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B65D 1/36

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U1S S1086 S1102

(56) Documents Cited
GB 1077440 A GB 0959971 A EP 0498760 A1
EP 0488531 A2 EP 0248291 A2 US 5123527 A
US 4081646 A US 4026457 A

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# (54) Containers

(57) A container for foodstuffs comprises at least three separate wells 11, 13, preferably comprising a large well 11 between two smaller wells 13. The wells are sealed, e.g. by means of a plastics sheet.

Alternatively, a container comprises a central well 3 encircled by a well in the form of a trough 5.

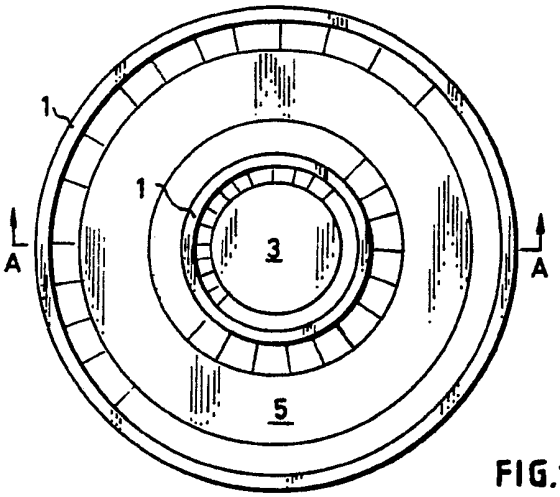


FIG.1.

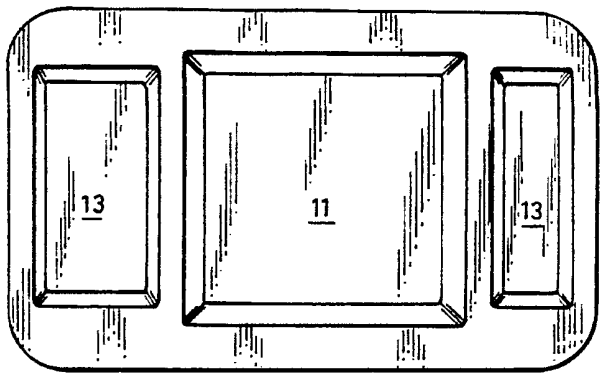


FIG.6.

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At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1990.

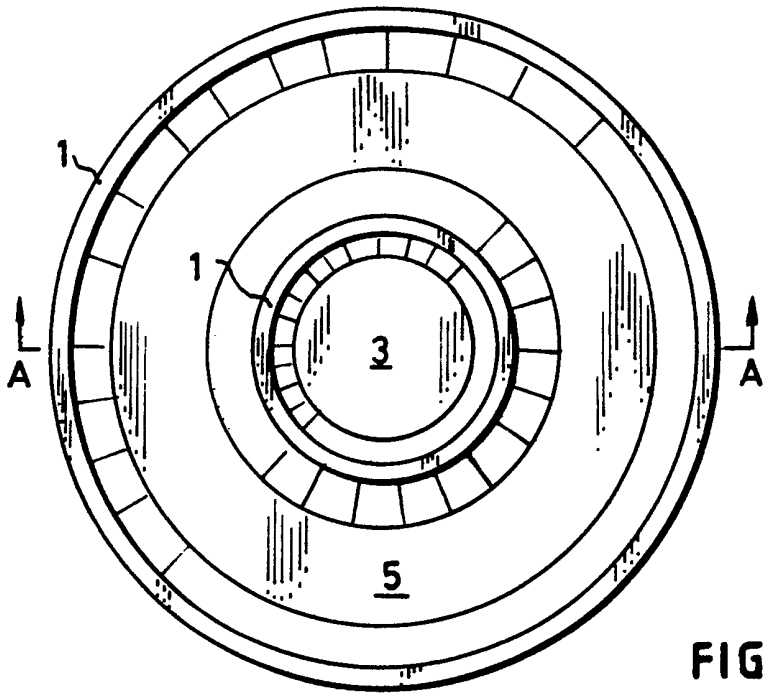


FIG.1.

