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54

**Egg Tray for incubating and hatching eggs.**

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The invention relates to a tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber, the tray comprising a number of egg accommodation spaces in which space an egg is able to be hatched, and at least one passage for a chicken through which passage a chicken hatched from said egg may pass through the tray and enter a chicken accommodation space located below the tray.

## **Egg Tray for incubating and hatching eggs**

### **Background**

5           The present invention relates to a tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber, the tray comprising a number of egg accommodation spaces in which space an egg is able to be hatched.

          The present invention further relates to an assembly of a crate providing a chicken accommodation space for hatching and rearing chicken and a said tray.

10           The present invention further relates to a method for hatching a number of eggs

          Such a tray is known from and holds in general as much eggs as possible to utilize the capacity of a brooding machine or setter. It is known to arrange an egg in a hole in the bottom face of the tray. However these holes are not suitable for allowing passage for a chicken. Also, the egg will be held in the hole such that the tray can be  
15           manipulated e.g. tilted in the airflow. This means that in use of the tray, the hole will be closed off and remain closed off by the eggshell.

          It is known to place trays in a stable for rearing chicken. However, such a stable does not provide ideal conditions for newly hatched chicken. In addition, the chicken need to climb over eggshells and/or other chicken to leave the tray. Also, potentially all  
20           chicken in the stable may contact the eggshells that are a potential source of germs and/or hurt themselves at the eggshells.

          Hatcher baskets, like crates, for hatching/coming out of chickens are known. An important disadvantage of such a crate is that the eggshells pollute the accommodation wherein the hatched chicken live. These eggshells are a potential source of germs. In  
25           addition, the eggs and eggshells limit the walking space of the hatched chicken.

          US4398499A relates to a tray for poultry incubation and hatching. This known tray is adapted to contain poultry eggs during both incubation and hatching.

          Hatching machines are known as well e.g. from EP1104987 (B1). However these machines do have the same disadvantage that the eggshells pollute the accommodation  
30           wherein the hatched chicken stay.

          Method and Machines for initial rearing of chicken are known from EP2174081 A1. This machine provides a clean environment and optimal growing conditions to newly hatched chickens but without hatching the chickens.

## Summary of the invention

5           The invention aims to provide a tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber, which tray enables not only to hold eggs but also to hatch eggs and separate the newly hatched chicken as soon as possible from eggshells without need for handling the chicken and/or the chicken leaving the incubation chamber.

          Another object of the invention is to provide an improved tray for containing a  
10       number of eggs in an incubation chamber, wherein the tray solves at least partly a problem associated with known trays.

          Yet another object of the invention is to provide an alternative tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber.

15           According to a first aspect of the invention this is realized with a tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber, the tray comprising a number of egg accommodation spaces in which space an egg is able to be hatched, wherein a first egg accommodation space comprises, seen from the first egg accommodation space, an inwardly protruding member for supporting an egg in the first egg accommodation  
20       space and an outwardly protruding member for supporting an egg in an adjacent egg accommodation space. Because of the first egg accommodation space having an inwardly protruding member for supporting an egg and an outwardly protruding member for supporting an egg in an adjacent egg accommodation space, the tray enables to provide a passage with a constant area as along the height of the passage. In  
25       practice this means that there is no narrowing experienced by a chicken passing through the passage. In addition, the inwardly and outwardly protruding members offer freedom to arrange the accommodation spaces in an efficient pattern, as each egg accommodation space forms also a passage for chicks.

          An egg accommodation space in which space an egg is able to be hatched means  
30       that an egg is firmly held in said space such that the tray may be manipulated in an forced air flow in the incubation chamber. This handling, e.g. tilting of the tray, is common in industry during the logistic process of the tray filled with eggs, in particular during incubation, to ensure for example an even distribution of the air flow around the

eggs over time. The incubation chamber is a room which is suitable to be conditioned by a forced air flow such that e.g. temperature can be controlled with accuracy of 0.5 or even 0.1 °C.

5 The invention is described referring to a first egg accommodation space and an adjacent egg accommodation space. It will be clear that what is an inwardly protruding member in the first egg accommodation space, constitutes an outwardly protruding member in an adjacent egg accommodation space. A It will be apparent that usually all of the number of egg accommodation spaces of the tray are implemented according to the invention.

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In an embodiment, the first egg accommodation space comprises a passage through which a newly hatched chicken may pass through the tray and enter a chicken accommodation space located below the tray, wherein the passage is at least delimited by the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member. In particular, a number of egg accommodation spaces comprises a passage for chicken. More particular, all of the number of egg accommodation spaces of the tray comprise a passage for newly hatched chicken. This way there is freedom to lay the eggs in a desired pattern and leave passages open where needed. Most likely a desired pattern involves that each egg accommodation space adjoins a passage for a chicken. This even more optimizes the transition of chicken from the tray to a chicken accommodation space located below the tray.

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In an embodiment of the tray the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member comprise a curved surface, in particular a double curved surface. The curved surface provides a smooth contact area for a newly hatched chicken when passing through the passage, such that there is no harm for the chicken. The double curved surface of the inwardly protruding member is convex as seen from the first egg accommodation space, and the double curved surface of the outwardly protruding member is concave as seen from the first egg accommodation space. In other words, one the one hand the protruding members function as support members for firmly holding an egg and on the other hand the protruding members are configured such that a chicken may safely pass the protruding members without damage.

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Preferably, the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member have a similar, preferably identical configuration such that a cross sectional area of the passage is essentially constant along a central axis of the first egg accommodation space. This realizes in practice that a chicken experiences no narrowing when passing through the passage.

In an embodiment, the first egg accommodation space is delimited by a circumferential wall which extends in circumferential direction around the central axis and has wall sections wherein the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member are provided on different wall sections. In particular, each wall section is provided with one protrusion for supporting an egg. It may however be conceivable that a single wall section is provided with the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member. However important is that the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member alternate with each other seen in the circumferential direction.

In an embodiment, the circumferential wall is provided with, as seen in the circumferential direction, alternately the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member.

In an embodiment, a wall section extends between the first accommodation space and the adjacent egg accommodation space and separates said first and adjacent egg accommodation space. In particular, each wall section separates adjacent egg accommodation spaces.

In an embodiment of the tray, the first egg accommodation space is delimited by six wall sections. In particular, all egg accommodation spaces are each delimited by six wall sections.

In an embodiment of the tray, wall sections of the six wall sections are provided with, as seen in the circumferential direction, alternately the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member.

In an embodiment of the tray, the passage is configured such that a chicken may pass the passage and an egg is not passable through the passage. This ensures separation of the eggs or eggshells from the chicken in their initial rearing because eggs and eggshells are left in the tray while chicken may pass through the passage to a chicken accommodation space located below the tray.

