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(71) Applicant(s)
Wirtgen GmbH

(72) Inventor(s)
Von Schonebeck, Winfried;Wagner, Stefan

(74) Agent / Attorney
FB Rice, Level 23 44 Market Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

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(71) **Anmelder** (*für alle Bestimmungsstaaten mit Ausnahme von US*): **Wirtgen GmbH** [DE/DE]; Reinhard-Wirtgen-Strasse 2, 53578 Windhagen (DE).

(72) **Erfinder; und**

(75) **Erfinder/Anmelder** (*nur für US*): **VON DER SCHÖNE-BECK, Winfried** [DE/DE]; Im Hahn 6, 53560 Vettelschoss (DE). **WAGNER, Stefan** [DE/DE]; Girardetallee 12, 53604 Bad Honnef (DE).

(74) **Anwalt:** **DALLMEYER, Georg**; Bahnhofsvorplatz 1, Deichmannhaus am Dom, 50667 Köln (DE).

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(54) Title: MILLING MACHINE, IN PARTICULAR SURFACE MINER, AND METHOD FOR MINING MILLED MATERIAL OF AN OPEN CAST SURFACE

(54) Bezeichnung: FRÄSMASCHINE, INSbesondere SURFACE MINER, SOWIE VERFAHREN ZUM ABBAUEN VON FRÄSGUT EINER TAGEBAUFLÄCHE

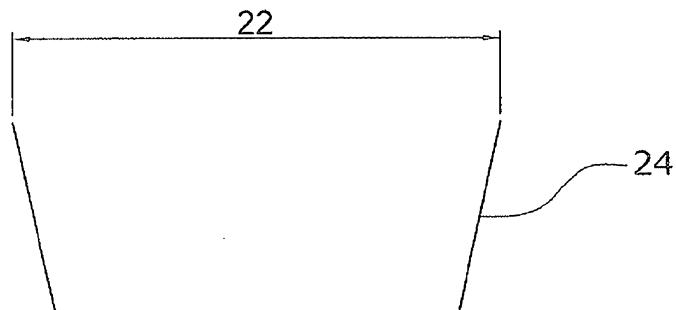


Fig. 6

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a method for milling an open cast surface or for milling away layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface with a milling machine that removes the ground surface. According to the invention, by milling the ground surface along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length, by transporting the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum load volume per load, and by replacing a completely loaded truck with an unloaded truck when the maximum load volume of a truck load is reached, the following features can be achieved: the maximum total load volume that results from the length of the current milling track is calculated as a function of the current effective working width and an optimized milling depth with respect to a predetermined, preferably maximum milling power; the number of truck loads required for the maximum total load volume of a milling track is calculated; an effective total load volume of the current milling track resulting from the volume of the nearest whole number of loads is determined; and the adjustable total milling volume of the milling machine over the length of the milling track is adjusted to match the effective total load volume, resulting in a whole number of loads.

(57) Zusammenfassung:

[Fortsetzung auf der nächsten Seite]



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Bei einem Verfahren zum Fräsen einer Tagebaufläche oder zum Abfräsen von Schichten einer Verkehrsfläche aus Asphalt oder Beton mit einer die Bodenoberfläche abarbeitenden Fräsmaschine, durch Fräsen der Bodenoberfläche entlang einer vorgegebenen Frässpur vorgegebener Länge, durch Transportieren des Fräsgutes über eine Fördereinrichtung zu mindestens einem Behälter eines neben der Fräsmaschine mitfahrenden Lastkraftwagens mit einem vorgegebenen maximalen Ladevolumen je Ladung, und durch Ersetzen eines vollständig beladenen Lastkraftwagens durch einen unbeladenen, wenn das maximale Ladevolumen einer Lastkraftwagen-Ladung erreicht ist, ist vorgesehen, dass das Berechnen des sich über die Länge der aktuellen Frässpur ergebenden maximalen Gesamt-Ladevolumens in Abhängigkeit der aktuellen effektiven Arbeitsbreite und einer in Bezug auf eine vorgegebene, vorzugweise maximale Fräseistung optimierten Frästiefe, das Berechnen der Anzahl der für das maximale Gesamtladevolumen einer Frässpur erforderlichen Lastkraftwagen-Ladungen, das Festlegen eines effektiven Gesamt-Ladevolumens der aktuellen Frässpur, das sich aus dem Volumen der nächstliegenden ganzzahligen Anzahl von Ladungen ergibt, und das Anpassen des einstellbaren Gesamt-Fräsvolumens der Fräsmaschine über die Länge der Frässpur an das effektive Gesamt-Ladevolumen, das eine ganzzahlige Anzahl von Ladungen ergibt.

Milling machine, in particular surface miner, as well as method for mining milled material of an opencast mining surface

The invention relates to a method in accordance with claims 1 and 6 respectively, as well as to a milling machine in accordance with claims 18 and 23 respectively.

In mining, earthwork and rock operations, the mining of solid earth materials in the form of milled material offers a great advantage over drilling and blasting as it can be performed with much greater economic efficiency.

The milling machine, generally called a surface miner, is able to crush the mined material to such a small size that it can be processed without any or requiring only minor subsequent treatment. The material removed by a milling drum is loaded, via loading conveyors, onto a truck that travels along next to the milling machine. In the process, the milled material is cut, crushed and finally loaded.

A known method provides that the ground surface of an opencast mining surface is milled along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length. In the process, the milling operation is optimized, in terms of milling depth and milling speed, in accordance with the machine's power and the type of material to be milled.

The milled material is transported via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load. Once the truck is fully loaded, it is replaced with an unloaded truck.

At the end of the milling track, the milling machine turns so that an adjoining milling track can be removed. It is of disadvantage in this process that the truck may not be fully loaded at the end of the milling track so that the vehicle either needs to transport the milled material away being only partially loaded, or else needs to wait for the turning manoeuvre to be completed, in which case the working process will have to be interrupted once again during the next truck change until changing of the trucks has been completed. In order to minimize the breaks in operation, it is also known to use truck and trailer combinations that are provided with one or several trailers. With such truck and trailer combi-

nations, there is the problem all the more, however, of the truck and trailer combination not being fully loaded at the end of the milling track. As such a truck is not able to perform a turning manoeuvre, there is the problem all the more in this arrangement of it not being possible to fully load the truck and trailer combination.

