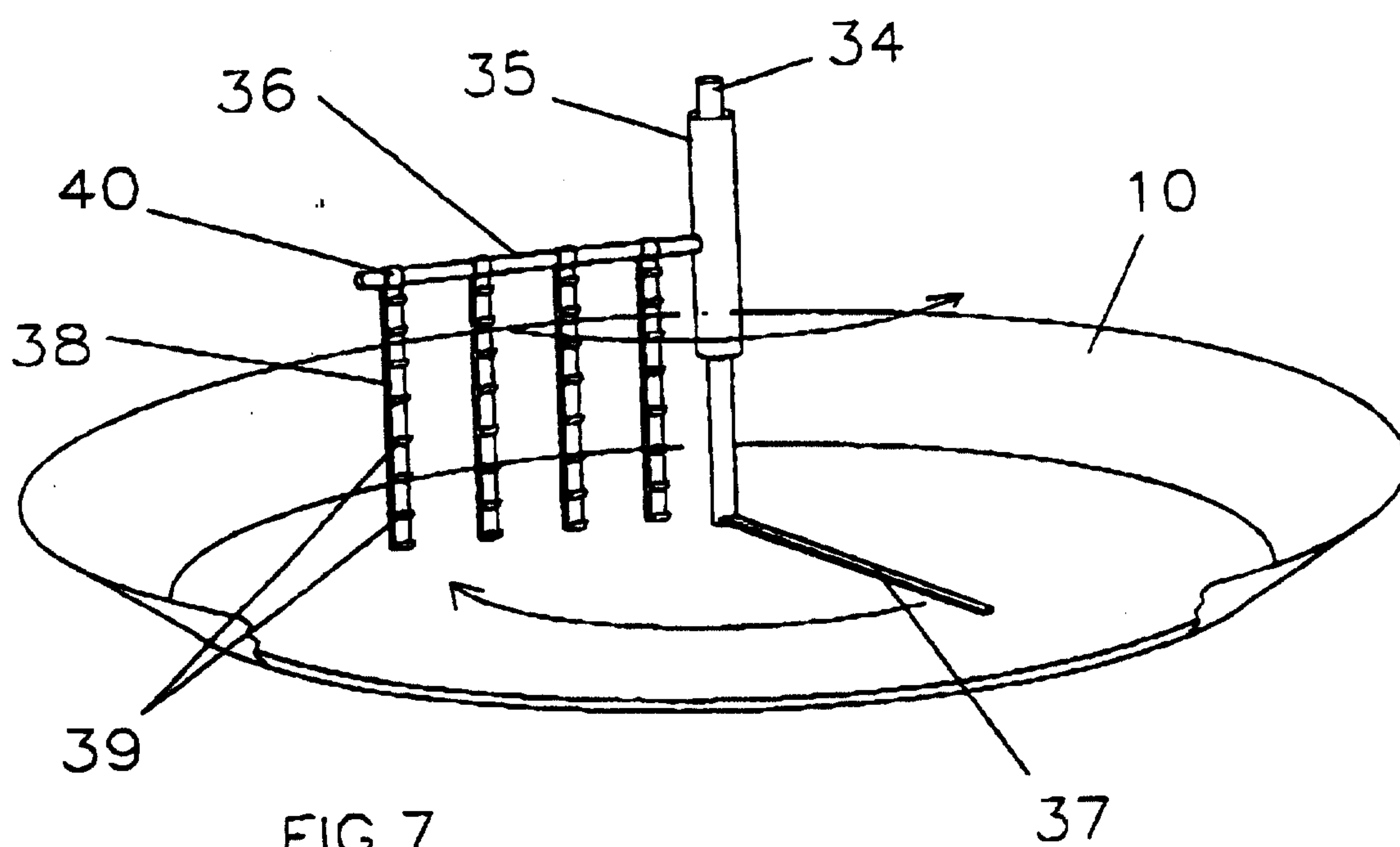


FIG. 6