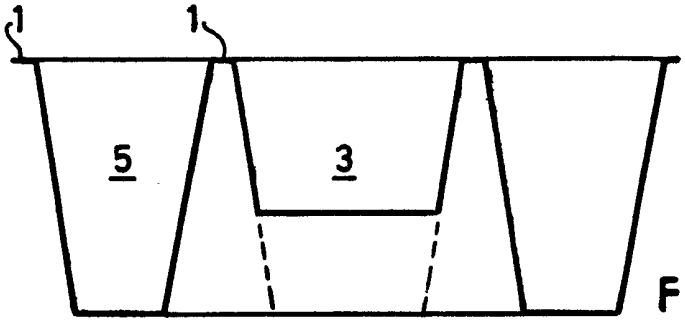


FIG.2.

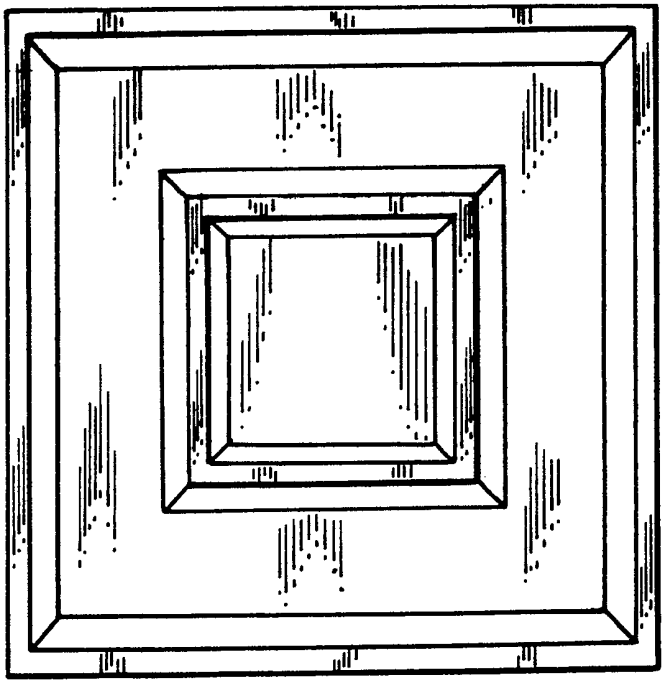

FIG.3.

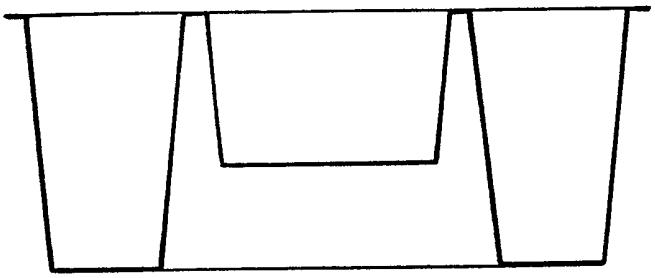

FIG.4.