In an embodiment, the passage has an Y-shaped cross-section. This is considered an optimal shape with respect to a chicken because it enables to allow passage of the widest part of a chicken without requiring a great surface area for the passage.

In an embodiment, the tray comprises a raised edge at the outline of the tray for keeping hatched chicken on the tray. It is noted that, in use, while keeping hatched chicken on the tray, the tray may contain a number of eggs that still have not hatched.

In an embodiment, the tray is configured such that the tray is stackable for providing a stack of a number of trays.

According to a further aspect of the invention this is realized with an assembly of a crate providing a chicken accommodation space for hatching and rearing chicken and a tray according to the invention arranged on top of the crate, the crate having an open top such that a chicken may enter the chicken accommodation space through the passage. The crate is suitable to be placed in a conditioned space like a hatcher and takes advantage of the forced air flow in such a hatcher because of the open structure of the crate. In this case, the crate has a series of ventilation slits. Such a crate or hatcher basket has a bottom face and sidewalls for keeping chicken in the crate. The bottom face and sidewall provide the chicken accommodation space.

In an embodiment of the assembly, the tray is arranged on top of the crate in a removable manner. In particular, the crate comprises a tray receiving space which is suitable to receive the tray in a sliding manner. This way, a tray may be easily slid from one side of the crate above the chicken accommodation space of the crate, even when crates are stacked.

In an embodiment of the assembly, the crate and the tray are integrally formed.

In an embodiment of the assembly, the crate comprises a trough for containing feed for chicken. This enables feeding of the chicken shortly after hatching in the same conditioned chamber without intervention by a chicken handling device or operator.

In an embodiment of the assembly, the crate comprises at least one transparent portion for observing the chicken and allowing light to enter the chicken accommodation space.

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According to a further aspect of the invention this is realized with a stack of a number of assemblies according to the invention. The crates including a tray, are suitable to be stacked and such a stack may be positioned in a conditioned chamber.

According to a further aspect of the invention this is realized with a method for hatching a number of eggs, the method comprising the steps of:

- placing the eggs in a tray according to the invention,
- arranging the tray on top of a crate, which crate provides a chicken accommodation space,
- incubating the eggs for a required brooding period until hatching occurs,
- passing of hatched chicken from the tray, through the passage and into the chicken accommodations space of the crate.

In an embodiment, the method comprises providing feed and/or water for the hatched chicken in the chicken accommodation space of the crate.

In an embodiment, the method comprises the steps of:

- candling eggs in the tray for detecting non-hatchable eggs in the tray,
- removing detected non-hatchable eggs from their respective egg accommodation spaces,
- passing of a newly hatched chicken through a passage that results from the removing of the detected non-hatchable eggs from their respective egg accommodation spaces.

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Candling per se is a well known process in the field of hatching and incubating technology. Removing of a non-hatchable egg, which in itself is undesirable, now beneficially provides a passage for a chicken. This way, the loadfactor of a tray can even more be improved.

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The invention further relates to a device comprising one or more of the characterising features described in the description and/or shown in the attached drawings.

10 The invention further relates to a method comprising one or more of the characterising features described in the description and/or shown in the attached drawings.

The various aspects discussed in this patent can be combined in order to provide additional advantages.

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### **Description of the drawings**

The invention will be further elucidated referring to an preferred embodiment shown in the drawing wherein shown in:

20 Fig. 1 in perspective view a tray according to the invention;  
 fig. 2 the tray according to fig. 1 in perspective view from the bottom;  
 fig. 3 a top view of the tray of fig. 1;  
 fig. 4 a bottom view of the tray of fig;  
 fig. 5 a detail of fig. 1;  
 25 fig. 6 a detail of fig. 2; and  
 fig. 7 a stack of assemblies of a crate and a tray according to the invention.

### **Detailed description of embodiments**

30 The invention will be described referring to all figures. The invention is described referring to a first egg accommodation space 3. It will be clear that this can be any accommodation space of the tray 1. In the figures an embodiment of a tray 1 according to the invention is shown. In use, the tray 1 contains a number of eggs 2. The tray is for

use in an incubation chamber which is not shown. This is clear from e.g. the plurality of ventilation slits 13a, 13b that enable to impose a desired climate provided by the incubation chamber onto the interior of the tray 1. The tray 1 comprises a number of separate egg accommodation spaces 3. In this space 3 the eggs are firmly held such that the eggs may be hatched in a controlled manner. Here, the eggs are firmly held in a egg accommodation space between a number of inwardly protruding members 4, in this case three members 4 for each accommodation space 3. The inwardly protruding member 4 and the outwardly protruding member 4 comprise a double curved surface 6, 7. Therefore, eggs of different size can be accommodated in each egg accommodation space 3.

As can be best seen from fig. 5 and 6, the double curved surface 6 of the inwardly protruding member 4 is convex as seen from the first egg accommodation space 3. The double curved surface 7 of the outwardly protruding member 5 is concave as seen from the first egg accommodation space 3. The inwardly protruding member 4 and the outwardly protruding member 5 have an identical configuration. In view of the thin-walled structure of both the inwardly protruding member 4 and the outwardly protruding member 5 this provides a cross sectional area of the passage that is essentially constant along the central axis 8 of the first egg accommodation space 3. The inwardly protruding member 4 and the outwardly protruding member 5 are hollow as seen from the bottom, see fig. 4, such that no dirt can accumulate during use.

The first egg accommodation space 3 is delimited by a circumferential wall 9. The wall 9 extends in circumferential direction around the central axis 8 of the first egg accommodation space 3. The wall 9 has wall sections 10, 11, in this case 6 wall sections. Each egg accommodation space 3 has a hexagonal shape and therefore individual egg accommodation spaces 3 connect seamlessly and provide a tray with a honeycomb pattern which is illustrated by a virtual grid 15 shown in fig. 3. Each wall section 10, 11 extends between the first accommodation space 3 and the adjacent egg accommodation space and separates said first and adjacent egg accommodation space. The wall sections 10, 11 of the wall 9 of the first egg accommodation space 3 blend seamlessly into a lower edge 16 as shown in fig. 6. The lower edges 16 of individual accommodation spaces 3 build a regular pattern as can be seen in fig. 4.

In this case, each wall section 10, 11 is provided with a protruding member 4, 5. The “inwardly” or “outwardly” is from perspective of an individual egg

accommodation space 3. In fact, adjacent egg accommodation spaces 3 share a common protrusion 4, 5. The circumferential wall 9 is provided with, as seen in the circumferential direction, alternately the inwardly protruding member 4 and the outwardly protruding member 5.

5           The inwardly protruding member 4 and the outwardly protruding member 5 are integral with the circumferential wall 9. Here, the inwardly protruding member 4 and the outwardly protruding member 5 blend seamlessly into a lower edge 16.

