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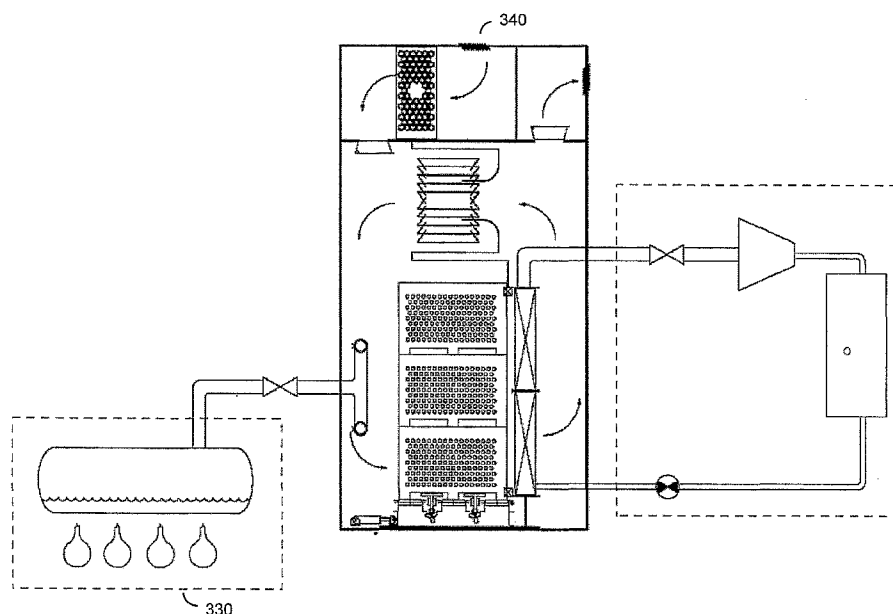
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(54) Title: SURFACE PASTEURIZATION OF BULK AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for processing bulk agricultural products are provided. The method includes bulk loading agricultural products into a sealable container; and heating the agricultural products to a temperature in a range of about 140-350 degrees °F for a period of less than about 10 minutes. The apparatus includes a sealable chamber including at least one door sized to allow bulk produce to be loaded into the chamber. A steam generator has an outlet provided in the chamber sized to provide sufficient steam output to raise the temperature of the chamber loaded with produce to a range of about 140-350 degrees °F in a period of less than about 10 minutes.

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— *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments*

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B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) USPC - 426/521 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched 426/399, 407 Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) PUBWEST (USPT, PGPB, USOC, EPAB, JPAB); GoogleScholar Search terms: surface pasteurization, sterilization, fruits, vegetables, produce, container, agitator, heat exchanger, ripening inhibitor, steam, heat, agriculture		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X ----- Y	US 3,042,533 A (McCONNELL et al.) 03 July 1962 (03.07.1962), entire document	1-9, 12 ----- 10-11, 13-34
Y	US 6,245,294 B1 (GOLDBERG et al.) 12 June 2001 (12.06.2001), claim 1, col 1, ln 58; col 5, ln 61-67	10-11, 15-20
Y	US 6,153,240 A (TOTTENHAM et al.) 28 November 2000 (28.11.2000), claim 1	21-34
Y	US 6,468,953 B1 (HITCHEMS et al.) 22 October 2002 (22.10.2002), claim 9	14
Y	US 3,598,516 A (SCHULL et al.) 10 August 1971 (10.08.1971), col 2, ln 58-60	27-28
Y	JIANG et al. Responses of banana fruit to treatment with 1-methylcyclopropene. Journal Plant Growth Regulation, June 1999, Vol 28, no 2, pp 77-82	13
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