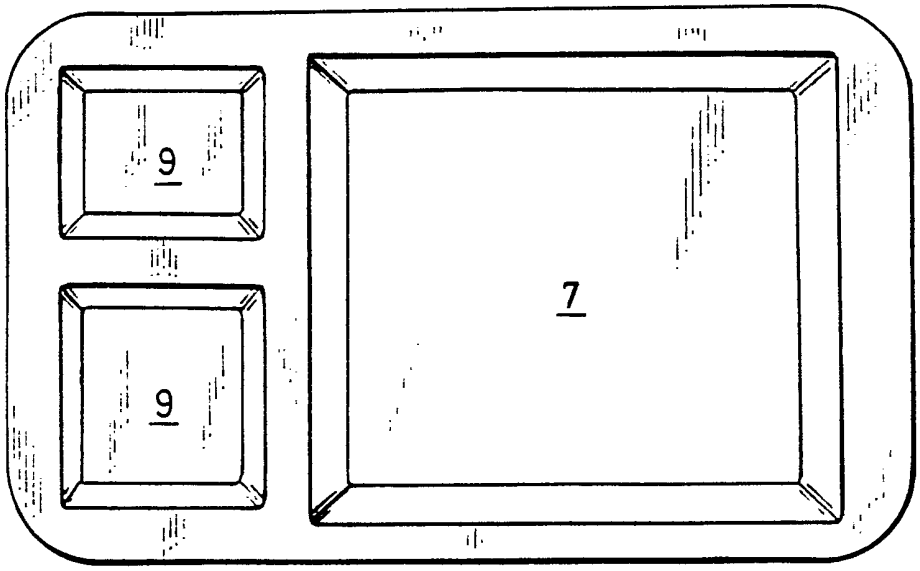


FIG.5.

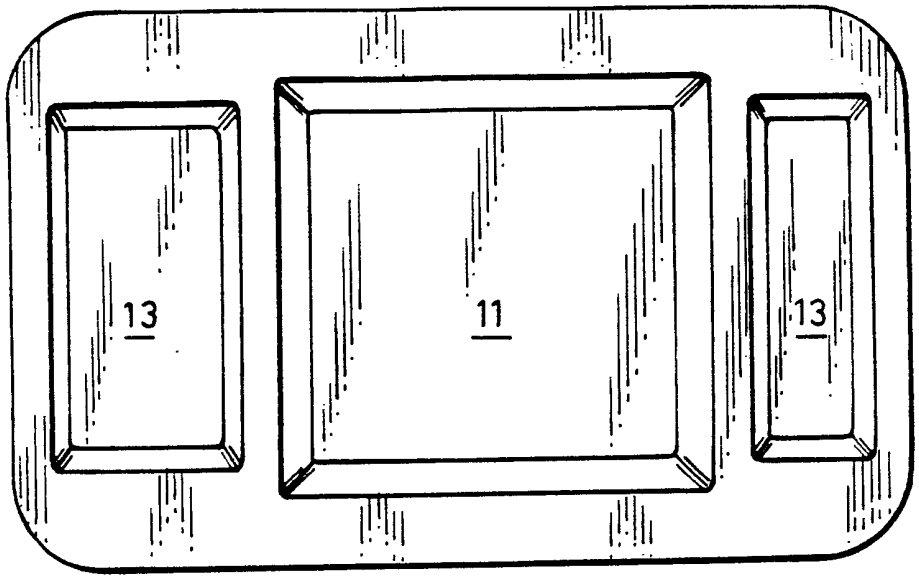


FIG.6.

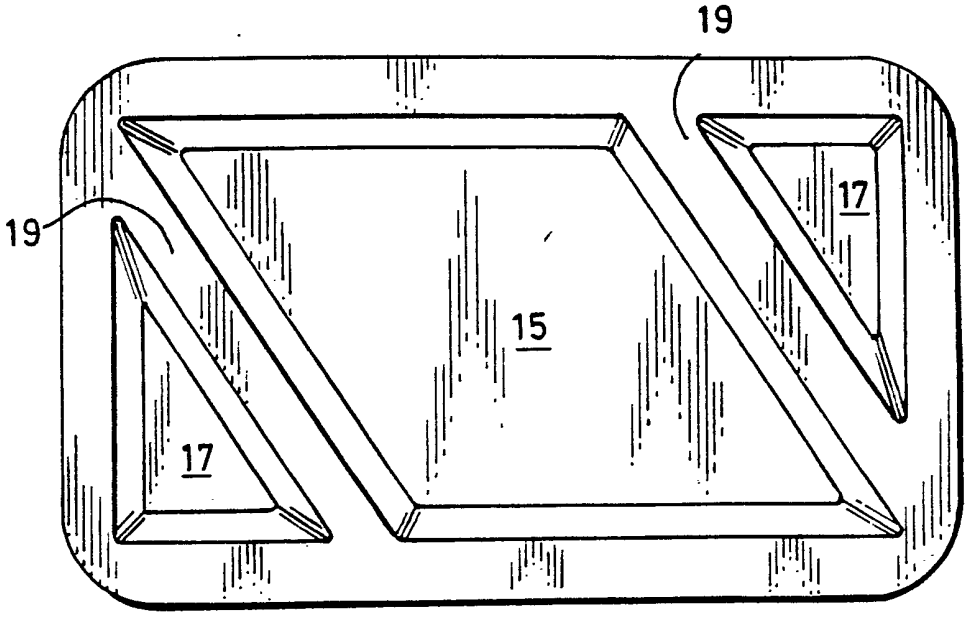


FIG.7.