10           Each egg accommodation space 3 of the tray 1 has a passages 12 for a chicken through which passage 12 a chicken hatched from an egg may pass through the tray 1 and enter a chicken accommodation space (not shown) located below the tray 1. The passage 12 is defined by inwardly protruding members 4 and outwardly protruding members 5. The passage 12 is configured such that a chicken may pass the passage 4 and an egg is not passable through the passage 12. When the first egg accommodation space 3 is occupied by an egg, the passage 12 is closed off to such an extent that a  
15           chicken is not able to pass through the passage 12 of the first egg accommodation space 3. When no egg is present in the first egg accommodation space 3, a chicken is able to pass through the passage 12 of the first egg accommodation space 3.

20           The tray comprises a raised edge 14 at the outline of the tray 1 for keeping hatched chicken on the tray 1. As the egg accommodation space 3 comprises a passage 12 for a chicken, a left open, that is not filled with an egg, egg accommodation space functions, in use, as a passage. The inwardly protruding members 4 and outwardly protruding members 5 are configured such that a chicken may safely pass said support  
25           member without damage.

30           Fig. 7 shows a stack of assemblies of a crate 17 and a tray 1 according to the invention. The tray 1 is schematically shown here, without any details. The crate 17 provides a chicken accommodation space for hatching and rearing chicken. The tray 1 is arranged on top of the crate 17. Therefore, the crate has an open top such that a chicken may enter the chicken accommodation space through the passage. The crate 17 is suitable to be placed in a conditioned space like a hatcher and takes advantage of the forced air flow in such a hatcher because of the open structure of the crate. In this case,

the crate has a series of ventilation slits. Such a crate or hatcher basket has a bottom face and sidewalls for keeping chicken in the crate. The bottom face and sidewall provide the chicken accommodation space.

Here, the tray 1 is arranged on top of the crate 17 in a removable manner.

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During use of the tray 1 in assembly with a crate 5, the following steps are taken for hatching a number of eggs:

- placing the eggs in a tray 1 which tray comprises at least one passage 12 for a chicken through which passage 12 a chicken may pass through the tray 1 and enter a chicken accommodation space located below the tray 1,
- arranging the tray 1 on top of a crate, which crate provides a chicken accommodation space,
- brooding the eggs for a required brooding period until hatching occurs,
- passing of hatched chicken from the tray 1, through the passage 12 and into the chicken accommodations space of the crate.

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It will also be obvious after the above description and drawings are included to illustrate some embodiments of the invention, and not to limit the scope of protection. Starting from this disclosure, many more embodiments will be evident to a skilled person which are within the scope of protection and the essence of this invention and which are obvious combinations of prior art techniques and the disclosure of this patent.

20

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**Claims**

1. Tray (1) for containing a number of eggs (2) in an incubation chamber, the tray  
5 comprising a number of egg accommodation spaces (3) in which space an egg is  
able to be hatched, wherein a first egg accommodation space (3) comprises,  
seen from the first egg accommodation space, an inwardly protruding member  
(4) for supporting an egg in the first egg accommodation space and an  
outwardly protruding member (5) for supporting an egg in an adjacent egg  
10 accommodation space.
2. Tray according to claim 1, wherein the first egg accommodation space comprises  
a passage (12) through which a newly hatched chicken may pass through the  
tray and enter a chicken accommodation space located below the tray, wherein  
15 the passage is at least delimited by the inwardly protruding member and the  
outwardly protruding member (5).
3. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein the inwardly protruding member  
and the outwardly protruding member comprise a curved surface (6, 7).  
20
4. Tray according to claim 3, wherein the inwardly protruding member and the  
outwardly protruding member comprise a double curved surface (6, 7).
5. Tray according to claim 4, wherein the double curved surface (6, 7) of the  
25 inwardly protruding member is convex as seen from the first egg  
accommodation space.
6. Tray according to claim 4 or 5, wherein the double curved surface (6, 7) of the  
outwardly protruding member is concave as seen from the first egg  
30 accommodation space.
7. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein the inwardly protruding member  
and the outwardly protruding member have a similar, preferably identical

configuration such that a cross sectional area of the passage is essentially constant along a central axis (8) of the first egg accommodation space.

- 5 8. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein the first egg accommodation space (3) is delimited by a circumferential wall (9) which extends in circumferential direction around the central axis (8) and has wall sections (10, 11) wherein the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member are provided on different wall sections.
- 10 9. Tray according to claim 8, wherein the circumferential wall is provided with, as seen in the circumferential direction, alternately the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member.
- 15 10. Tray according to claim 8 or 9, wherein a wall section extends between the first accommodation space and the adjacent egg accommodation space and separates said first and adjacent egg accommodation space.
- 20 11. Tray according to any of claims 8 - 10, wherein the first egg accommodation space (3) is delimited by six wall sections (10, 11).
- 25 12. Tray according to claim 11, wherein wall sections of the six wall sections (10, 11) are provided with, as seen in the circumferential direction, alternately the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member.
- 30 13. Tray according to any of claims 8 - 12, wherein each egg accommodation space (3) is delimited by six wall sections (10, 11).
14. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein a number of egg accommodation spaces comprises a passage for chicken.
15. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein each egg accommodation space comprises a passage for a chicken.

16. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein the passage is configured such that a chicken may pass the passage and an egg is not passable through the passage.
- 5 17. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein the passage has an Y-shaped cross-section.
18. Tray according to a preceding claim, comprising a raised edge (14) at the outline of the tray for keeping hatched chicken on the tray.
- 10 19. Tray according to a preceding claim, wherein the tray is configured such that the tray is stackable for providing a stack of a number of trays.
- 15 20. Assembly of a crate (17) providing a chicken accommodation space for hatching and rearing chicken and a tray (1) according to a preceding claim arranged on top of the crate, the crate having an open top such that a chicken may enter the chicken accommodation space through the passage (12).
- 20 21. Assembly according to claim 20, wherein the tray is arranged on top of the crate in a removable manner.
22. Assembly according to claim 21, wherein the crate comprises a tray receiving space which is suitable to receive the tray in a sliding manner.
- 25 23. Assembly according to claim 20 or 21, wherein the crate and the tray are integrally formed.
24. Assembly according to a preceding claim 20 - 23, the crate comprising a trough for containing feed for chicken.
- 30 25. Assembly according to a preceding claim 20 - 24, wherein the crate comprises at least one transparent portion for observing the chicken and allowing light to enter the chicken accommodation space.

26. Stack of a number of assemblies according to any one of claims 20 - 25.

27. Method for hatching a number of eggs, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5
- placing the eggs in a tray according to a preceding claim 1-19,
  - arranging the tray on top of a crate, which crate provides a chicken accommodation space,
  - incubating the eggs for a required brooding period until hatching occurs,
  - passing of hatched chicken from the tray, through the passage and into
- 10 the chicken accommodations space of the crate.

