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(54) Title: BUNDLE OF TOBACCO INDUSTRY PRODUCTS

(57) Abstract: A bundle (1) of tobacco industry products configured to extend from an open end of a base of a parallelepiped-shaped outer container, the bundle comprising a group of tobacco industry products wrapped in a barrier layer (2) comprising parallel front and rear major surfaces separated from each other by parallel minor side surfaces, a top surface and a bottom surface, wherein the barrier layer comprises an elongate section (11) formed in the front major surface delimited by a line of weakness, said elongate section facing a major front wall of the base when the bundle is received therein, said elongate section extending in a longitudinal direction along at least a major portion of the length of the tobacco industry products between the top surface and bottom surface and including a tongue (12) extending beneath a lower end of at least one tobacco industry product such that, when the bundle is received in the base and the elongate section (11) is pulled in a direction out of the base, at least one smoking article is at least partially lifted out of the base by the tongue (12), wherein the elongate section in the front major surface of the bundle is closer to one of the minor side surfaces than the other of the minor side surfaces..

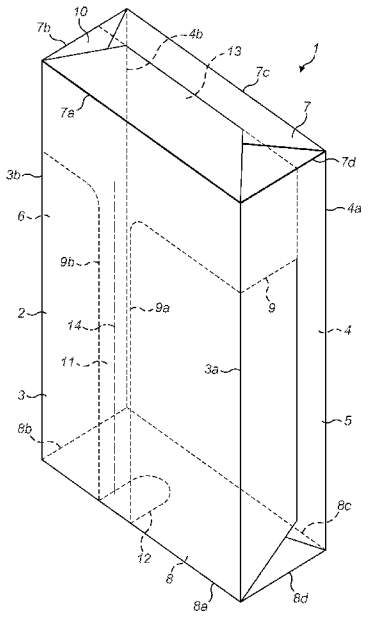

FIG. 1

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Bundle of Tobacco Industry Products

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a bundle of tobacco industry products, particularly but not exclusively to a bundle of smoking articles such as cigarettes. The present invention also relates to a pack of tobacco industry products and a barrier layer to wrap a group of tobacco industry products to form a bundle.

Background

A bundle comprises a group of tobacco industry products, such as cigarettes, wrapped in a barrier layer. It is known to provide the barrier layer with a removable portion that includes an integral elongate lifting strip in a major front surface that extends in a longitudinal direction, i.e. along the length of the cigarettes. When the removable portion is removed to enable access to the cigarettes to be obtained, the elongate lifting strip separates from the remainder of the barrier material along a line of weakness. The lifting strip includes a tongue or end portion that extends beneath one or more cigarettes of the bundle so that a cigarette is at least partially lifted out of the bundle as the removable portion, including the lifting strip, is removed.

Summary

A bundle of tobacco industry products configured to extend from an open end of a base of a parallelepiped-shaped outer container, the bundle comprising a group of tobacco industry products wrapped in a barrier layer comprising parallel front and rear major surfaces separated from each other by parallel minor side surfaces, a top surface and a bottom surface, wherein the barrier layer comprises an elongate section formed in the front major surface delimited by a line of weakness, said elongate section facing a major front wall of the base when the bundle is received therein, said elongate section extending in a longitudinal direction along at least a major portion of the length of the tobacco industry products between the top surface and bottom surface and including a tongue extending beneath a lower end of at least one tobacco industry product such that, when the bundle is received in the base and the elongate section is pulled in a direction out of the base, at least one smoking article is at least partially lifted out of the base by the tongue, wherein the elongate section in the front major surface of the bundle is closer to one of the minor side surfaces than the other of the minor side surfaces.

Advantageously this prevents a user's grip from inhibiting extraction of the removable portion.

The barrier layer can comprise a removable portion delimited by a line of weakness, said removable portion including at least part of the top surface covering an upper end of the tobacco industry products which can extend from an open end of the base when the bundle is received therein, said removable portion exposing the upper end of the tobacco industry products when removed. Advantageously this provides an opening for access to the tobacco industry products while keeping the tobacco industry products wrapped before the removable portion is removed.

The removable portion and the elongate section can be integrally formed so that the elongate section is pulled in a direction out of the base to lift a tobacco industry product and removed together with the removable portion. This enables the tobacco industry products to be exposed and a tobacco industry product to be lifted with a single action of removing the removable portion and elongate section together.

The removable portion and the elongate section can be separate to each other and the barrier layer can be configured such that the elongate section is pullable in a direction out of the base after the removable portion has been removed. This enables a user to remove the removable portion independently of lifting the elongate section.

The removable portion of the bundle of tobacco industry products can comprise at least a part of the front major surface between the at least part of the top surface and the elongate section, the at least part of the front major surface and the top surface together forming an access aperture when the removable portion is removed. In addition or alternatively the opening can be configured to extend from the top surface into at least one minor side surface. It can be appreciated that the opening could also extend into the rear major surface. Having the opening extending over at least one edge and into one or more surfaces improves access to the tobacco industry products. It also enables a relatively larger area for the tobacco industry products to be lifted through, than if the opening was provided in only one surface.