A further problem lies in loading the container of a truck evenly in order to be able to make maximum use of the container volume.

10 Any discussion of documents, acts, materials, devices, articles or the like which has been included in the present specification is not to be taken as an admission that any or all of these matters form part of the prior art base or were common general knowledge in the field relevant to the present invention as it existed before the priority date of each claim of this application.

15 Throughout this specification the word "comprise", or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated element, integer or step, or group of elements, integers or steps, but not the exclusion of any other element, integer or step, or group of elements, integers or steps.

In a first aspect, the present invention provides a method for milling an opencast mining surface or for milling off layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface with a milling machine removing the ground surface,

25 -by milling the ground surface along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length,

-by transporting the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load, and

30 -by replacing a fully loaded truck with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a truck load has been reached,

including

-calculation of the maximum total loading volume resulting over the length of the current milling track as a function of the current effective working width and

35 a milling depth that has been optimized in relation to a predetermined, preferably maximum milling power,

-calculation of the number of truck loads required for the maximum total loading volume of a milling track,

2A

-determination of an effective total loading volume of the current milling track, which results from the volume of the nearest whole number of loads, and

-adjustment of the adjustable total milling volume of the milling

5 machine over the length of the milling track to match the effective total loading volume that results in a whole number of loads.

In a related aspect, the present invention provides a method for milling an opencast mining surface or for milling off layers of an asphalt or concrete

10 traffic surface with a milling machine removing the ground surface,

-by milling the ground surface along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length,

-by transporting the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said

15 truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load, and

-by replacing a fully loaded truck with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a load has been reached,

including

-controlling the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance

20 speed of the milling machine in such a fashion that the loading space of the at least one container is loaded evenly and fully over the length up to the maximum loading volume.

In a further related aspect, the present invention provides a milling machine,

25 with a control unit for controlling the removal process during the mining of milled material of an opencast mining surface or during the milling off of layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface, and for controlling the transporting away of the removed milled material for loading onto a truck, where the milling machine

30 -removes the ground surface along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length,

-conveys the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load,

35 and where

-a fully loaded truck is replaced with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a truck load has been reached,

and wherein

2B

the control unit

-calculates the maximum total loading volume resulting over the length of the current milling track as a function of the current effective working width and a milling depth that has been optimized in relation to a predetermined,

5 preferably maximum milling power,

-calculates the number of truck loads required for the maximum total loading volume of a milling track,

-determines an effective total loading volume of the current milling track, which results from the nearest whole number of loads, and

10 -adjusts the adjustable total milling volume of the milling machine over the length of the milling track to match the effective total loading volume that results in a whole number of loads.

In a further related aspect, the present invention provides a milling machine,

15 with a control unit for controlling the removal process during the mining of milled material of an opencast mining surface or during the milling off of layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface, and for controlling the transporting away of the removed milled material for loading onto a truck, where the milling machine

20 -removes the ground surface along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length,

-conveys the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load, and where

25 -a fully loaded truck is replaced with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a truck load has been reached,

wherein

the control unit controls the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine in such a fashion that the loading space

30 of the at least one container is loaded evenly and fully over the length up to the maximum loading volume.

The invention enables the milling operation to be optimized in such a manner that, at the end of a current milling track, the container of a truck is, or

35 containers of a truck are, also completely filled so that journeys of the trucks or truck and trailer combinations with containers not fully loaded are avoided, thus also minimizing the number of breaks in operation for the purpose of changing the trucks.

At the same time, the advance speed may be increased, for example, when working at a reduced milling depth so that the time required for milling off a milling track can be reduced.

It is preferably provided that the adjustable total milling volume of the milling machine in a milling track is adjusted to match a total loading volume which results from the volume of the nearest lower whole number of loads.

In this case, adjustment of the total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume is preferably effected by altering the milling depth. The reason for this is that, by reducing the milling depth, the total milling volume within a milling track can be reduced in such a fashion that it corresponds to the specified effective total loading volume that enables a whole number of loads to be achieved in a milling track.

An alternative possibility consists in adjusting the total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume by altering the effective working width by selecting a different overlap of adjoining milling tracks.

In this case, the milling depth optimized for the milling process is maintained, and the reduction of the total milling volume for adjustment to the total loading volume is adjusted by partly travelling over the previous milling track.

It is provided in this arrangement that the advance speed of the milling machine is adjusted to match the effective total milling volume in such a fashion that a preselected milling power, preferably maximum milling power, is maintained or achieved.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the milling process and the even loading of the container, it may also be provided that the travel speed of the truck is controlled, as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine, in such a fashion that the loading space of the at least one container is loaded evenly and fully over the length up to the maximum loading volume.

This is preferably effected by regulating the loading process by means of controlling the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine and of the measured loading condition of a container.

The travel speed or the current position of the truck may alternatively be controlled as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine, or of the distance travelled by the milling machine in the current milling track, or of the current discharge position of the transport device.

It may further be provided that the travel speed or the current position of the truck is controlled in such a fashion that the discharge position of the conveying device above the at least one container moves from a front or rear end position inside the container to an end position that is opposite in longitudinal direction.

The travel speed of the truck is preferably controlled in such a fashion that the travel speed of the truck is higher than or equal to the advance speed of the milling machine.

It may alternatively be provided that the travel speed of the truck is controlled in such a fashion that the travel speed shows a constant positive difference to the advance speed of the milling machine.

It may alternatively be provided that the travel speed of the truck is controlled in such a fashion that the travel speed of the truck is altered in a discontinuous fashion.

At the beginning of the loading process, it may be provided that controlling the travel speed of the truck at a higher travel speed than the advance speed of the milling machine begins only after a sufficiently high initial fill has been discharged at the front or rear end position.

The method can be applied to advantage in particular when truck and trailer combinations with several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion are used.

In order to enable a continuous loading process, it is particularly advantageous in this arrangement if containers on several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion are used in which the upper end edges of the opposite end walls of adjacent containers overlap.

Containers may be used in this arrangement, the opposite end walls of which are provided with a mutually adapted curvature about an axis orthogonal to the ground surface in such a fashion that the opposite end walls have a smallest possible mutual distance but enable a mutual turning movement of the trailers both laterally and in a ramp transition area nonetheless.