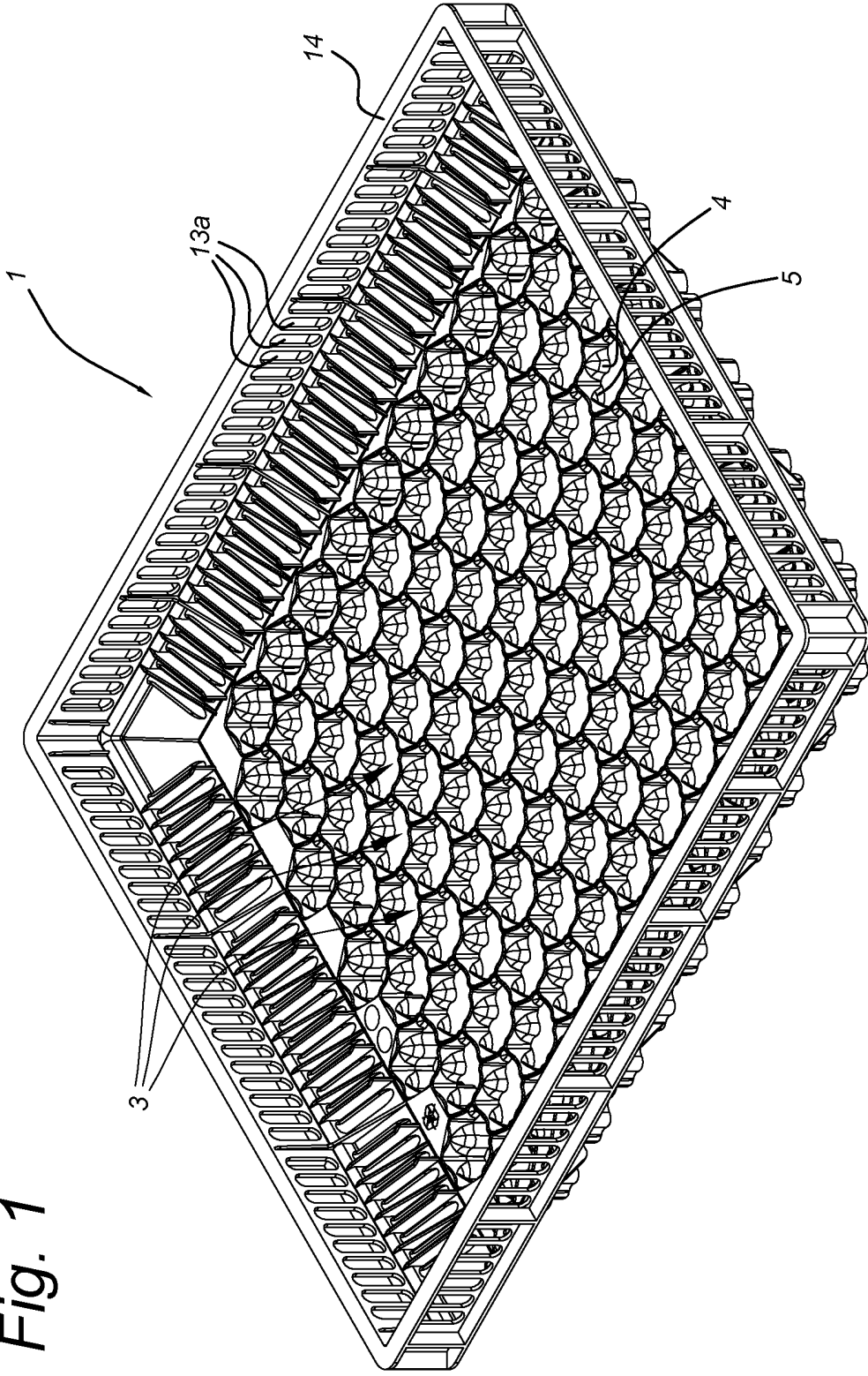
28. Method according to claim 27, comprising providing feed and/or water for the hatched chicken in the chicken accommodation space of the crate.

15 29. Method according to claim 27 or 28, comprising the steps of:

- candling eggs in the tray for detecting non-hatchable eggs in the tray,
  - removing detected non-hatchable eggs from their respective egg accommodation spaces,
  - passing of a newly hatched chicken through a passage that results from
- 20 the removing of the detected non-hatchable eggs from their respective egg accommodation spaces.

