United States Patent

[11] 3,559,865

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[54] **BACON CONTAINER**
1 Claim, 8 Drawing Figs.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **229/2.5,**
99/174; 220/72
[51] **Int. Cl.** **B65d 1/00,**
B65b 25/06
[50] **Field of Search** 99/171,
174; 229/87, 2.5, 29; 220/72

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ABSTRACT: A container for a draft of sliced, shingled bacon having a curved top surface and a relatively flat underside, wherein the container has vertical end walls and a bottom portion having an interior surface conforming to the general contour of the top surface of the bacon draft.

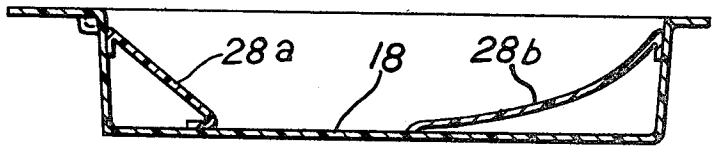

Fig. 1

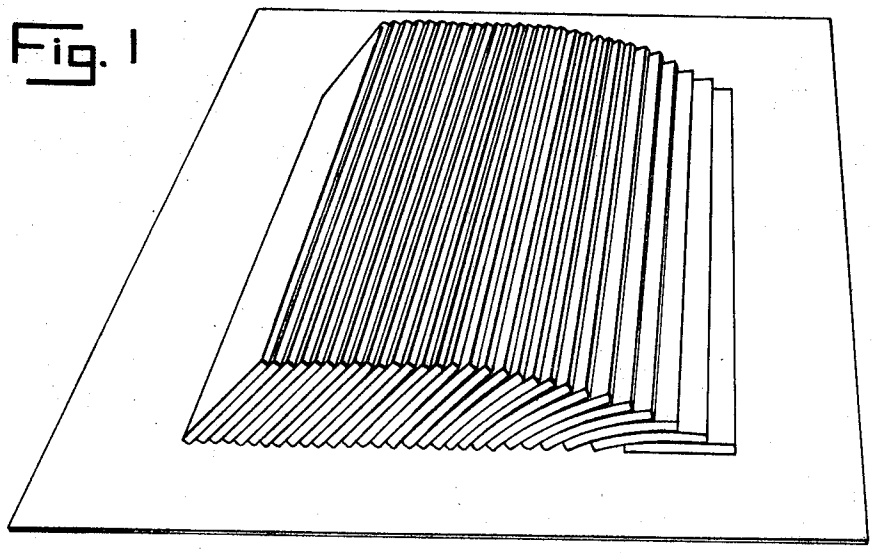

Fig. 2

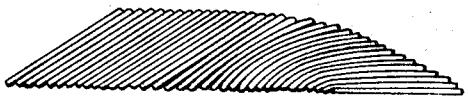

Fig. 3

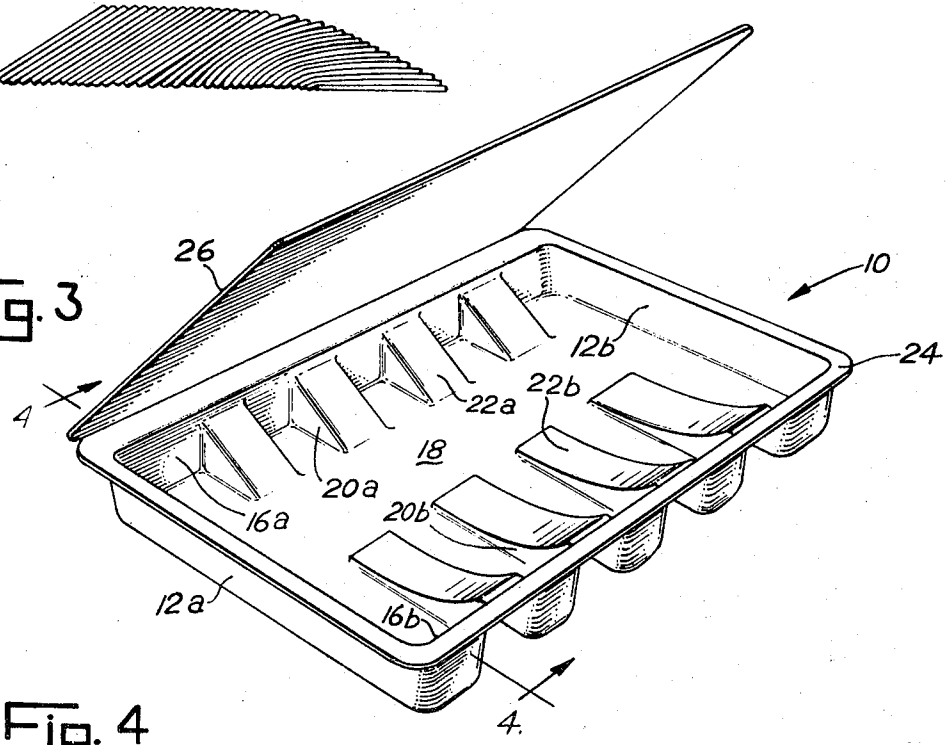

Fig. 4

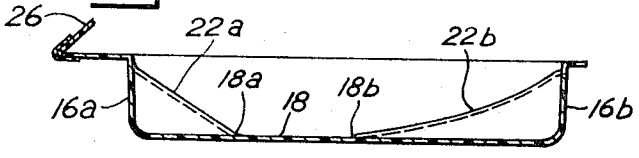

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Fig. 5

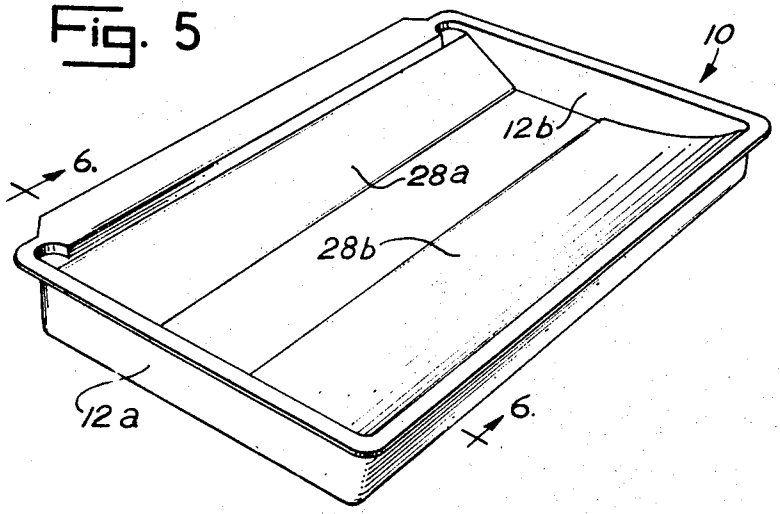
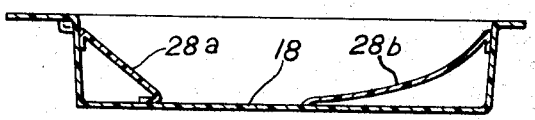