Containers may also be used, the front end wall side of which is curved in a convex manner and is provided, preferably at the front end edge, with a projecting collar that covers a driver's cabin of the truck and/or the rear upper concavely curved end edge of the end wall of a container travelling ahead.

In the following, one embodiment of the invention is explained in greater detail with reference to the drawings.

The following is shown:

Fig. 1 a graphic representation of a so-called opencast pit of an opencast mining surface,

Fig. 2 loading of a container of a truck via a transport conveyor of the milling machine,

Fig. 3 a side view of a surface miner,

Fig. 4 a top view of a surface miner,

Fig. 5 a complete cross-section of a pit in the working direction of the milling machine,

Fig. 6 a complete cross-section of a pit transverse to the working direction,

Fig. 7 definition of the actual cutting depth,

Fig. 8 material heaps with realistic and idealized loading, and

Fig. 9 a basic structure of a truck control unit.

Fig. 1 shows an opencast pit of an opencast mining surface, wherein the reference symbol 4 shows the ground surface to be processed, the area 6 shows a ramp which leads to an elevated turning area 8 in the respective periphery of the opencast pit. The surface miner 3 can turn in said turning area 8 after a milling track has been removed in order to process an adjoining milling track in the opposite direction.

An opencast pit has a size of, for example, approx. 100 m in width and approx. 500 m in length.

As can be seen from Fig. 2, the milled material removed by the surface miner 3, such as ore or coal, is loaded via a transport conveyor 2 onto a truck 1 that may also be provided with one or several containers 10. A container is located on the truck 1, said container having a loading volume of, for instance, 100 t. Truck and trailer combinations with a total number of three containers of 100 t each mounted on trailers are frequently used, so that the total loading capacity of such a truck load amounts to approx. 300 t. When a truck with a 100-t container is used, changing of the trucks needs to be performed approx. 16 to 17 times over the length of a milling track of approx. 500 m. This means that a short break in operation during changing of the trucks is required after every 30 m already, as the transport conveyor needs to be stopped and, due to the high milling power of the milling machine, the milling process thus also needs to be interrupted briefly during changing of the vehicles.

Fig. 3 shows a surface miner 3 that is provided with a control unit 12 for controlling the removal process during the mining of milled material of an opencast mining surface or during the milling off of layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface, and for controlling the transporting away of the removed milled material for loading onto a truck.

The ground surface is removed along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length.

The milled material is conveyed via a conveying device, for instance, a transport conveyor 2, to at least one container of a truck 1 that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck 1 having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load.

A fully loaded truck is replaced with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a truck load has been reached.

The control unit 12 of the milling machine 3 calculates

- the maximum total loading volume resulting over the length of the current milling track as a function of the current effective working width and a milling depth that has been optimized in relation to a predetermined, preferably maximum milling power,
- the number of truck loads required for the maximum total loading volume of a milling track, and determines
- an effective total loading volume of the current milling track, which results from the nearest whole number of loads.

The control unit 12 then adjusts the adjustable total milling volume of the milling machine over the length of the milling track to match the effective total loading volume that results in a whole number of loads.

For the purpose of setting and adjusting the total milling volume, the control unit 12 can calculate the effective total loading volume which results from the nearest lower whole number of loads.

For the purpose of adjusting the adjustable total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume, the control unit 12 can alter, preferably reduce, the milling depth.

For the purpose of adjusting the adjustable total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume, the control unit 12 can alternatively alter

the effective working width by selecting a different overlap of adjoining milling tracks.

The control unit 12 can set the advance speed of the milling machine to a pre-selected milling power, preferably maximum milling power.

In addition, the control unit 12 can control the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine in such a fashion that the loading space of the at least one container is loaded evenly and fully over the length up to the maximum loading volume.

The control unit 12 can regulate the loading process of at least one container by controlling the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine and of the measured loading condition of the container.

The control unit 12 can control the travel speed or the current position of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine, or of the distance travelled by the milling machine in the current milling track, or of the current discharge position of the transport device in relation to the truck.

In this arrangement, the control unit 12 can control the travel speed or the current position of the truck in such a fashion that the discharge position of the conveying device above the at least one container moves from a front or rear end position inside the container to an end position that is opposite in longitudinal direction.

Preferably, the control unit can control the travel speed of the truck in such a fashion that the travel speed of the truck is higher than or equal to the advance speed of the milling machine.

The control unit 12 can increase the travel speed of the truck only after a sufficiently high initial fill has been reached at the front or rear end position.

The containers may be arranged on several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion, in which case the adjacent upper end edges of the opposite end walls overlap.

The adjacent end walls of the containers on the several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion may be provided with a mutually adapted curvature about an axis orthogonal to the ground surface in such a fashion that the end walls have a smallest possible mutual distance but enable a lateral turning movement of the trailers nonetheless.

The containers may be curved in a convex manner at the front end wall side and be provided, preferably at the front end edge, with a projecting collar that covers a driver's cabin of the truck and/or the rear upper concavely curved end edge of the end wall of a container travelling ahead.

A dimensioning and control concept for automated opencast mining is described in the following. The procedure comprises the following steps:

- calculation/dimensioning of the cutting depth for each layer (as a function of a "vertical" opencast mining process, assuming that the pit dimensions are known) to achieve optimal truck loading for each layer,
- application of a control concept for the opencast mining/loading process to achieve optimal truck loading at minimized control and communication efforts.

The fundamental advantage of the following control concept lies in the fact that a continuous loading process between truck and opencast milling machine, where both machines travel at a constant speed, is especially easy to realize with regard to the control concept and requires almost no communication between the milling machine and the truck (except at the beginning and at the end of the loading process).

The principle of the present invention consists in controlling the truck speed and direction as a function of the actual position and speed of the milling machine (or of the position and speed of the conveyor belt of the milling machine respectively), the cutting depth and cutting width of the milling machine and other process parameters known in advance, such as the maximum payload of the truck, the equivalent loading length of the truck and the density of the milled material.