The front major surface of the bundle of tobacco industry products can have a longitudinal axis and the elongate section can be delimited, at least in part, by two parallel lines of weakness in said front major surface, wherein a centre line extending

between said parallel lines of weakness can be parallel to, and laterally offset from, said longitudinal axis towards one minor side surface of the bundle. Advantageously the elongate section is easily removed from the surrounding barrier material along the lines of weakness, without a user's grip inhibiting this.

The centre line extending between the parallel lines of weakness can be laterally offset from said longitudinal axis such that one of said parallel lines of weakness lies on said longitudinal axis of the front major panel. The centre line extending between the parallel lines of weakness can be laterally offset from said longitudinal axis such that both parallel lines of weakness are closer to the same minor side surface than the other minor side surface. Advantageously the elongate section can be offset by a number of varying degrees.

Each of the tobacco industry products can have a diameter W, and the centre line extending between the parallel lines of weakness can be laterally offset from said longitudinal axis by at least a distance equal to diameter W. Advantageously this prevents a user's grip from inhibiting the lifting of a centrally located cigarette, or from inhibiting the removal of the elongate section. The lateral distance between the parallel lines of weakness can be equal to, or greater than, the diameter W of a tobacco industry product.

The tongue can be shaped to extend underneath more than one tobacco industry product within the bundle. The tongue can be formed from a portion of the bottom surface of the barrier layer. Advantageously the barrier layer including the removable portion, elongate section and tongue can be manufactured from a single sheet of barrier material if required.

The tobacco industry products can be smoking articles such as cigarettes. However, it can be envisaged that alternative tobacco industry products can be stored in the bundle for example but not limited to combustible smoking articles such as, cigarillos, cigars, tobacco for pipes or for roll-your-own cigarettes, electronic smoking articles such as e-cigarettes, heating devices that release compounds from substrate materials without burning such as tobacco heating products; and hybrid systems to generate aerosol from a combination of substrate materials, for example hybrid systems containing a liquid or gel or solid substrate.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a pack of tobacco industry products comprising a parallelepiped shaped outer container having a base comprising major front and rear walls spaced from each other by minor side walls and a bottom wall, and a bundle of tobacco industry products received in the base so that said upper end of the tobacco industry products extend from the base and the front major surface of the barrier layer faces the major front wall of the base.

According to yet another aspect of the invention there is provided a barrier layer to wrap a group of tobacco industry products to form the bundle of tobacco industry products according to the invention.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a bundle of tobacco industry products before a removable portion and elongate section are removed, wherein the removable portion and the elongate section are integral to one another;

Figure 2 shows the bundle of tobacco industry products of Figure 1 after the removable portion and elongate section are removed;

Figure 3 shows a pack containing the bundle of tobacco industry products of Figure 1;

Figure 4 shows a bundle of tobacco industry products before the removable portion and elongate section are removed, wherein the removable portion and the elongate section are separate to each other.

Detailed Description

It is known to provide a bundle of tobacco industry products with a removable portion that includes an elongate lifting strip to at least partially lift a cigarette from the bundle upon removal of the removable portion. However, a user's grip on the bundle, applied indirectly via the pack in which the bundle is received, can result in the removable portion being difficult to remove, as the lifting strip becomes trapped between the cigarettes and the front face of the pack due to the pressure applied to the front face of the pack by a consumer holding the pack. In particular, a user's thumb of the hand in which the pack is held often presses against a region of the front wall of the pack directly above the lifting strip. Embodiments of the present invention seek to address the aforementioned issue.

Figure 1 shows a wrapped bundle of tobacco industry products 1, for example smoking articles according to an embodiment of the invention. In this example, the tobacco industry products are cigarettes 15.

The wrapped bundle 1 comprises a flexible barrier material 2 or barrier layer that has been wrapped around a group of cigarettes, for example 20 cigarettes. However, it will be appreciated that the wrapped bundle 1 may contain any number of cigarettes 15, for example 10 or 14 cigarettes. The cigarettes 15 are elongate cylindrical articles and are arranged in rows such that the overall shape of the wrapped bundle 1 is substantially cuboid or parallelepiped. The cigarettes 15 or tobacco industry products each have a diameter W.

The wrapped bundle 1 comprises two major surfaces, a front surface 3 and a rear surface 4, separated by opposing minor side surfaces, a first minor side surface 5 and a second minor side surface 6. The bundle 1 further comprises a top surface 7 and a bottom surface 8. The top surface 7 is surrounded on four sides by edges 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, the bottom surface surrounded by edges 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d. Each major face 3, 4 has two further edges, 3a, 3b and 4a, 4b. The wrapped bundle 1 shown in the accompanying drawings have square edges, but it will be appreciated that the edges may be rounded or otherwise shaped according to the shape of the contents of the bundle 1.

