ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A rack including an inclined base having elongated seat forming rods positioned thereover and orientated in a manner so as to support upwardly opening bags which receive foodstuff, the overflow or spillage falling through the supporting seats and onto the base for discharge at one end thereof.

The instant invention is generally concerned with the stacking and dispensing of bagged foodstuff, and more particularly relates to a rack uniquely adapted so as to support a plurality of upwardly opening bags of foodstuffs, normally segmental in nature as in the case of French fries, in a manner whereby spillage or overflow will be discharged to a collection point.

It is a primary object of the instant invention to provide a rack wherein loaded bags can be placed and wherein specific provision is made so as to collect spillage and/or overflow for repacking.

In connection with the above object, it is also a significant object of the invention to provide a rack which is particularly useful in relatively high speed operations, the rack easily receiving and automatically positioning introduced bags of French fries or the like, while at the same time maintaining the bags for simple dispensing therefrom.

Likewise, it is a significant object of the instant invention to provide a collection base wherein foodstuff falling from the mounted bags will be automatically collected and discharged to one side of the rack, normally back onto the work surface from which the foodstuff was originally taken.

Furthermore, it is an object of the invention to provide a rack which is of a rigid, clean construction capable of being easily cleaned and maintained.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become apparent upon consideration of the description and claims, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the rack comprising the instant invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the rack being utilized;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the rack taken substantially on a plane passing along line 3–3 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken substantially on a plane passing along line 4–4 in FIG. 3; and

FIG. 5 is a rear elevation view of the rack.

Referring now more specifically to the drawings, reference numeral 10 is used to generally designate the rack comprising the instant invention. The rack 10 includes an enlarged flat panel-like base or bottom wall 12 which, in the operative position of the rack 10, is inclined upwardly from the front edge 14 to the rear edge 16 thereof, that portion of the base 12 immediately adjacent the front edge 14, designated by the reference numeral 18, defining a horizontally projecting lip.

A rear wall 20 and opposite side walls 22 project perpendicularly upward from the corresponding rear and side edges of the base 12 with the upper edges thereof being substantially coplanar. As will be appreciated from the drawings, the side walls 22, which incidentally are imperforate so as to confine foodstuff 24 which might overflow or spill from the received bags 26, extended from sealed engagement with the opposed ends of the back wall 22 to approximate in alignment with the inner portion of the lip 18.

An elongated flat front wall 28 extends transversely between and has its opposite ends secured to the forward ends of the two side walls 22. The lower longitudinal edge 30 of the front wall 28 is positioned vertically above the base or bottom wall 12 so as to allow for a free passage of the overflow or spillage of foodstuff therebeneath. The upper edge 32 of the front wall 28 is orientated substantially coplanar with the upper edges of the rear and side walls 20 and 22.

The actual seats or supports for the bags 26 are defined by upper and lower pairs of rods 34 and 36. Several sets of these rods 34 and 36 extend horizontally between and have the opposite ends thereof secured to the rear and front walls 20 and 28. With particular reference to FIG. 4, it will be noted that each lower pair of rods 36 is positioned substantially closer to each other than the cooperating upper pair of rods 34 so as to define in effect an elongated converging bag seat for reception of the bags as indicated by the phantom line showing in FIG. 4. Incidentally, as will also be appreciated from FIG. 4, the opposed end sets of bag seating rods utilize the adjacent side walls, or at least the upper edge portions thereof, as a means for engaging the upper portions of adjacent bags in cooperation with the first rods 34 inwardly thereof. By the same token, it will be noted that each of the rods 36 is in effect common to two adjacent cooperating bag seats. The use of these elongated rods 34 and 36 in defining the bag seats or supports is particularly significant in that it provides for free passage of any spillage or overflow therethrough onto the subjacent inclined base 12, the lower edges of the bags 26 being supported a substantial distance thereabove.

With reference to FIGS. 1 and 2, it will be appreciated that the front wall 28 is provided with a series of triangular notches 38 herein, each notch extending downwardly from the upper edge 32 in alignment with one of the rod formed bag seats, thereby facilitating introduction and removal of the bags, and also allowing for the possible projection of an end-most bag partially therethrough so as to increase the number of bags which might be accommodated by the device or possibly enable the accommodation of larger than normal bags without requiring an undesirable wedging of the bags between the fixed rear and front walls.