Calculation of the optimal cutting depth as a function of the vertically progressing layer mining process:

General definitions and relations:

Known process parameters and variables:

$l_{mine,max}$ in [m]: maximum total horizontal distance to be mined without the milling machine turning back (including the ramp and the flat part; see Fig. 5)
 α_{ramp} in [m]: mining ramp angle; see Fig. 5

ρ_{mat} in [t/m^3]: density of the mined material

M_{pay} in [t]: payload of the truck

L in [-]: loosening factor, relation between the density of the cut material and the density of the loaded material

$F_{T,max}$ in [m]: maximum cutting depth

F_B in [m]: cutting width

$F_{T,act}$ in [m]: actual cutting depth

Unknown process variables to be determined (in the sequence of clarification):

$l_{mine,act}$ in [m]: actual total horizontal distance to be mined without the milling machine turning back (including the ramp and the flat part; see Fig. 5)

$l_{ramp,act}$ in [m]: actual horizontal distance to be mined while the milling machine is on the ramp; see Fig. 7

$l_{flat,act}$ in [m]: actual horizontal distance to be mined while the milling machine is on the flat part of the pit cross-section; see Fig. 7

$Q_{ramp,act}$ in [m^3]: material volume to be loaded on the ramp

$Q_{flat,act}$ in [m^3]: material volume to be loaded on the flat part of the mining track

$Q_{total,act}$ in $[m^3]$: total material volume to be loaded in a single track

$M_{total,act}$ in $[t]$: total weight to be loaded in a single track

n_{trucks} in $[-]$: number of trucks required for the total load of a single track.

Fig. 1 shows a top view of the sample of a pit, and Figs. 5 and 6 show the relevant cross-sections. A complete pit cross-section in the working direction of the milling machine is depicted in Fig. 5. In Fig. 5, 16 depicts the maximum pit length, 18 depicts the maximum mining length, 21 depicts the maximum mining depth, and 20 depicts the mining ramp, said mining ramp having a slope of, for instance, 1:10~5.71°. The complete pit cross-section transverse to the working direction is depicted in Fig. 6. In Fig. 6, 22 depicts the maximum mining depth, and 24 depicts the mining ramp, said mining ramp having a slope of, for instance, 1:0.25~76°. Let it be assumed that the total pit dimensions as well as the cross-section are known prior to the start of the mining process. Determination of the dimensions is typically performed prior to the start of the mining process by means of an extensive analysis of drilling samples.

Calculation procedure:

- Start at the top of the pit by adjusting $l_{min,e,act}$ to the beginning of the track length and by adjusting the cutting depth to the maximum cutting depth
- Calculate the number of trucks required by means of the cited procedure
- Reduce the number of trucks required to the next smaller whole number
- Recalculate the cutting depth and the actual horizontal distance on the flat part $l_{flat,act}$
- Set $l_{flat,act}$ as the starting value for $l_{min,e,act}$ to calculate the next cutting depth

The material volume that needs to be loaded on a ramp can be calculated from

$$Q_{ramp,act} = \frac{1}{2} \cdot l_{ramp,act} \cdot F_{T,act} \cdot F_B \cdot L.$$

In a similar fashion, the material volume that needs to be loaded on the flat part can be derived from

$$Q_{flat,act} = l_{flat,act} \cdot F_{T,act} \cdot F_B \cdot L.$$

The total material that needs to be loaded for the entire track is simply

$$Q_{total,act} = Q_{flat,act} + 2 \cdot Q_{ramp,act}.$$

Substituting the material volume of the ramp and the flat part results in

$$Q_{total,act} = l_{flat,act} \cdot F_{T,act} \cdot F_B \cdot L + 2 \cdot \frac{1}{2} \cdot l_{ramp,act} \cdot F_{T,act} \cdot F_B \cdot L,$$

which can be further simplified to

$$Q_{total,act} = \underbrace{(l_{flat,act} + l_{ramp,act}) \cdot F_{T,act} \cdot F_B \cdot L}_{l_{mine,act}}$$

The total weight to be loaded is

$$M_{total,act} = Q_{total,act} \cdot \rho_{mat}$$

The number of truck loads required for the total load is

$$n_{trucks} = M_{total,act} / M_{pay}.$$

A recalculation of the required cutting depth can now be performed quite easily by solving the aforementioned equations for the cutting depth, which results in

$$F_{T,act} = \frac{Q_{total,act}}{F_B \cdot L \cdot l_{mine,act}}.$$

The current total horizontal distance of the flat part can be determined by initially calculating the distance of the ramp

$$l_{ramp,act} = \frac{F_{T,act}}{\tan(\alpha_{ramp})}.$$

The remaining distance of the flat part $l_{flat,act}$ can then be calculated from (Fig. 7)

$$l_{flat,act} = l_{mine,act} - 2 \cdot l_{ramp,act}.$$

The total horizontal distance $l_{mine,act}$ for calculation of the next layer equals the last calculated distance of the flat part

$$l_{mine,act} = l_{flat,act}$$

with the exception of the first calculation, where said length needs to be set to the maximum initial horizontal distance $l_{mine,max}$.

Fig. 8 shows material heaps 26 with realistic and idealized loading 28, 30, with 32 depicting the loading length.

Control law for the truck speed:

General definitions and relations:

Known process parameters and variables:

F_T in [m]: cutting depth

F_B in [m]: cutting width

v_{SM} in [m/min]: advance speed of the milling machine

M_{pay} in [t]: payload of the truck

L in [-]: loosening factor, relation between the density of the cut material and the density of the loaded material

ρ_{mat} in [t/m³]: density of the mined material

l_{lc} in [m]: equivalent loading length of the truck

Unknown process variables to be determined (in the sequence of clarification):

t_{lc} in [min]: truck loading time

Q_{lc} in [m³]: material volume for one loading cycle

\dot{q} in $[m^3/min]$: material flow rate from the milling machine

$A_{tray,cr}$ in $[m^2]$: loadable cross-sectional area of the truck tray

v_{Truck} in $[m/min]$: truck speed in forward direction

Where: [min]: minutes [m]: metres $[m^3/min]$: cubic metres per minute

The truck-loading cross-sectional area as a function of the surface milling machine speed, the cutting depth, the cutting width and the truck speed can be calculated by using the following simple assumptions and relations:

- The material can be loaded onto the truck without any angle of repose (see Fig. 8 for illustration).
- The truck 1 and the milling machine 3 travel at a constant speed.
- The truck 1 starts loading at the front end of the truck tray and travels faster than the milling machine.
- There is no storage of material in the milling machine 3.
- A constant loosening of the cut material takes place, i.e. the material delivered by the conveying device equals the cut material, multiplied by the loosening factor.