As shown in Figure 1, the wrapped bundle is provided with a removable portion 10 delimited by a line of weakness 9 and including at least part of the top surface 7 covering an upper end of the tobacco industry products. As illustrated, in some embodiments the removable portion can also extend over edges 7b, 7d and 3a, 3b on to the minor side surfaces 5, 6. It can be appreciated that the removable portion extends over any suitable number of edges. The removable portion 10 in Figure 1 extends over 6 edges, 3a, 3b, 7a, 7b, 7d and 8a.

The front major surface 3 of the bundle comprises a longitudinal axis extending centrally from edge 7a to edge 8a and in a direction extending along the length of the cigarettes. The removable portion 10 further comprises an elongate section 11 extending in a longitudinal direction in the front major surface 3 of the bundle 1. The elongate section 11 extends from the front major surface 3, over edge 8a and into the bottom surface 8. The removable portion 10 and the elongate section 11 are integrally formed

so that the elongate section 11 is pulled to lift a tobacco industry product and removed together with the removable portion 10.

In some embodiments, and as illustrated in Figure 4, the removable portion 10 and the elongate section 11 can be separate to each other; this is an alternative to what is illustrated in Figure 1 where the elongate section 11 and removable portion 10 are integral to one another. The barrier material 2 is configured such that the elongate section 11 is moveable independently of the removable portion 10. The elongate section 11 is separated from the removable portion 10 by a line of weakness 9c. However, the elongate section 11 can also be separated from the removable portion by a cut instead of the line of weakness 9c. Furthermore the elongate section 11 may at least partially overlap the removable portion 10. To lift a tobacco industry product 15, the removable portion 10 is removed first to provide an opening 13 in the barrier material 2, which exposes an upper end of the tobacco industry products 15 through said opening 13. After the removable portion 10 has been removed the elongate section 11 is pulled or lifted in a direction away from the bottom surface 8 to lift at least one tobacco industry product 15 through the opening 13. The elongate section 11 being removed from the barrier material 2 as it is pulled by a user. It can be appreciated however, that the elongate section 11 may not be entirely removable from the barrier material 2 and could remain at least partially attached to the barrier material 2 after a first tobacco industry product 15 has been lifted.

In embodiments of the present invention, the elongate section 11 is disposed closer to one minor side surface than the other. For example, the elongate section may be closer to the second minor side surface 6 than to the first minor side surface 5. Alternatively, the elongate section 11 can be disposed closer to the first minor side surface 5 than the second minor side surface 6.

In particular, the elongate section 11 is laterally offset from the longitudinal axis of the front major surface 3 of the bundle. The elongate section 11 can be delimited, at least in part, by two parallel lines of weakness 9a, 9b having a centreline 14 extending between them. However, it will be appreciated that the two lines of weakness 9a and 9b need not be parallel to one another and the elongate portion can vary in size along its length.

Although a number of dimensions can be envisaged for the elongate section 11, in this example the lateral distance between the lines of weakness 9a, 9b is at least equal to the diameter W of a tobacco industry product 15.

The centreline 14 is parallel to the longitudinal axis of the front major surface 3 and is laterally offset therefrom towards one minor side surface 5 or 6. The elongate section 11 may be offset from the longitudinal axis to an extent that one of the parallel lines of weakness 9a or 9b lies on the longitudinal axis of the front major surface 3. However, the elongate section 11 may be offset from the longitudinal axis such that both parallel lines of weakness 9a and 9b are closer to the same minor side surface 5 or 6 than the other minor side surface 5 or 6. Furthermore it can be appreciated that the centreline 14 is offset from the longitudinal axis by at least a distance equal to diameter W of the cigarettes 15.

The elongate section 11 is laterally offset from the longitudinal axis of the front major surface 3 so that when a user grips the bundle 1 to remove the removable portion 10, they are less likely to impede removal of the elongate section 11 by applying pressure to it with their thumb. In particular, if the elongate strip is located centrally, i.e. so that its centreline extends along the longitudinal axis of the major front surface, a consumer is more likely to place their thumb over it, and apply pressure to it via the front wall of the pack, when the pack is held in the hand. By laterally offsetting the elongate strip, there is less chance of a user's thumb being placed directly over it when the pack is held, thereby reducing the pressure applied to the elongate strip and making it easier to extract from the pack upon removal.

The elongate section 11 includes a tongue 12 which is shaped to extend underneath a tobacco industry product 15 within the bundle. It can be appreciated that the tongue 12 may be divergently or convergently shaped, rounded, square, or any alternative shape which provides a suitable surface area to lift a tobacco industry product from the bundle 1 when the removable portion 10 is removed. The tongue 12 can be formed from a portion of the bottom surface 8 of the barrier layer. The tongue 12 extends beneath a lower end of at least one smoking article such that, when the removable portion 10 is removed, at least one smoking article is lifted from of the bundle 1 by the tongue 12, through the opening 13 or access aperture.