Fig. 6



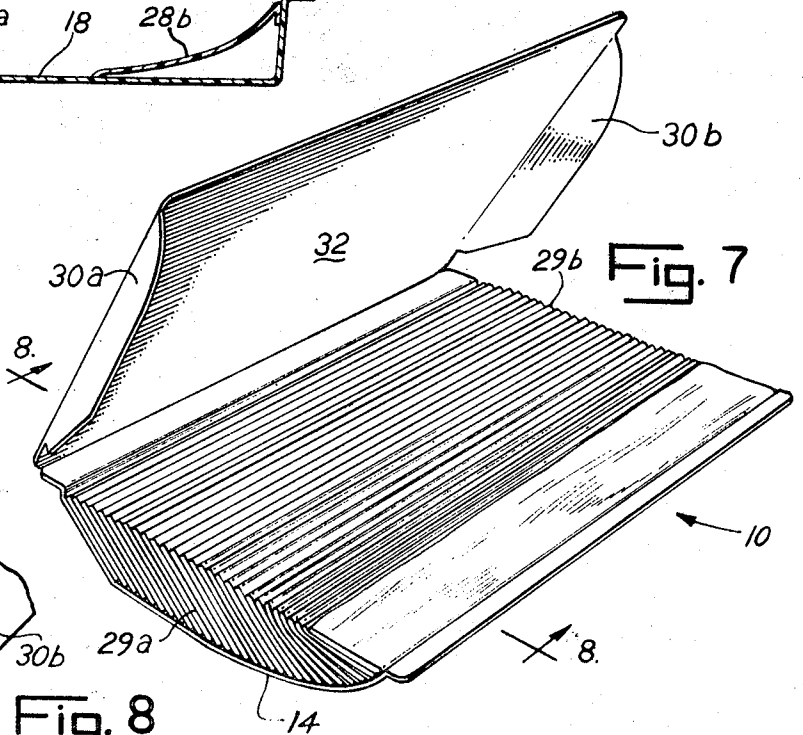


Fig. 7

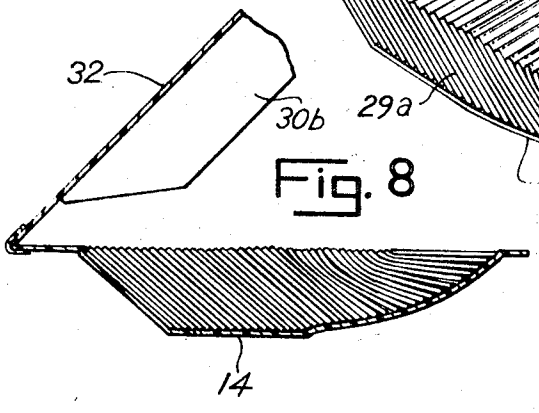


Fig. 8

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BACON CONTAINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a new container for a draft of sliced shingled bacon.

Sliced bacon is made by slicing large slabs of bacon cut from the underside of hogs and referred to as hog bellies. In commercial operations the slicing and handling of the bacon is performed by a machine, such as the "Anco" slicer which will cut enough slices to make approximately 1 or 2 pounds of whatever unit of weight is desired. As each unit of bacon is being sliced, the individual slices fall onto the bed of the slicer and on top of each other in shinglelike fashion which exposes one edge of each slice. This unit of sliced shingled bacon is referred to as a draft and has an irregularly curved top surface or top side, and relatively flat underside. After the aforesaid slicing operation, the draft is transferred to a carrying board in preparation for packaging.

The first slice that is cut will lie flat on the carrying board and the cutting of subsequent slices in a shingled arrangement results in the top surface of the draft having a contour that curves upwardly from the first slice for about two-thirds the width of the draft until reaching a maximum height and then curves downwardly to the carrying board. The underside of the draft resting on the carrying board is relatively flat and contains one edge of each of the slices in the same plane.

After slicing, each draft of bacon moves down a conveyor from the slicer and its weight is adjusted to the desired amount by adding or removing a strip or strips or a portion thereof. After the desired weight is established the draft moves further down the conveyor until reaching the packaging station where it is inserted by an attendant in a conventional bacon carton made from wax-coated cardboard and having a window for viewing the bacon. Such cartons are generally rectangular in shape and are about half the height of the bacon draft which results in some bulging of the carton when the draft is inserted therein. This bulge is eliminated, however, by compressing the draft to the same height as the carton when the cartons are stacked and pressed on top of each other in a shipping container which is subsequently sealed and stored in a cooler to await shipment.

During this chilling period the compressed slices tend to become bound to each other. When the bacon reaches the consumer the slices are usually still in this chilled compressed condition and it is difficult to remove the individual slices without first allowing the temperature of the bacon to rise to a point where the slices can be easily removed from each other without having to gouge or rip the slices apart in attempting to peel them from the draft.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new container for sliced shingled bacon that will overcome the aforesaid difficulties.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a new container for sliced shingled bacon that will tend to reduce compression of the draft when the containers are stacked on top of each other.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a new container for sliced shingled bacon that will permit the easy removal of chilled bacon strips therefrom without having to unduly gouge or tear free the strips from the draft.

Yet another object is to provide a new container for sliced shingled bacon wherein one side of the draft lies at the top of the container and presents all the edges thereof in the same general plane.

Other objects and advantages of the instant invention will become apparent as the specification proceeds.

This new container is comprised of a bottom portion having a base and two sidewalls extending for the length of the slices and having an inside surface adapted to conform to the general configuration of the top surface of the draft such that when the draft is in the container, the compression of the draft during subsequent handling of the container is reduced and each slice of bacon is more easily removed therefrom.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The container will be more specifically described in connection with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a draft of sliced shingled bacon on sheet of waxed carrying board after leaving the slicer (not shown).

FIG. 2 is a side view of said draft.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the container of the instant invention.

FIG. 4 is a view of said container in cross section along line 4–4 in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another embodiment of said container.

FIG. 6 is a view of said embodiment is cross section along line 6–6 in FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a further embodiment of said container.

FIG. 8 is a view of said further embodiment in cross section along line 8–8 in FIG. 7.

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now to the drawings and more particularly FIGS. 3 and 4, the container of the instant invention, referred to generally by the numeral **10**, comprises two vertically disposed end walls **12***a* and **12***b* and bottom portion having two sidewalls **16***a* and **16***b* and a base **18**. The base **18** and sidewalls **16***a* and **16***b* have ribs molded therefrom which project into the interior of the container to form two rows of ribs **20***a* and **20***b* in spaced relation extending from the top portion of sidewalls **16***a* and **16***b* down to said base **18**.