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Fig. 1



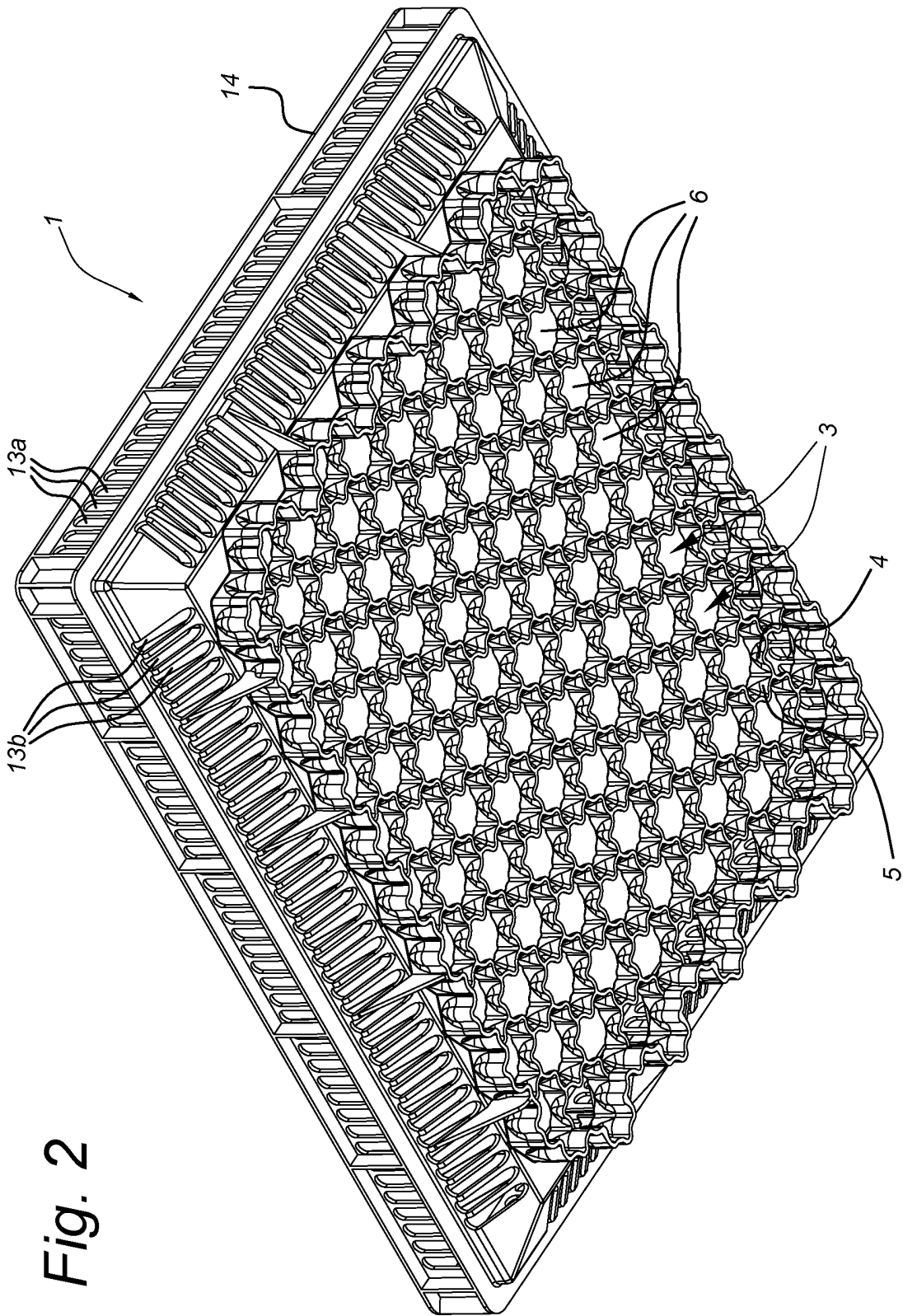


Fig. 2



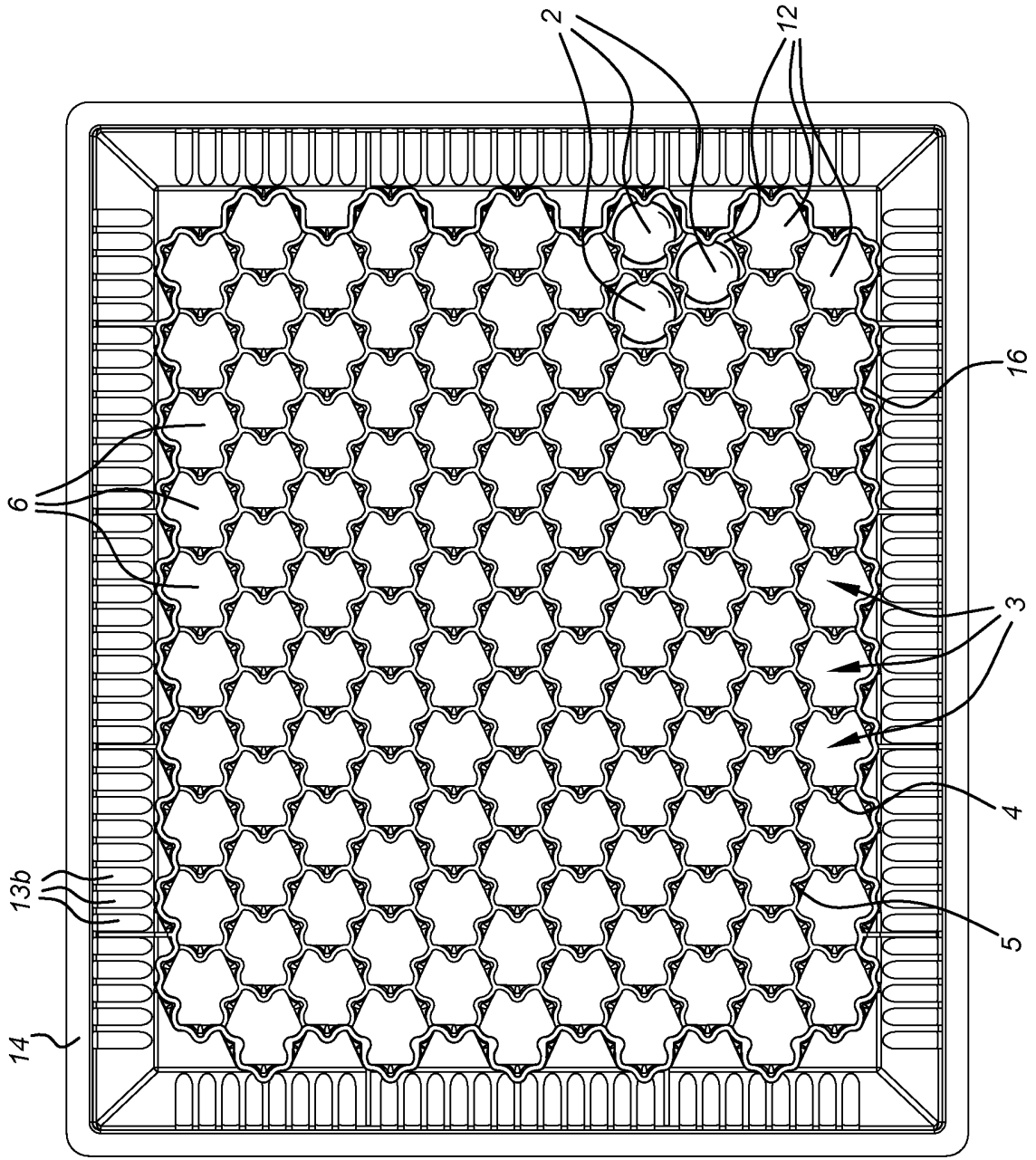
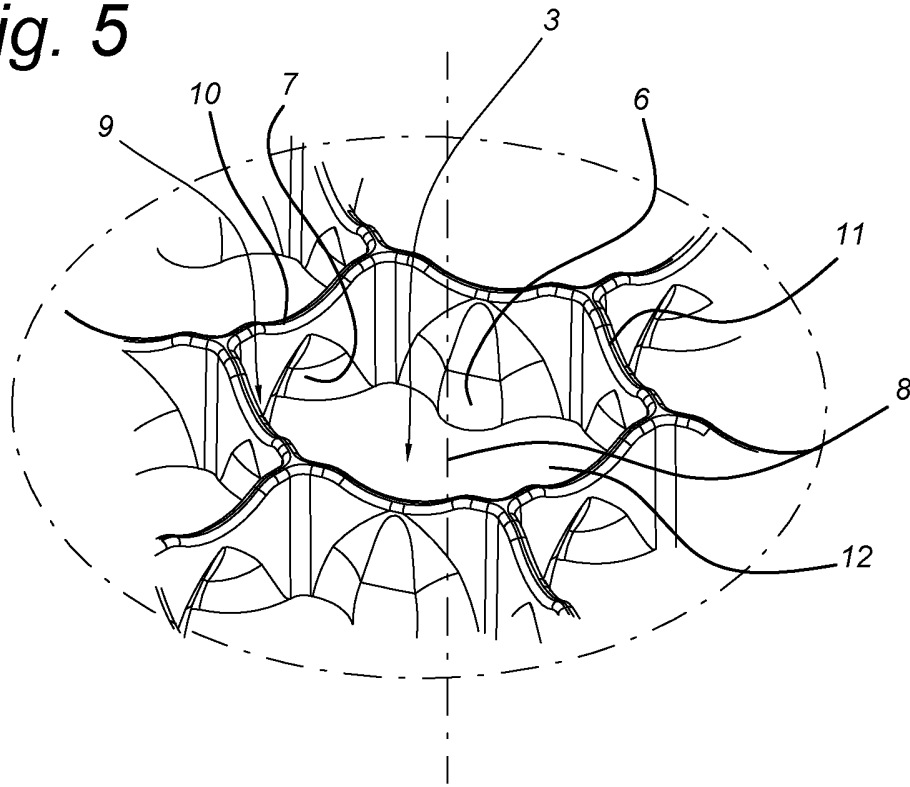