As illustrated, the opening 13 extends from the top face 7, over the front edge 7a between the top face 7 and the front major face 3, and onto the front major face 3 of the wrapped bundle 1. In some examples, the opening 13 also extends over the rear major face 4 of the wrapped bundle 1, or on to the minor side faces 5, 6.

As shown in Figure 2, after the removable portion 10 has been removed, the opening 13 provides access to the cigarettes 15 within the wrapped bundle 1. Furthermore removal of the removable portion 10 has caused at least one cigarette 15 to be lifted relative to an adjacent cigarette 15. The cigarettes 15 can be removed from the wrapped bundle 1 via the opening 13 or access aperture.

Preferably, the lifting portion 10 and barrier material 2 are made from a flexible plastics material, for example polypropylene, polyethylene, or a polyethylene terephthalate. Alternatively, the lifting portion 10 and barrier material 2 can be made of a foil, for example a metal foil, or a metallised film (for example a metallised polymer film) or other flexible material suitable for packaging. The lifting portion 10 and/or barrier material 2 may comprise printing, for example but not limited to, colours, logos, product information and instructions.

The wrapped bundle 1 may be provided as packaging itself, the bundle being wrapped in a wrapper. However, it may be received within a hinged-lid pack 20. As can be seen from Figure 3, the hinged-lid pack 20 has a base portion 21 having a parallelepiped form and which is adapted to receive the wrapped bundle 1 such that the wrapped bundle 1 protrudes from the base portion 21. The base portion 21 further comprises a major front wall 16 and a rear wall 17 spaced from each other by minor side walls 18, 19 and a bottom wall 24. The major front surface 3 of the bundle 1 or barrier layer 2 faces the major front wall 16 of the base 21 when the bundle 1 is disposed within the base 21. In this position, the removable portion 10 is accessible for opening the wrapped bundle 1 and lifting at least one cigarette 15, providing access and easy removal of the cigarettes 15 within.

A lid 22 is hingedly connected to the base portion 21 about a hinge 23. The lid 22 is pivotable between a closed position, where the lid 22 covers the wrapped bundle 1, and an open position, where the wrapped bundle 1 is exposed.

It will be appreciated that the above described examples may further include an inner frame or supports within the bundle 1 or surrounding the bundle 1 to improve stability of the bundle of tobacco industry product.

It will be appreciated that the above described examples of a wrapped bundle 1 and packaging may be used to package tobacco industry products other than cigarettes 15 as mentioned previously.

As used herein, the term "tobacco industry product" is to be understood as including smoking articles comprising combustible smoking articles such as cigarettes, cigarillos, cigars, tobacco for pipes or for roll-your-own cigarettes, (whether based on tobacco, tobacco derivatives, expanded tobacco, reconstituted tobacco, tobacco substitutes or other smokable material), electronic smoking articles such as e-cigarettes, heating devices that release compounds from substrate materials without burning such as tobacco heating products; and hybrid systems to generate aerosol from a combination of substrate materials, for example hybrid systems containing a liquid or gel or solid substrate.

In one embodiment, the tobacco industry product is a smoking article for combustion selected from the group consisting of a cigarette, a cigarillo and a cigar.

In one embodiment, the tobacco industry product is a non-combustible smoking article.

In one embodiment the tobacco industry product is a heating device which releases compounds by heating, but not burning, a substrate material. The material may be for example tobacco or other non-tobacco products, which may or may not contain nicotine. In one embodiment the heating device is a tobacco heating device.

In another embodiment the tobacco industry product is a hybrid system to generate aerosol by heating, but not burning, a combination of substrate materials. The substrate materials may comprise for example solid, liquid or gel which may or may not contain nicotine. In one embodiment, the hybrid system comprises a liquid or gel substrate and a solid substrate. The solid substrate may be for example tobacco or other non-tobacco products, which may or may not contain nicotine. In one embodiment the hybrid system comprises a liquid or gel substrate and tobacco.

In order to address various issues and advance the art, the entirety of this disclosure shows by way of illustration various embodiments in which the claimed invention(s) may be practiced and provide for an improved bundle of tobacco industry products. The advantages and features of the disclosure are of a representative sample of embodiments only, and are not exhaustive and/or exclusive. They are presented only to assist in understanding and teach the claimed features. It is to be understood that advantages, embodiments, examples, functions, features, structures, and/or other aspects of the disclosure are not to be considered limitations on the disclosure as defined by the claims or limitations on equivalents to the claims, and that other embodiments may be utilised and modifications may be made without departing from the scope and/or spirit of the disclosure. Various embodiments may suitably comprise, consist of, or consist essentially of, various combinations of the disclosed elements, components, features, parts, steps, means, etc. In addition, the disclosure includes other inventions not presently claimed, but which may be claimed in future.