The desired foodstuff moving inclination of the base 12 is achieved through a vertical back panel 40 which is positioned flat against the outer face of the rear wall 20. This rear wall 20 includes a pair of threaded studs 42 fixed thereto and projecting rearwardly therefrom through vertically elongated slots 44 in the panel 40 whereby an actual adjustment of the angle of inclination of the base 12 can be effected prior to a fixed clamping of the back panel 40 to the rear wall 20 by wing nuts or the like 46 threaded on the outer ends of the threaded studs 42. The back panel 40 is of a width slightly less than the width of the rear wall 20 and projects both above and below the rear wall with the lower edge of the back panel 40 having a laterally directed seating foot 48 thereon for engagement with the support surface.

Finally, a U-shaped handle 50 is affixed to one of the side walls 22 for both facilitating the handling of the rack 10 when storing or washing the rack, and also so as to provide a convenient means for slightly agitating the rack 10 should such be desirable in providing for a set.
tling of the foodstuff 24 within the bags 26 or a movement of the spillage or overflow down the inclined base 12 and said wall 28.

In actual use, noting FIG. 2 particularly, the rack will be positioned on a work area, as an example, with the forward or discharge end thereof positioned within a tray within which French fries or the like are stacked wherein any loose French fries, or for that matter any foodstuffs being bagged, will be redischarged into the loading tray. The individual bags are then filled, normally utilizing a scoop type tool, and placed within the rod defined seats so as to be retained in an elevated position for ready removal therefrom as needed. Any of the foodstuff falling from the bags will pass easily through the spaced rods and fall onto the inclined base which in turn results in a lateral sliding of the foodstuff through the open end of the rack beneath the front wall 28. The actual inclination of the base 10 can be varied through the back panel. Further, the movement of the spilled foodstuff can be encouraged by a slight shaking of the rack through handle 50 should such be necessary. The spilled foodstuff is in this manner returned to the working tray and can be gathered for introduction into additional bags, thereby avoiding waste by making the spilled foodstuff immediately available for repackaging. This immediate availability of our spilled foodstuff is also significant in that no time will be lost in regathering the foodstuff which in turn could result in a cold or hardened product. As will be appreciated, the lower pairs of rods 34 are so spaced as to engage and thereby support the opposed sides of an opened and normally filled bag, the bag being both resiliently and firmly positioned in an upright position.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention as claimed.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

1. A rack for bags or the like including a base, base support means supporting said base at an inclination to the horizontal, and bag support means for supporting a plurality of bags vertically above the inclined base, said bag support means defining free vertical passages throughout to the inclined base, said bag support means comprising a plurality of elongated spaced members overlapping said base, said members cooperating to define bag stabilizing seats for vertically orientating a plurality of bags with the open ends thereof uppermost, and means engaged with and supporting said elongated spaced members.

2. The rack of claim 1 wherein said elongated spaced members comprise at least one set of upper and lower laterally spaced pairs of rod-like members, said lower pair of rod-like members being laterally closer to each other than said upper pair of rod-like members and being cooperatively positioned relative thereto so as to define a downwardly converging configuration for the formed bag stabilizing seats.

3. The rack of claim 2 including a plurality of said sets of upper and lower rod-like members provided in parallel relation transversely across said base.

4. The rack of claim 3 wherein said means engaged with and supporting said elongated spaced members comprise opposed generally vertical wall portions at opposite ends of said members.

5. The rack of claim 4 wherein said inclined base includes upper and lower edge portions between which the base inclines, said wall portions being located at and extending along said upper and lower edge portions, the wall portion extending along said lower base edge portion being in vertically spaced relation thereaboe.

6. The rack of claim 5 including handle means for effecting a selected agitation thereof.

7. The rack of claim 6 wherein the inclination of said base is variable through said base support means.

8. The rack of claim 1 including walls located about and extending upwardly from all portions of the periphery of said base other than that corresponding with the lowermost portion of the inclined base so as to define a passage from said base.

9. A rack for bags to be filled with loose foodstuff, said rack including a substantially flat-panel-like base, said base being orientated at an inclination to the horizontal from an upper edge to a lower edge whereby foodstuff falling thereon will gravitate to the lower edge for a collection thereat, and bag support means positioned in spaced relation over said base and being generally coextensive therewith, said bag support means including spaced portions defining foodstuff passing free vertical passages therethrough to the inclined base whereby foodstuff falling from rack loaded bags will pass through the bag support means onto the inclined base for collection at the lower edge thereof.

10. The rack of claim 9 wherein said bag support means is horizontally orientated over the inclined base so as to maintain a vertical orientation of received bags.

11. The rack of claim 10 including walls located about and extending upwardly from all portions of the periphery of the base other than the lower edge thereof so as to define passage means for movement of the base collected foodstuff from the inclined base.

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THERON E. CONDON, Primary Examiner
R. L. SPRUILL, Assistant Examiner

U.S. Cl. X.R.

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