Fig. 4

**Fig. 5**



**Fig. 6**

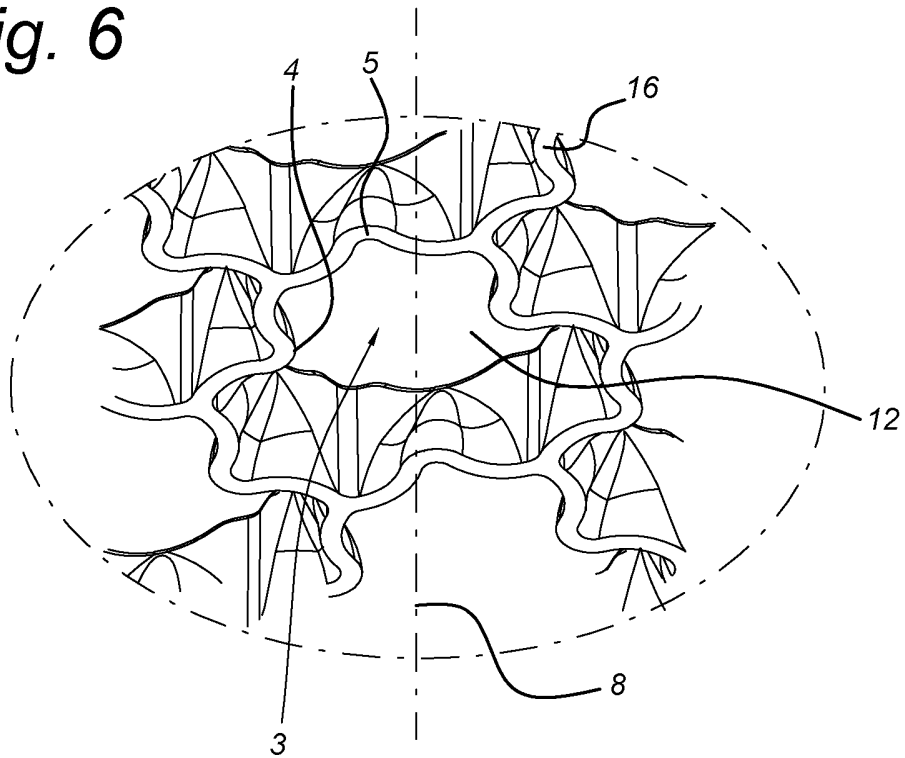
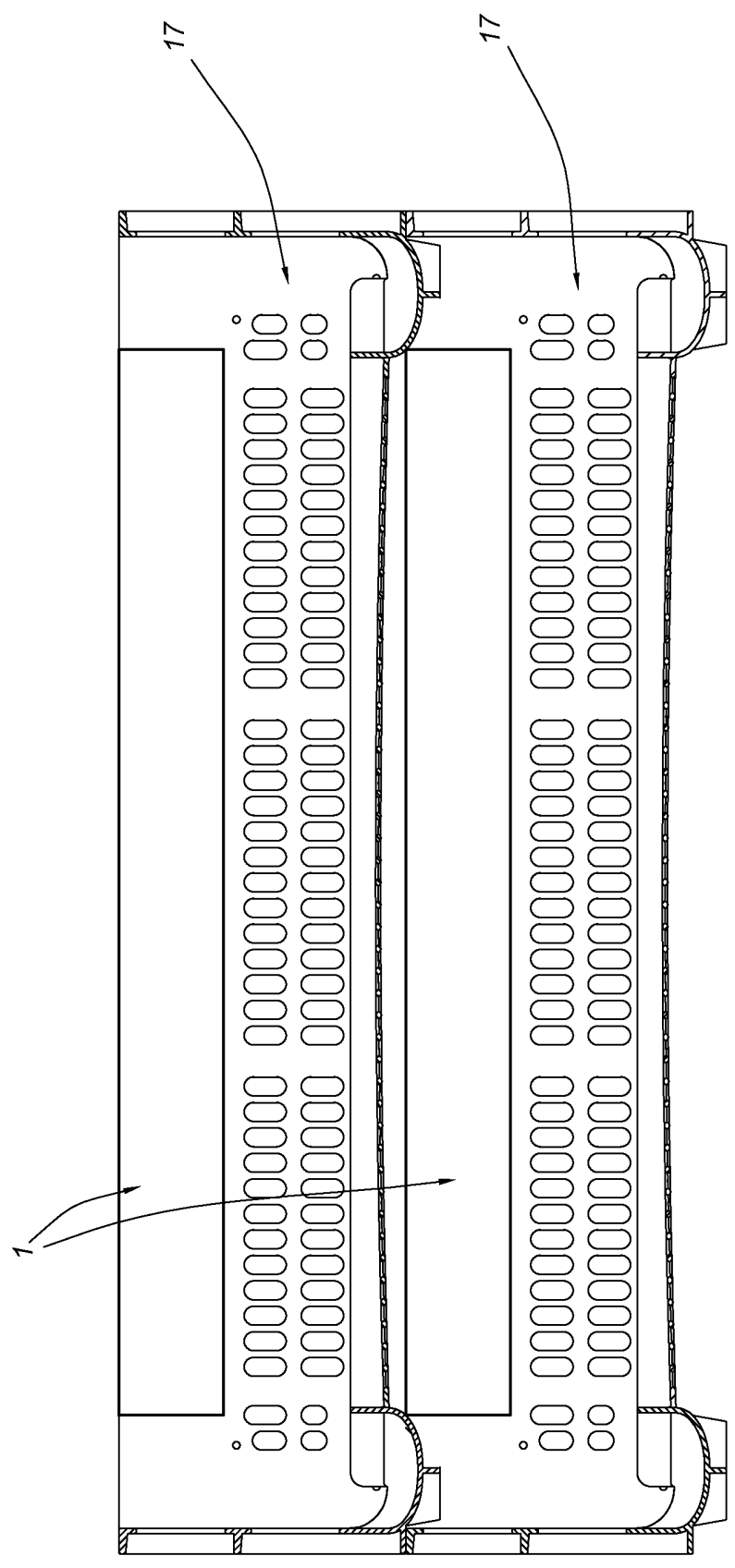


Fig. 7



**Abstract**

The invention relates to a tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber, the tray comprising a number of egg accommodation spaces in which space  
5 an egg is able to be hatched, and at least one passage for a chicken through which  
passage a chicken hatched from said egg may pass through the tray and enter a chicken  
accommodation space located below the tray.