Claims

1. A bundle of tobacco industry products configured to extend from an open end of a base of a parallelepiped-shaped outer container, the bundle comprising a group of tobacco industry products wrapped in a barrier layer comprising parallel front and rear major surfaces separated from each other by parallel minor side surfaces, a top surface and a bottom surface,

wherein the barrier layer comprises an elongate section formed in the front major surface delimited by a line of weakness, said elongate section facing a major front wall of the base when the bundle is received therein, said elongate section extending in a longitudinal direction along at least a major portion of the length of the tobacco industry products between the top surface and bottom surface and including a tongue extending beneath a lower end of at least one tobacco industry product such that, when the bundle is received in the base and the elongate section is pulled in a direction out of the base, at least one smoking article is at least partially lifted out of the base by the tongue,

wherein the elongate section in the front major surface of the bundle is closer to one of the minor side surfaces than the other of the minor side surfaces.

2. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to claim 1, wherein the barrier layer comprises a removable portion delimited by a line of weakness, said removable portion including at least part of the top surface covering an upper end of the tobacco industry products which extend from an open end of the base when the bundle is received therein, said removable portion exposing the upper end of the tobacco industry products when removed.

3. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to claim 2, wherein the removable portion and the elongate section are integrally formed so that the elongate section is pulled in a direction out of the base to lift a tobacco industry product and removed together with the removable portion.

4. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to claim 2, wherein the removable portion and the elongate section are separate to each other and the barrier layer is configured such that the elongate section is pullable in a direction out of the base after the removable portion has been removed.

5. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to any of claims 2 to 4, wherein the removable portion comprises at least a part of the front major surface between the at least part of the top surface and the elongate section, the at least part of the front major surface and the top surface together forming an access aperture when the removable portion is removed.

6. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to any preceding claim, wherein the front major surface has a longitudinal axis and the elongate section is delimited, at least in part, by two parallel lines of weakness in said front major surface, wherein a centre line extending between said parallel lines of weakness is parallel to, and laterally offset from, said longitudinal axis towards one minor side surface of the bundle.

7. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to claim 6, wherein the centre line extending between the parallel lines of weakness is laterally offset from said longitudinal axis such that one of said parallel lines of weakness lies on said longitudinal axis of the front major panel.

8. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to claim 6, wherein the centre line extending between the parallel lines of weakness is laterally offset from said longitudinal axis such that both parallel lines of weakness are closer to the same minor side surface than the other minor side surface.

9. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to claim 8, wherein each of the tobacco industry products has a diameter W, and the centre line extending between the parallel lines of weakness is laterally offset from said longitudinal axis by at least a distance equal to diameter W.

10. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to claim 9, wherein the lateral distance between the parallel lines of weakness is equal to, or greater than, the diameter W of a tobacco industry product.

11. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to any preceding claim, wherein the tongue is shaped to extend underneath more than one tobacco industry product within the bundle.

12. The bundle of tobacco industry products according to any preceding claim, wherein the tobacco industry products are smoking articles such as cigarettes.

13. A pack of tobacco industry products comprising a parallelepiped shaped outer container having a base comprising major front and rear walls spaced from each other by minor side walls and a bottom wall, and a bundle of tobacco industry products according to any preceding claim received in the base so that said upper end of the tobacco industry products extend from the base and the front major surface of the barrier layer faces the major front wall of the base.

14. A barrier layer to wrap a group of tobacco industry products to form the bundle of tobacco industry products according to any of claims 1 to 12.