The material delivered by the milling machine 3 during a specific loading time t_{lc} can be calculated from

$$Q_{lc} = F_T \cdot F_B \cdot v_{SM} \cdot L \cdot t_{lc} = \dot{q} \cdot t_{lc} \cdot$$

The resulting cross-sectional loading area of the truck tray can be calculated from

$$A_{tray,cr} = Q_{lc} / l_{lc}$$

where l_{lc} represents an equivalent loading length assuming that the load deposited on the truck resembles a cuboid.

By substituting the material volume and the loading length one obtains

$$A_{tray,cr} = F_T \cdot F_B \cdot L \cdot \frac{v_{SM}}{v_{Truck} - v_{SM}}, \quad (1)$$

which means that for a given cutting depth, a given cutting width and a given loosening factor the cross-sectional loading area is a function of the milling machine speed and the difference of milling machine speed and truck speed. This relation can be verified quite easily. Assuming that the truck is stationary ($v_{truck} = 0$), it results from the aforementioned relation that

$$A_{tray,cr} = F_T \cdot F_B \cdot L,$$

which means that the material cross-section to be cut by the milling machine, multiplied by the loosening factor, needs to be stored in the truck 1.

To be able to obtain a particular cross-sectional loading area of the truck tray, equation (1) produces a control law for adjusting the truck speed and/or the milling machine speed for a given cutting depth and cutting width. In practice, the loading area is subject to a limitation that is due to the maximum payload of the truck tray. With a given maximum payload of the truck tray, the maximum material volume that can be loaded during one loading cycle is defined by

$$Q_{lc,max} = M_{pay} / \rho_{mat}.$$

The maximum material volume can then be translated into a maximum cross-sectional loading area

$$A_{tray,cr,max} = Q_{lc,max} / l_{lc} \quad (2).$$

Inserting (2) into (1) and solving (1) for the truck speed produces a feedforward control law for the truck speed:

$$v_{Truck} = v_{SM} \left(1 + \frac{F_T \cdot F_B \cdot L \cdot \rho_{mat} \cdot l_{lc}}{M_{Pay}} \right).$$

The basic structure of a truck control unit is depicted in Fig. 9. The truck position and speed feedforward control unit 34 includes a feedforward control rule for the

truck speed and for mapping the conveyor position onto the truck position. The truck position and speed feedforward control unit 34 includes measuring values 36, such as absolute conveyor positions and speeds, actual cutting depth and actual milling machine speed. Additional parameters 38 exist, such as the maximum payload of the truck, the loosening factor, the material density, the equivalent loading length of the truck tray, or the cutting width. 40 depicts the commanded speeds and positions (direction and amplitude), 42 depicts the truck control device, 44 depicts the control commands, speed commands, 46 depicts the truck, 48 depicts the absolute truck position, and 50 depicts the ATS/GPS.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

1. Method for milling an opencast mining surface or for milling off layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface with a milling machine removing the ground surface,
 - by milling the ground surface along a predetermined milling track having a predetermined length,
 - by transporting the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load, and
 - by replacing a fully loaded truck with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a truck load has been reached, including
 - calculation of the maximum total loading volume resulting over the length of the current milling track as a function of the current effective working width and a milling depth that has been optimized in relation to a predetermined, preferably maximum milling power,
 - calculation of the number of truck loads required for the maximum total loading volume of a milling track,
 - determination of an effective total loading volume of the current milling track, which results from the volume of the nearest whole number of loads, and
 - adjustment of the adjustable total milling volume of the milling machine over the length of the milling track to match the effective total loading volume that results in a whole number of loads.
 2. Method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the total milling volume of the milling machine in a milling track is adjusted to match a total loading volume which results from the volume of the nearest lower whole number of loads.
 3. Method in accordance with claim 1 or 2, including adjusting the total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume by altering the milling depth.

4. Method in accordance with claim 1 or 2, including adjusting the total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume by altering the effective working width by selecting a different overlap of adjoining milling tracks.

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5. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 4, wherein the advance speed of the milling machine is adjusted to match the effective total milling volume in such a fashion that a preselected milling power, preferably maximum milling power, is maintained or achieved.

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6. Method for milling an opencast mining surface or for milling off layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface with a milling machine removing the ground surface,

 -by milling the ground surface along a predetermined milling track

15 having a predetermined length,

 -by transporting the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load, and

 -by replacing a fully loaded truck with an unloaded truck when the

20 maximum loading volume of a load has been reached,

including

 -controlling the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine in such a fashion that the loading space of the at least one container is loaded evenly and fully over the length up

25 to the maximum loading volume.

7. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 6, including regulating the loading process by controlling the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine and of the

30 measured loading condition of a container.

8. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 6, including controlling the travel speed or the current position of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine, or of the distance

35 travelled by the milling machine in the current milling track, or of the current discharge position of the transport device.

9. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 8, including controlling the travel speed or the current position of the truck in such a fashion that the discharge position of the conveying device above the at 5 least one container moves from a front or rear end position inside the container to an end position that is opposite in longitudinal direction.
10. Method in accordance with one of the claims 6 to 9, including controlling the travel speed of the truck in such a fashion that the travel 10 speed of the truck is higher than or equal to the advance speed of the milling machine.
11. Method in accordance with one of the claims 6 to 10, including controlling the travel speed of the truck in such a fashion that the travel 15 speed of the truck shows a constant positive difference to the advance speed of the milling machine.
12. Method in accordance with one of the claims 6 to 10, including controlling the travel speed of the truck in such a fashion that the travel 20 speed of the truck is altered in a discontinuous fashion.
13. Method in accordance with one of the claims 6 to 12, wherein control of the travel speed of the truck at a higher travel speed than the advance speed of the milling machine begins only after a sufficiently high initial fill 25 has been discharged at the front or rear end position.
14. Method in accordance with one of the claims 1 to 13, including the use of trucks with containers on several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion.
- 30
15. Method in accordance with claim 14, including the use of containers on several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion where the upper end edges of the opposite end walls of adjacent containers overlap.