# SAMENWERKINGSVERDRAG (PCT)

## RAPPORT BETREFFENDE NIEUWHEIDSONDERZOEK VAN INTERNATIONAAL TYPE

IDENTIFICATIE VAN DE NATIONALE AANVRAGE	KENMERK VAN DE AANVRAGER OF VAN DE GEMACHTIGDE
	<b>P6052442NL</b>
Nederlands aanvraag nr.	Indieningsdatum
<b>2013281</b>	<b>31-07-2014</b>
	Ingeroepen voorrangsdatum
Aanvrager (Naam)	
<b>HatchTech Group B.V</b>	
Datum van het verzoek voor een onderzoek van internationaal type	Door de Instantie voor Internationaal Onderzoek aan het verzoek voor een onderzoek van internationaal type toegekend nr.
<b>08-11-2014</b>	<b>SN63048</b>
<b>I. CLASSIFICATIE VAN HET ONDERWERP</b> (bij toepassing van verschillende classificaties, alle classificatiesymbolen opgeven)	
Volgens de internationale classificatie (IPC)	
<b>A01K41/06</b>	
<b>II. ONDERZOCHETE GEBIEDEN VAN DE TECHNIEK</b>	
Onderzochte minimumdocumentatie	
Classificatiesysteem	Classificatiesymbolen
<b>IPC</b>	<b>A01K</b>
Onderzochte andere documentatie dan de minimum documentatie, voor zover dergelijke documenten in de onderzochte gebieden zijn opgenomen	
III.	<b>GEEN ONDERZOEK MOGELIJK VOOR BEPAALDE CONCLUSIES</b> (opmerkingen op aanvullingsblad)
IV.	<b>GEBREK AAN EENHEID VAN UITVINDING</b> (opmerkingen op aanvullingsblad)

**ONDERZOEKSRAPPORT BETREFFENDE HET  
RESULTAAT VAN HET ONDERZOEK NAAR DE STAND  
VAN DE TECHNIEK VAN HET INTERNATIONALE TYPE**

Nummer van het verzoek om een onderzoek naar  
de stand van de techniek

NL 2013281

<p>A. CLASSIFICATIE VAN HET ONDERWERP INV. A01K41/06 ADD.</p> <p>Volgens de Internationale Classificatie van octrooien (IPC) of zowel volgens de nationale classificatie als volgens de IPC.</p>											
<p>B. ONDERZOCHE GEBIEDEN VAN DE TECHNIEK</p> <p>Onderzochte minimum documentatie (classificatie gevolgd door classificatiesymbolen) A01K</p> <p>Onderzochte andere documentatie dan de minimum documentatie, voor dergelijke documenten, voor zover dergelijke documenten in de onderzochte gebieden zijn opgenomen</p> <p>Tijdens het onderzoek geraadpleegde elektronische gegevensbestanden (naam van de gegevensbestanden en, waar uitvoerbaar, gebruikte trefwoorden) EPO-Internal, WPI Data</p>											
<p>C. VAN BELANG GEACHTE DOCUMENTEN</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Categorie °</th> <th>Geciteerde documenten, eventueel met aanduiding van speciaal van belang zijnde passages</th> <th>Van belang voor conclusie nr.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td> <p>US 3 147 738 A (THEILIG ARTHUR W) 8 september 1964 (1964-09-08) * kolom 1, regel 11 - regel 13 * * kolom 2, regel 2 - regel 9 * * kolom 3, regel 26 - kolom 4, regel 38; figuren 1-3 *</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> </td> <td>1-29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A</td> <td> <p>US 4 004 552 A (LEVIN GERD) 25 januari 1977 (1977-01-25) * samenvatting; figuren 1-3, 3A, 6 *</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> </td> <td>1-29</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Categorie °	Geciteerde documenten, eventueel met aanduiding van speciaal van belang zijnde passages	Van belang voor conclusie nr.	A	<p>US 3 147 738 A (THEILIG ARTHUR W) 8 september 1964 (1964-09-08) * kolom 1, regel 11 - regel 13 * * kolom 2, regel 2 - regel 9 * * kolom 3, regel 26 - kolom 4, regel 38; figuren 1-3 *</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p>	1-29	A	<p>US 4 004 552 A (LEVIN GERD) 25 januari 1977 (1977-01-25) * samenvatting; figuren 1-3, 3A, 6 *</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p>	1-29
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<p><input type="checkbox"/> Verdere documenten worden vermeld in het vervolg van vak C.      <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leden van dezelfde octroofamilie zijn vermeld in een bijlage</p>											
<p>° Speciale categorieën van aangehaalde documenten</p> <p>"A" niet tot de categorie X of Y behorende literatuur die de stand van de techniek beschrijft</p> <p>"D" in de octrooiaanvraag vermeld</p> <p>"E" eerdere octrooi(aanvraag), gepubliceerd op of na de indieningsdatum, waarin dezelfde uitvinding wordt beschreven</p> <p>"L" om andere redenen vermelde literatuur</p> <p>"O" niet-schriftelijke stand van de techniek</p> <p>"P" tussen de voorrangdatum en de indieningsdatum gepubliceerde literatuur</p> <p>"T" na de indieningsdatum of de voorrangdatum gepubliceerde literatuur die niet bezwarend is voor de octrooiaanvraag, maar wordt vermeld ter verheldering van de theorie of het principe dat ten grondslag ligt aan de uitvinding</p> <p>"X" de conclusie wordt als niet nieuw of niet inventief beschouwd ten opzichte van deze literatuur</p> <p>"Y" de conclusie wordt als niet inventief beschouwd ten opzichte van de combinatie van deze literatuur met andere geciteerde literatuur van dezelfde categorie, waarbij de combinatie voor de vakman voor de hand liggend wordt geacht</p> <p>"&amp;" lid van dezelfde octroofamilie of overeenkomstige octrooipublicatie</p>											
<p>Datum waarop het onderzoek naar de stand van de techniek van internationaal type werd voltooid</p> <p style="text-align: center;">26 maart 2015</p>		<p>Verzenddatum van het rapport van het onderzoek naar de stand van de techniek van internationaal type</p>									
<p>Naam en adres van de instantie</p> <p>European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016</p>		<p>De bevoegde ambtenaar</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Postma, Rob</p>									