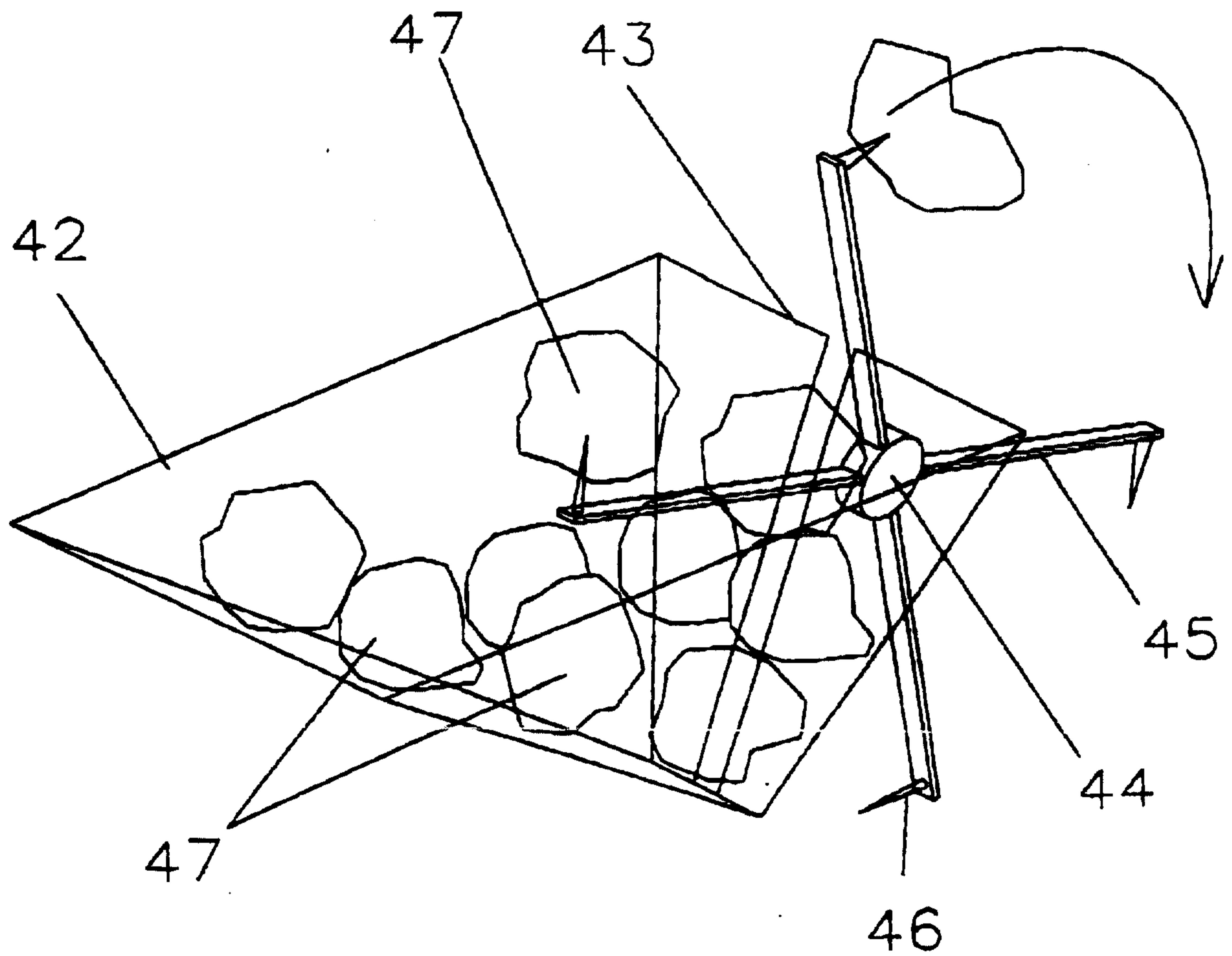


FIG. 9