16. Method in accordance with claim 14 or 15, including the use of containers on several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion, the opposite end walls of which are provided with a mutually adapted curvature about an axis orthogonal to the ground surface in such a fashion that the opposite end walls have a smallest possible mutual distance but enable a turning movement of the trailers nonetheless.
17. Method in accordance with claim 14 or 15, including the use of containers, the front end wall side of which is curved in a convex manner and is provided, preferably at the front end edge, with a projecting collar that covers a driver's cabin of the truck and/or the rear upper concavely curved end edge of the end wall of a container travelling ahead.
18. Milling machine, with a control unit for controlling the removal process during the mining of milled material of an opencast mining surface or during the milling off of layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface, and for controlling the transporting away of the removed milled material for loading onto a truck, where the milling machine
 - removes the ground surface along a predetermined milling track
 - 20 having a predetermined length,
 - conveys the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load, and where
 - 25 -a fully loaded truck is replaced with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a truck load has been reached, and wherein the control unit
 - calculates the maximum total loading volume resulting over the
 - 30 length of the current milling track as a function of the current effective working width and a milling depth that has been optimized in relation to a predetermined, preferably maximum milling power,
 - calculates the number of truck loads required for the maximum total loading volume of a milling track,
 - 35 -determines an effective total loading volume of the current milling track, which results from the nearest whole number of loads, and

-adjusts the adjustable total milling volume of the milling machine over the length of the milling track to match the effective total loading volume that results in a whole number of loads.

- 5 19. Milling machine in accordance with claim 18, wherein the control unit for setting and adjusting the total milling volume calculates the effective total loading volume which results from the nearest lower whole number of loads.
- 10 20. Milling machine in accordance with claim 18 or 19, wherein, for the purpose of adjusting the adjustable total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume, the control unit alters the milling depth.
- 15 21. Milling machine in accordance with claim 18 or 19, wherein, for the purpose of adjusting the adjustable total milling volume to match the specified effective total loading volume, the control unit alters the effective working width by selecting a different overlap of adjoining milling tracks.
- 20 22. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 21, wherein the control unit adjusts the advance speed of the milling machine to a preselected milling power, preferably maximum milling power.
- 25 23. Milling machine, with a control unit for controlling the removal process during the mining of milled material of an opencast mining surface or during the milling off of layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface, and for controlling the transporting away of the removed milled material for loading onto a truck, where the milling machine
 - removes the ground surface along a predetermined milling track
- 30 having a predetermined length,
 - conveys the milled material via a conveying device to at least one container of a truck that travels along next to the milling machine, said truck having a predetermined maximum loading volume per load, and where
- 35 -a fully loaded truck is replaced with an unloaded truck when the maximum loading volume of a truck load has been reached,

wherein

the control unit controls the travel speed of the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine in such a fashion that the loading space of the at least one container is loaded evenly and fully over the

5 length up to the maximum loading volume.

24. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 23, wherein the control unit regulates the loading process of at least one container by controlling the travel speed of the truck as a function of the

10 advance speed of the milling machine and of the measured loading condition of the container.

25. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 24,

wherein the control unit controls the travel speed or the current position of 15 the truck as a function of the advance speed of the milling machine, or of the distance travelled by the milling machine in the current milling track, or of the current discharge position of the transport device in relation to the truck.

20 26. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 25, wherein the control unit controls the travel speed or the current position of the truck in such a fashion that the discharge position of the conveying device above the at least one container moves from a front or rear end position inside the container to an end position that is opposite in 25 longitudinal direction.

27. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 23 to 26,

wherein the control unit controls the travel speed of the truck in such a

fashion that the travel speed of the truck is higher than or equal to the

30 advance speed of the milling machine.

28. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 23 to 27,

wherein the control unit controls the travel speed of the truck in such a

fashion that the travel speed of the truck shows a constant positive

35 difference to the advance speed of the milling machine.

29. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 25, wherein the control unit alters the travel speed of the truck in a discontinuous fashion.
- 5 30. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 23 to 29, wherein the control unit increases the travel speed of the truck only after a sufficiently high initial fill has been reached at the front or rear end position.
- 10 31. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 30, wherein the containers are arranged on several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion, where the adjacent upper end edges of the opposite end walls overlap.
- 15 32. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 30, wherein the adjacent end walls of the containers on the several trailers connected to one another in an articulated fashion are provided with a mutually adapted curvature about an axis orthogonal to the ground surface in such a fashion that the end walls have a smallest possible mutual distance but enable a lateral turning movement of the trailers nonetheless.
- 20 33. Milling machine in accordance with one of the claims 18 to 32, wherein the containers are curved in a convex manner at the front end wall side and are provided, preferably at the front end edge, with a projecting collar that covers a driver's cabin of the truck and/or the rear upper concavely curved end edge of the end wall of a container travelling ahead.
- 25 34. Method for milling an opencast mining surface or for milling off layers of an asphalt or concrete traffic surface with a milling machine substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
- 30 35. A milling machine with a control unit substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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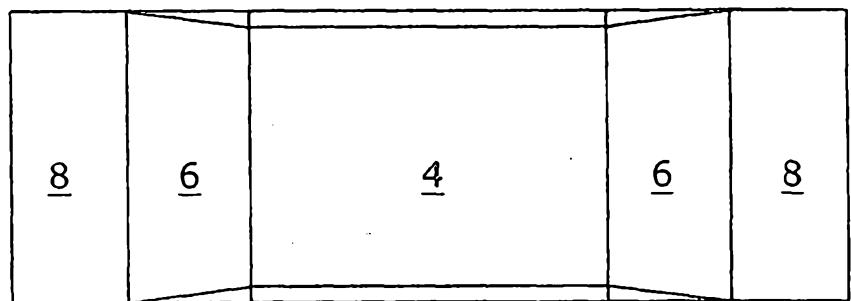