# CONTAINERS

This invention relates to containers for packaging foodstuffs, and in particular, packages for combinations of foodstuffs which are to be packaged and presented separately, but eaten together.

Food products of this nature of now popular, in particular comprising yogurt and the like, in combination with fruit, fruit sauces and the like, which can be mixed together by the user after opening of the package.

Such a package commonly consists of a formed thin sheet of plastics material, drawn or moulded to form two wells, usually of different sizes, with a rim for the attachment of a cover and seal sheet for example by heat sealing. The cover and seal sheet may for example be clear plastics sheet, metal foil, or metallized plastics.

The present application relates to improved containers for packaging food products which are to be kept separate until the time of eating.

According to one aspect of the invention such a package comprises at least three separate wells, preferably comprising a large well between two smaller wells.

According to another aspect of the invention, such a package comprises a central well encircled by a further well.

The accompanying drawings illustrate various food containers or packages in accordance with the present invention. In the drawings:

Figures 1 and 2 show a first container in plan and in diametral section.

Figures 3 and 4 show a second container in plan and in diametral section.

Figures 5 to 7 show three further containers in plan.

Each of the illustrated food packaging containers is made by techniques and of materials similar to those conventionally used in the food industry, in particular, for packaging combination products such as yogurt combined with a fruit sauce, to be mixed by the user

after opening. Thus, each container comprises a thin sheet of stiff plastics material, formed to define a plurality of wells with tapered sides to facilitate the forming, flat rim regions 1 being left around and between the wells. In use, the wells are filled with the required food products, and a sheet of sealing and covering material (not shown) is then bonded to the rim regions 1 around and between the wells so as to preserve the contents and keep them separate. After removing the cover sheet, the user can mix the separate contents of the wells, in one of the wells or in a separate container, or can eat the respective contents separately but as part of the same meal. In a common arrangement, a larger well contains yogurt or a similar product, and a smaller well contains fruit or a fruit-based sauce or the like to be mixed into the larger well.

Figures 1 and 2 show in plan and in section on A-A a container consisting of a circular central well 3 with tapered side walls for the fruit or other flavouring product, encircled by a circular outer well or trough 5 with tapered walls, for the yogurt.

Figures 3 and 4 show a modification of this in which the central well and outer trough are square (or rectangular). Other shapes for the well and trough can

be used, for example a central oval or ellipse as the well, encircled by the trough in the form of an oval or ellipse.

The respective diameters of the well 3 and trough 5 are selected according to the required proportions of the food products involved. The well and trough may be of identical depth (as shown in broken lines in figure 2), or of different depths (in which case the central well will normally be shallower than the outer trough).

Figures 5 to7 illustrate containers with more than the conventional two wells.

Figure 5 shows a three-well container, in which a rectangular plastics sheet is formed into a large rectangular or square well 7 with tapered walls, adjacent to one end of which are two small square or rectangular wells 9 of identical or different dimensions, also with tapered walls. The wells may be of identical depth, or one or both of the smaller wells may be shallower than the large well.

Figure 6 shows a container with a large square or rectangular well 11 placed centrally, and a smaller well 13 adjacent each end, of rectangular or curved oblong profile.

Figure 7 shows a modification in which the boundaries or rim regions 19 between the large central well 15 and the smaller end wells 17 are diagonal, so that the end wells are triangular in profile.