The contour of the surface of the ribs is adapted to conform to the general contour of the top surface of a bacon draft and is illustrated in FIG. 4. This rib surface contour comprises a diagonal linear portion **22***a* extending from the top portion of the first sidewall **16***a* and terminating in the base **18**; a horizontal linear portion **18***a* —*a* having one end **18***b* connected to the diagonal portion **22***a* and extending away therefrom; and a curved portion **22***b* connected to the other end **18***c* of the horizontal portion **18** and curving upwardly and away therefrom until terminating in the top portion of the second sidewall **16***b*.

The container is also adapted to support the draft of bacon by providing a plurality of ribs in each row with each rib having a width that will prevent any undue sagging of the bacon in the spaces between the ribs when the slices are laid transversely across the ribs.

A horizontally disposed flange **24** is provided at the upper end of the end walls and sidewalls and extends away therefrom. The flange **24** serves as a convenient base for the cover **26** and permits the container to be readily sealed by any suitable means known to the packaging art.

The inside dimensions of the container are slightly greater than the bacon draft to eliminate any interference with the inside surfaces of the container when the draft is packaged therein.

In packaging the bacon draft in the container, the draft is placed such that the contour of the top surface of the draft, as illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2, lies in and conforms to the matching contour of the rib surfaces **22***a* and **22***b* and linear portion **18***a*, as seen in FIG. 5, the underside of the draft lies at the top of the container and presents one edge of each bacon slice in the same general plane. The length of the draft lies transversely across the ribs and the ends of the draft is adjacent to the end walls of the container.

The draft can also be packaged in the reverse position, i.e., rather than placing the curved top side of the draft in the container to immediately match up with and conform to the inside surface of the container, the flat underside of the draft is placed into the container and will abut against the ribs ad-

jacent to the sidewalls. However, because of its flexibility or fluidity, the draft will sink or flow into the container and thereby reverse its curvature until lying in and conforming to the contour of the rib surfaces **22***a* and **22***b* and linear portion **18***a*.

After packaging, the cover is seated on the flange and the container is sealed and stacked in a shipping carton and transferred to a cooler to await shipment. During the aforesaid operations, the compressive forces on the draft will be carried by the walls of the container which thereby tends to reduce any compression of the draft itself.

By the time the bacon reaches the consumer, the draft will be relatively free of compression and the bacon slices can be more readily peeled therefrom while in a chilled condition without having to gouge or tear the slices.

The container of the instant invention is preferably molded from a rigid plastic that will resist the aforesaid compressive forces but any other suitable material will serve as well.

Another embodiment of the instant invention is illustrated in FIGS. **5** and **6** and is generally the same as the aforesaid embodiment except that the plurality of ribs in each row extending from the two sidewalls is replaced by two long ribs **28***a* and **28***b* running for the length of the sidewalls **16***a* and **16***b*. The first long rib **28***a* extends from one sidewall **16***a* down to the base and the second long rib **28***b* extends from the opposing sidewall **16***b* down to the base to form the desired inside contour of the container.

FIGS. **7** and **8** illustrate yet another embodiment of the instant invention having no end walls or ribs and comprised of a rigid bottom portion **14** with an inside surface conforming to the top surface contour of the bacon draft shown therein. The open ends **29***a* and **29***b* of the container are covered by means of ears **30***a* and **30***b* provided on the cover **32**. The ears have a configuration conforming to the open end of the container and will fit in the open ends when the cover is closed on top of the container. Any other suitable means such as a cellophane wrapper and the like may also be used to cover the open ends before or after the bacon is packaged therein by any of the techniques known in the art.

The embodiments of the instant invention shown in FIGS. **3** and **4**, and **5** and **6** are provided with ribs for supporting the conforming to the contour of the top surface of a bacon draft but it must be understood, as illustrated by the embodiment in FIGS. **7** and **8**, that the invention is not limited to a container having ribs but comprehends any container providing an inside surface for supporting a draft of bacon and having the same general contour as the top surface of a draft of bacon. It must further be understood that the invention is intended to cover all changes and modifications of the disclosed embodiments which fall within the spirit and scope of the invention.

I claim:

1. A container for a draft of sliced shingled bacon having a curved top surface and a relatively flat underside, said container comprising a rigid bottom portion having a curved inside surface adapted to conform to the general contour of the top surface of the bacon draft, wherein a cross section of said curved inside surface comprises a diagonal linear portion, a horizontal linear portion having one end connected to the termination of said diagonal portion and extending away therefrom, and a curved portion connected to the other end of said horizontal portion and curving upwardly and away therefrom.