Fig.1

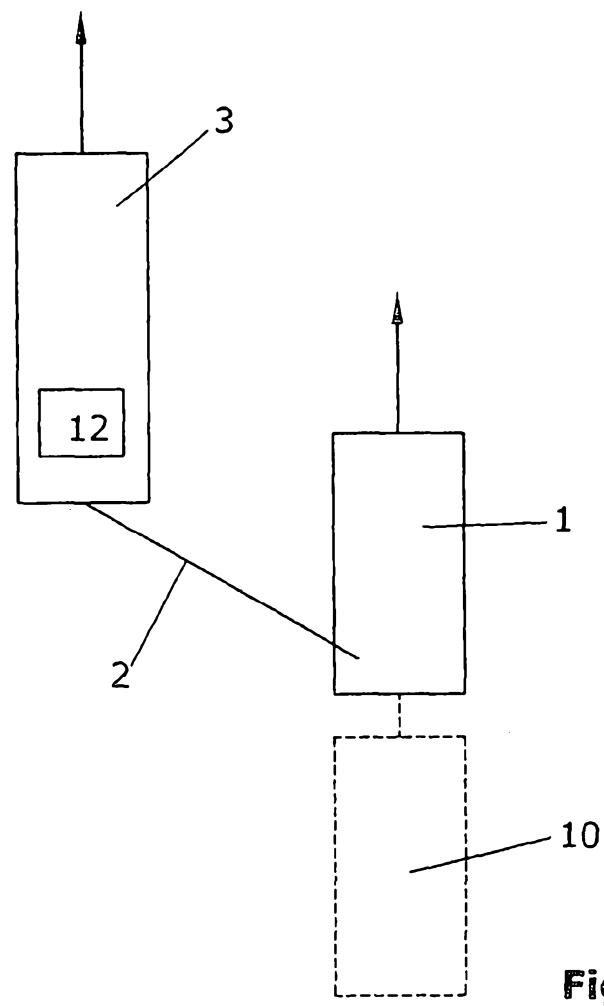


Fig.2

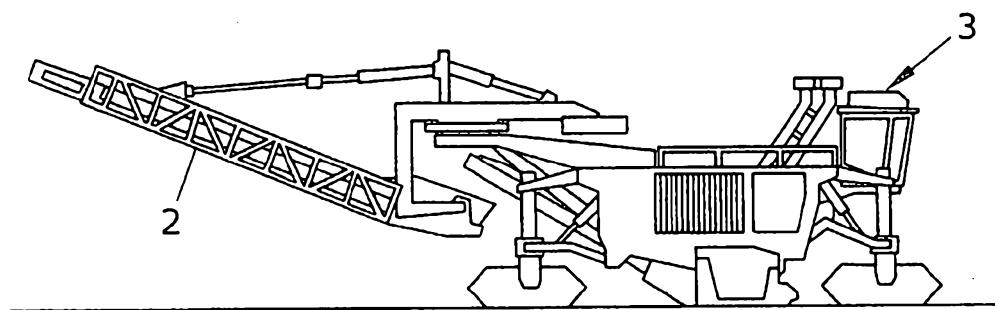


Fig.3

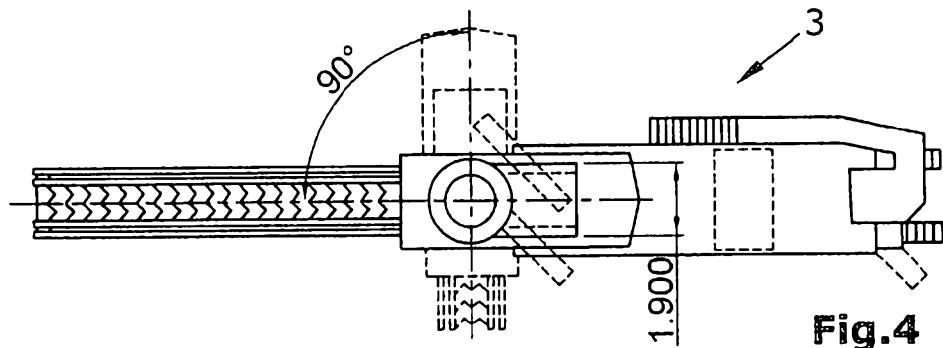


Fig.4

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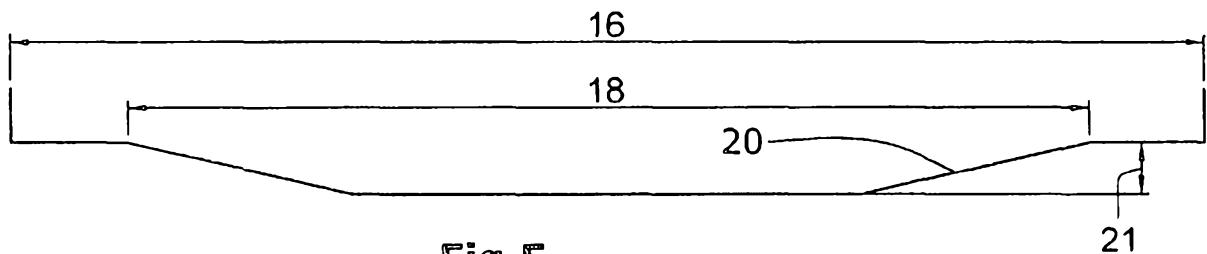