Particularly in the case of the containers shown in figures 5 to 7, the flat regions 1, 19 of the plastic sheet between the wells may be perforated, grooved or otherwise weakened, so that the wells can be separated from one another, or alternatively, by bending the sheet in these regions the smaller wells can be tilted towards or inverted over the large well, to facilitate mixing the food products from the smaller wells into the product in the larger well.

## Claims

1. A package for foodstuffs comprising a formed sheet of plastics material drawn or moulded to form at least three separate wells and a cover for sealing the wells.

2. A package according to Claim 1, comprising a relatively large well situated between two relatively smaller wells.

3. A package according to Claim 1, comprising two relatively small wells situated to one side of a relatively large well.

4. A package according to Claim 2 or 3, wherein the relatively large well is generally square or rectangular in plan.

5. A package according to Claim 2 or 3, wherein each relatively smaller well is generally rectangular or curved oblong in plan.

6. A package according to Claim 2, wherein the relatively large well is in the shape of a parallelogram in plan and each of the relatively smaller wells is triangular in plan.

7. A package according to any one of Claims 2 to 6, wherein one or both of the relatively smaller wells is or are shallower than the relatively large well.

8. A package for foodstuffs comprising a central well encircled by a well in the form of a trough.

9. A package according to Claim 8 in which the central well is circular in plan and the trough is circular in plan.

10. A package according to Claim 8 in which the central well is generally rectangular or square in plan and the trough is generally rectangular or square in plan.

11. A package according to Claim 8 in which the central well has the shape of an oval or ellipse in plan and the trough has the shape of an oval or ellipse in plan.

12. A package according to any one of the preceding claim in which one or more flat regions are provided between the wells and at least one said flat region is perforated, grooved or otherwise weakened to enable separation of the wells or inversion of one well over another.

13. A package according to any preceding claim in which the mouths of the wells are arranged in a common plane and are sealed by a common covering formed from a sheet of plastics, metal foil or metallized plastics.

14. A package according to any preceding claim in which one or more of the wells has tapered side walls.

15. A package substantially as herein described with reference to Figures 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5, 6 or 7 of the accompanying drawings.

**Examiner's report to the Comptroller under Section 17**
**(The Search report)** 8

GB 9223028.5

**Relevant Technical Fields**

(i) UK Cl (Ed.M) B8P (PE2B, PK10)

(ii) Int Cl (Ed.5) B65D 1/36

Search Examiner
MIKE HENDERSON

Date of completion of Search
5 JANUARY 1994

**Databases** (see below)
(i) UK Patent Office collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications.

(ii)

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of Claims :-
1-7, 12-15

**Categories of documents**

**X:** Document indicating lack of novelty or of inventive step.

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**A:** Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.

**P:** Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.

**E:** Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.

**&:** Member of the same patent family; corresponding document.

| Category | Identity of document and relevant passages | | Relevant to claim(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| X | GB 1077440 | (SOC AGRICOLE 'LES FERMIERS REVNIS DES FLANDRES) whole specification relevant | 1, 12, 13 |
| X | GB 959971 | (LAGUNA SCIENTIFIC INDUSTRIES) whole specification relevant | 1, 13, 14 |
| X | EP 0498760 A1 | (ALUSUISSE-LONZA SERVICES AG) whole specification relevant | 1, 3-5, 13 |
| X | EP 0488531 A2 | (OSCAR MEYER FOODS CORP) whole specification relevant | 1, 3-5, 13, 14 |
| X | EP 0248291 A2 | (FRANZ OSTERMEIER GMBH & CO KG) whole specification relevant | 1, 3-5, 12-14 |
| X | US 5123527 | (HUSTAD) whole specification relevant | 1-5, 13, 14 |
| X | US 4081646 | (GOLTSOS) whole specification relevant | 1-3, 5, 14 |
| X | US 4026457 | (SCHUBERT) Figure 6 most relevant | 1-4, 13, 14 |

**Databases:** The UK Patent Office database comprises classified collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications as outlined periodically in the Official Journal (Patents). The on-line databases considered for search are also listed periodically in the Official Journal (Patents).