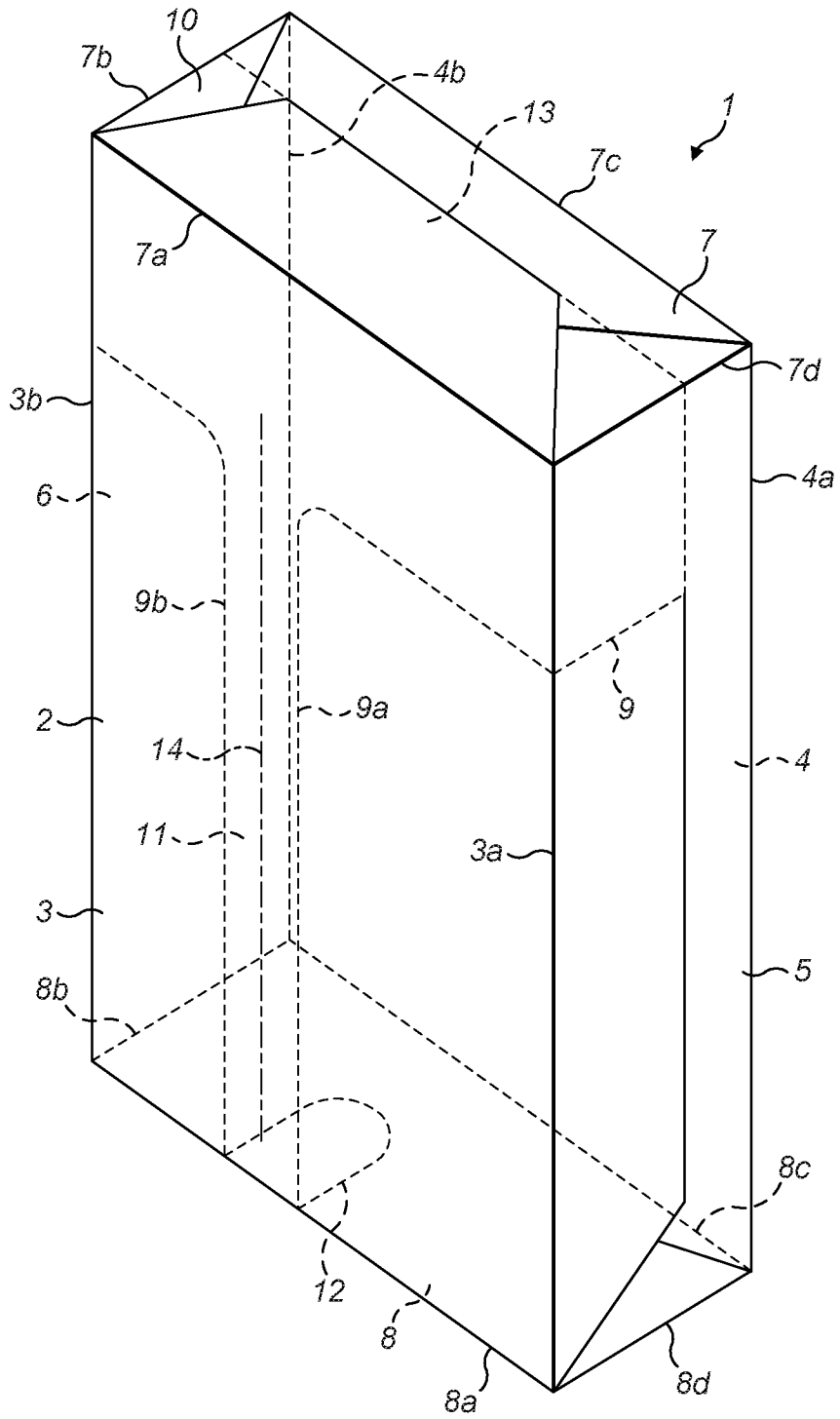

FIG. 1

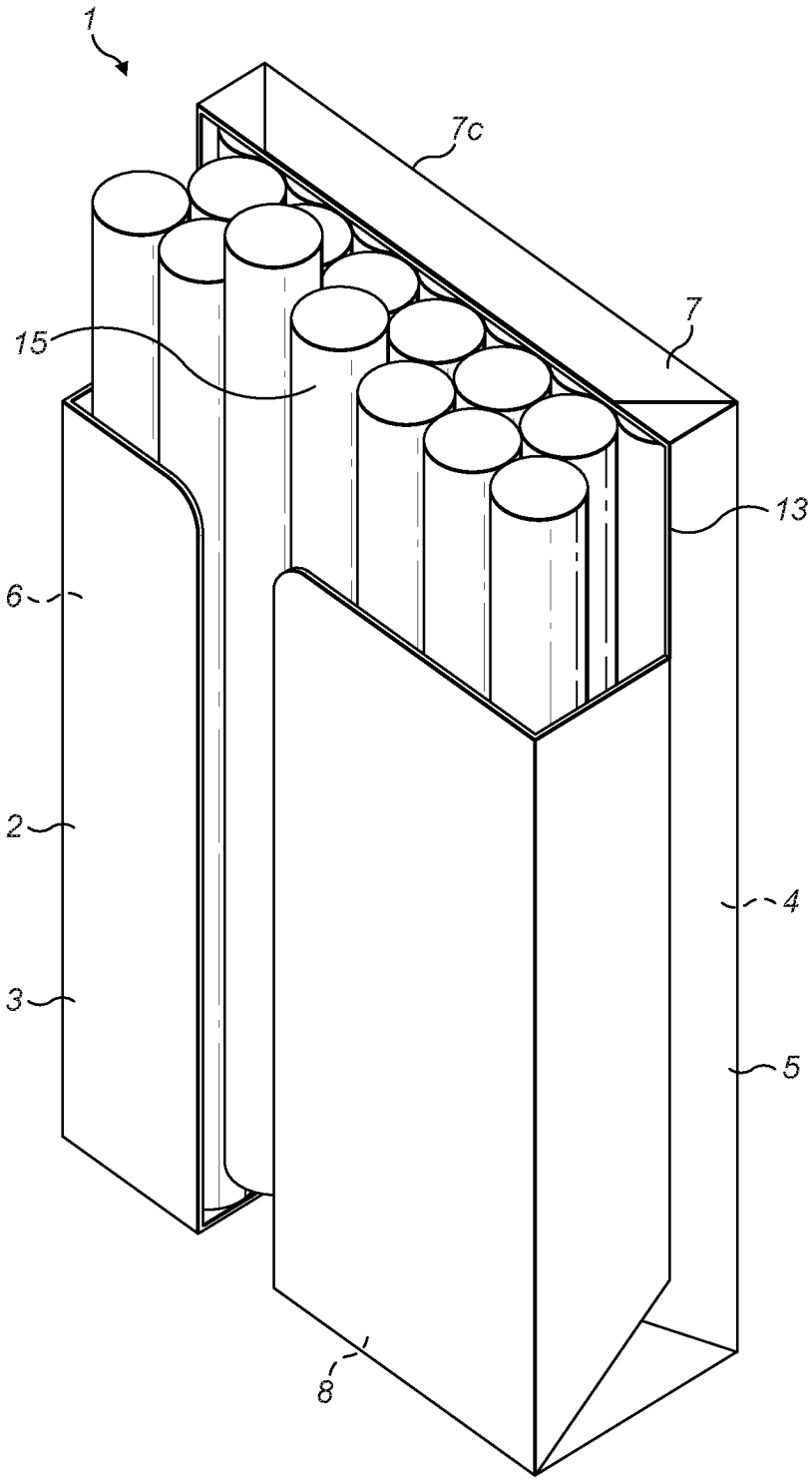

FIG. 2

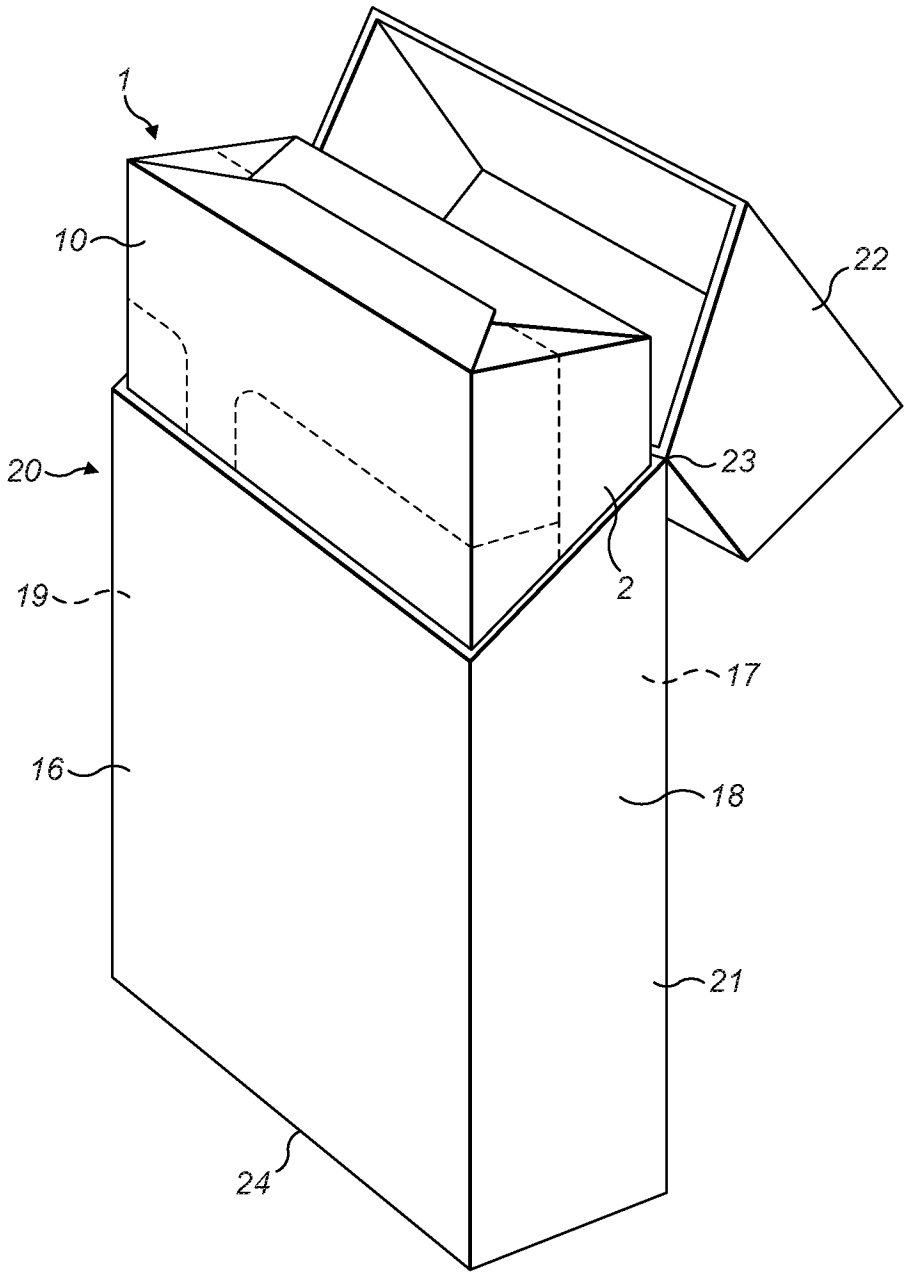

FIG. 3

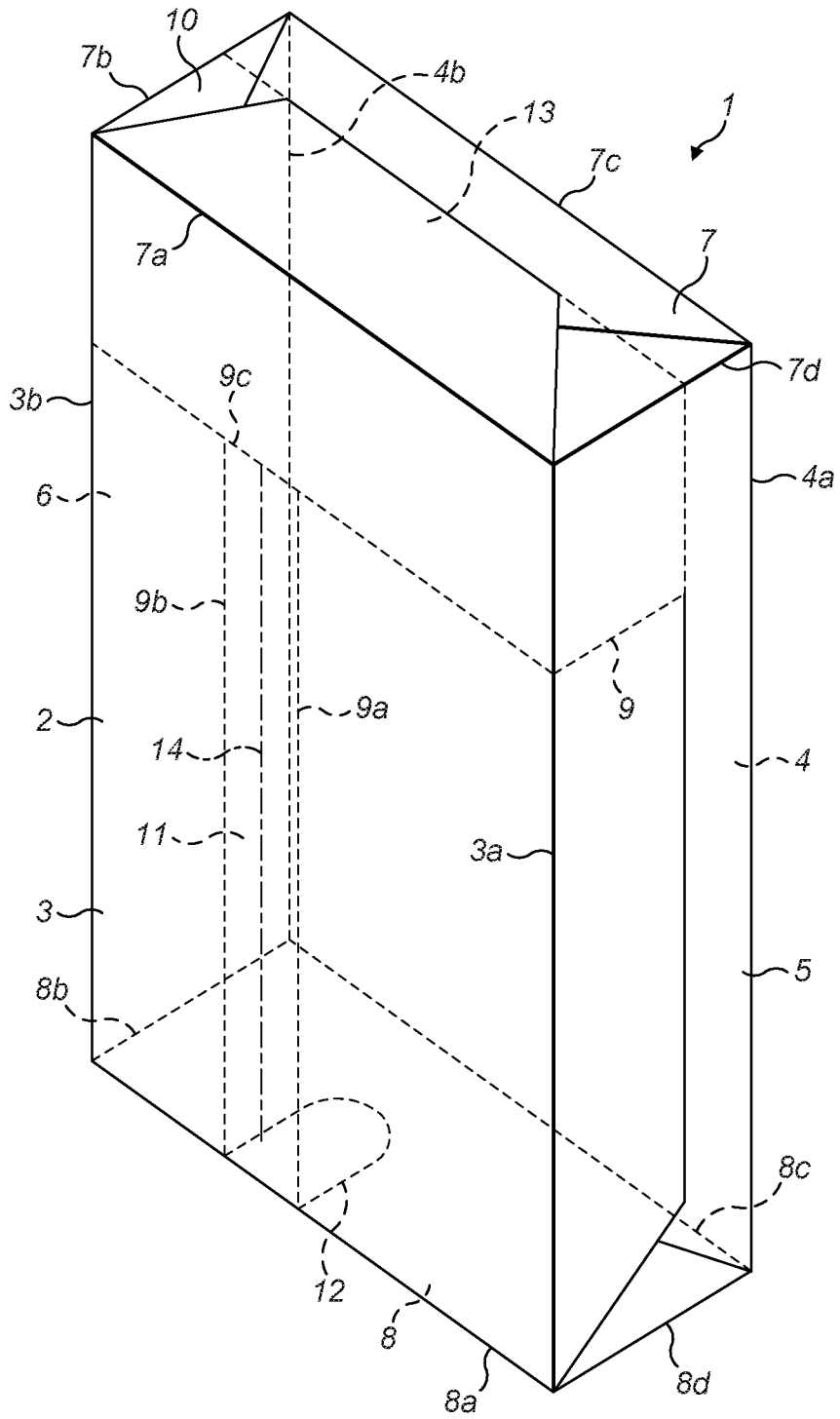

FIG. 4

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/GB2019/052774

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. B65D85/10
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 0 567 241 A2 (TOBACCO RES & DEV [CH]) 27 October 1993 (1993-10-27) abstract; figures 1-5,6A-6D column 3, line 57 - column 6, line 53 -----	1-14
X	DE 10 2015 014078 A1 (FOCKE & CO [DE]) 4 May 2017 (2017-05-04) abstract; figures 1-4,6 paragraph [0018] - paragraph [0034] -----	1-14

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

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Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
11 November 2019	19/11/2019

Name and mailing address of the ISA/	Authorized officer
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Segerer, Heiko

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No
PCT/GB2019/052774

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