Fig.5

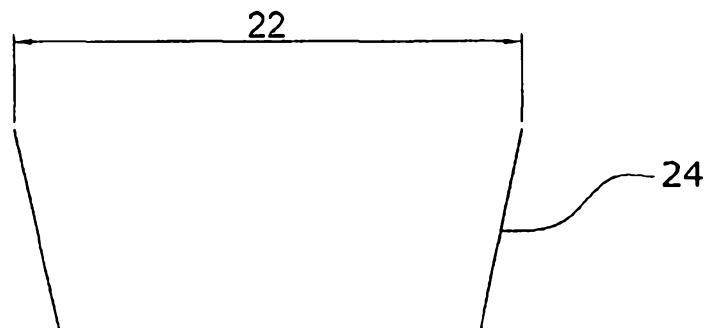


Fig.6

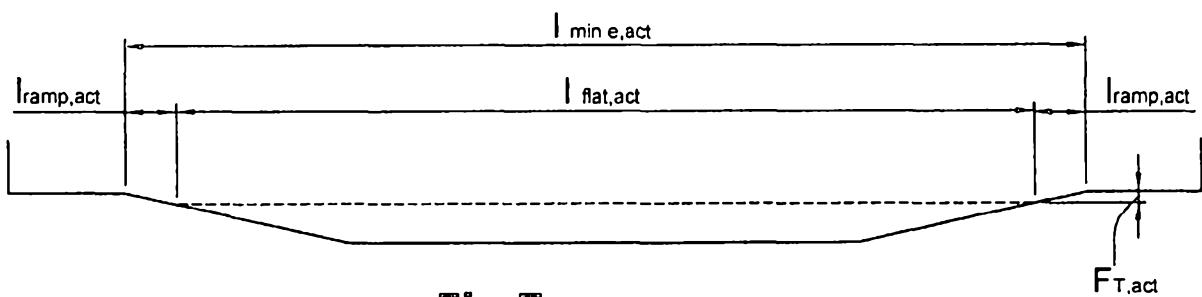


Fig.7

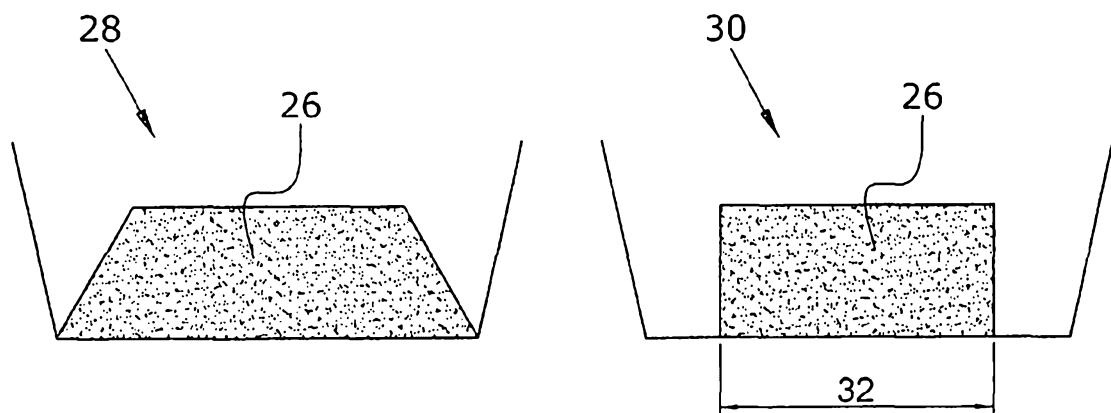


Fig.8

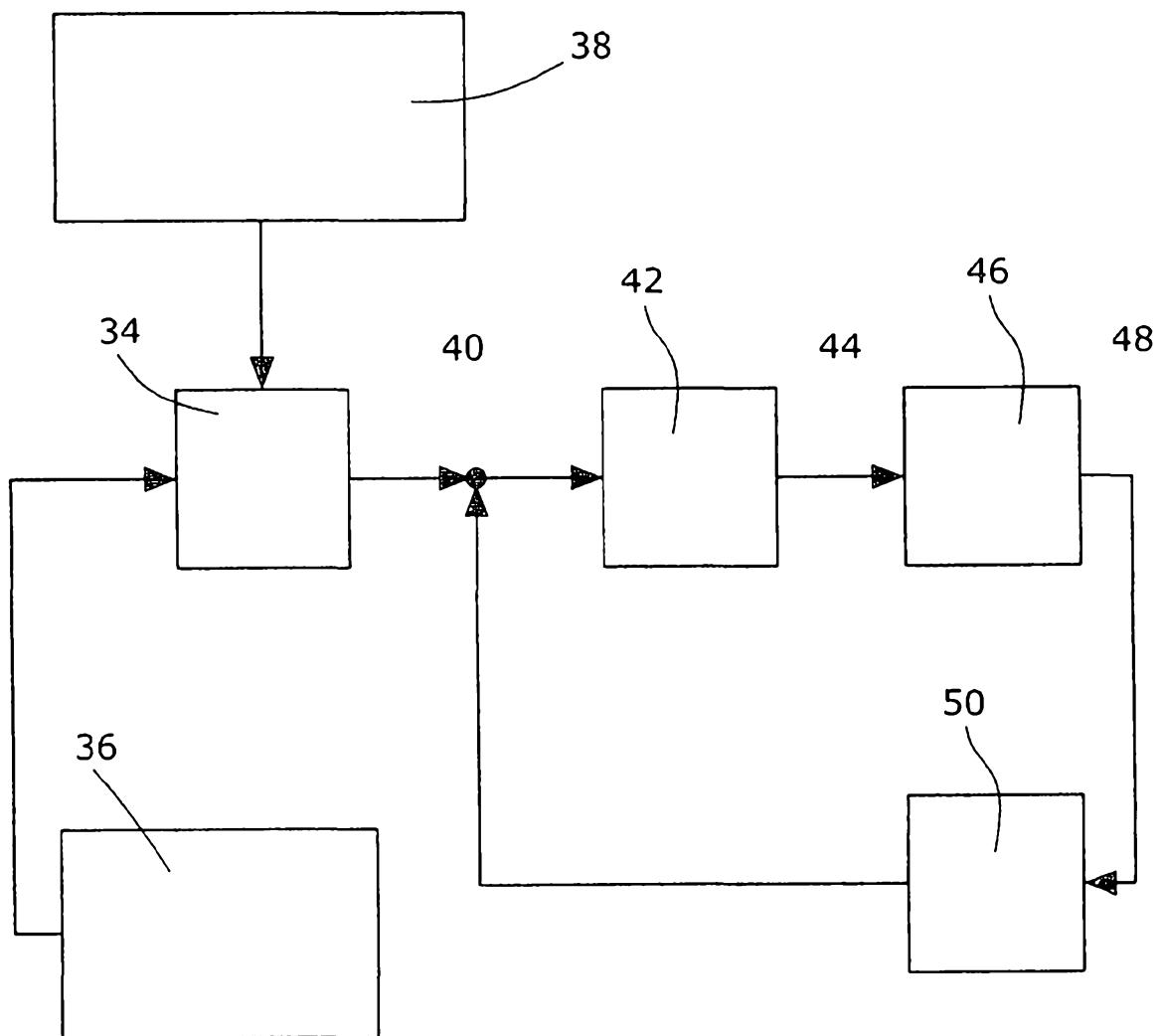


Fig.9