**ONDERZOEKSRAPPORT BETREFFENDE HET  
RESULTAAT VAN HET ONDERZOEK NAAR DE STAND  
VAN DE TECHNIEK VAN HET INTERNATIONALE TYPE**

Informatie over leden van dezelfde octrooifamilie

Nummer van het verzoek om een onderzoek naar  
de stand van de techniek

NL 2013281

In het rapport genoemd octrooigeeschrift	Datum van publicatie	Overeenkomend(e) geschrift(en)	Datum van publicatie
US 3147738	A	08-09-1964	GEEN
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US 4004552	A	25-01-1977	GEEN
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## WRITTEN OPINION

File No. SN63048	Filing date ( <i>day/month/year</i> ) 31.07.2014	Priority date ( <i>day/month/year</i> )	Application No. NL2013281
International Patent Classification (IPC) INV. A01K41/06			
Applicant HatchTech Group B.V.			

This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:

- Box No. I Basis of the opinion
- Box No. II Priority
- Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention
- Box No. V Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- Box No. VI Certain documents cited
- Box No. VII Certain defects in the application
- Box No. VIII Certain observations on the application

	Examiner Postma, Rob
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WRITTEN OPINION

Application number  
NL2013281

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**Box No. I Basis of this opinion**

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1. This opinion has been established on the basis of the latest set of claims filed before the start of the search.
2. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the application and necessary to the claimed invention, this opinion has been established on the basis of:
  - a. type of material:
    - a sequence listing
    - table(s) related to the sequence listing
  - b. format of material:
    - on paper
    - in electronic form
  - c. time of filing/furnishing:
    - contained in the application as filed.
    - filed together with the application in electronic form.
    - furnished subsequently for the purposes of search.
3.  In addition, in the case that more than one version or copy of a sequence listing and/or table relating thereto has been filed or furnished, the required statements that the information in the subsequent or additional copies is identical to that in the application as filed or does not go beyond the application as filed, as appropriate, were furnished.
4. Additional comments:

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**Box No. V Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

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1. Statement

Novelty	Yes: Claims	1-29
	No: Claims	
Inventive step	Yes: Claims	1-29
	No: Claims	
Industrial applicability	Yes: Claims	1-29
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations

**see separate sheet**

**WRITTEN OPINION**

Application number  
NL2013281

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**Box No. VII Certain defects in the application**

**see separate sheet**

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**Box No. VIII Certain observations on the application**

**see separate sheet**

**Re Item V**

**Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1 Reference is made to the following documents:

D1 US 3 147 738 A (THEILIG ARTHUR W) 8 september 1964 (1964-09-08)

D2 US 4 004 552 A (LEVIN GERD) 25 januari 1977 (1977-01-25)

- 1.1 Both document D1 and document D2 disclose a tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber, each known tray comprising a number of egg accommodation spaces in which space an egg is able to be hatched, wherein a first egg accommodation space comprises, seen from the first egg accommodation space, an inwardly protruding member for supporting an egg in the first egg accommodation space
- 1.2 The subject-matter of claim 1 therefore differs from the known trays in that said first egg accommodation space further comprises, seen from the first egg accommodation space, an outwardly protruding member for supporting an egg in an adjacent egg accommodation space.
- 1.3 With reference to what is brought to the attention of the applicant under **Re Item VIII**, the subject-matter of claim 1 further differs from the known trays in that the first egg accommodation space comprises a passage through which a newly hatched chicken may pass through the tray and enter a chicken accommodation space located below the tray, wherein the passage is at least delimited by the inwardly protruding member **and** the outwardly protruding member.
- 1.4 The subject matter of claim 1 and by extension of claims 20, 26 and 27 is therefore new.
- 1.5 The problem to be solved by the present invention may be regarded as to provide a tray for containing a number of eggs in an incubation chamber, which tray enables not only to set eggs but also to hatch eggs and separate the newly hatched chicken as soon as possible from eggshells without need for handling the chicken and/or the chicken leaving the incubation chamber.

- 1.6 The solution to this problem proposed in claim 1 of the present application is considered as involving an inventive step for the following reasons: The prior published documents, cited in the search report and in the description either taken individually or in combination do not disclose, suggest or reasonably lead the person skilled in the art to consider modification of the known egg drawer as specified in claim 1.
- 1.7 The person skilled in the art would not be able to combine all the features of claims 1, 20, 26 and 27 and as such arrive at the claimed tray, assembly of a crate, stack of assemblies and hatching method without an inventive activity.
- 1.8 Claims 2 to 19, 21 to 25 and 28 to 29 are dependent on claims 1, 20 and 27 respectively and as such also meet the requirements of novelty and inventive step.

### **Re Item VII**

#### **Certain defects in the application**

The relevant background art disclosed in documents D1 and D2 is not mentioned in the description, nor are these documents identified therein.

### **Re Item VIII**

#### **Certain observations on the application**

- 2 It is clear from the description on page 1, lines 13 to 21, page 2, lines 5 to 8 and lines 21 to 28, page 8, lines 15 to 18 and on page 9, lines 11 to 18, that the features relating to the passage through which a newly hatched chicken may pass through the tray and enter a chicken accommodation space located below the tray are essential to the definition of the invention.
- 2.1 Since independent claim 1 (and by extension claims 20, 26 and 27) does not contain these features it does not meet the requirement of clarity that any independent claim must contain all the technical features essential to the definition of the invention.
- 2.2 For the assessment of novelty and inventive step, independent claim 1 and by extension claims 20, 26 and 27 have been interpreted as comprising such passage through which a newly hatched chicken may pass through the tray

and enter a chicken accommodation space located below the tray, wherein said passage is at least delimited by the inwardly protruding member and the outwardly protruding member.

- 3 Claim 7 is drafted as being dependent on claim 1 and refers to "the passage". Claim 1 does not mention such a passage. Claim 7 has been interpreted as being dependent on any of the claims 2 to 6 instead.

Claim 16 and claim 17 are drafted as being dependent on claim 1 but seem to be dependent on claim 14 or claim 15 instead.

Claim 20 is drafted with reference to claim 1 and refers to "the passage". Claim 1 does not mention such a passage. Claim 20 has been interpreted as referring to any of the claims 2 to 19 instead.

Claim 27 is drafted with reference to claim 1 and refers to "the passage". Claim 1 does not mention such a passage. Claim 27 has been interpreted as referring to any of the claims 2 to 19 instead.

- 4 On page 8, line 8, outwardly protruding member 4 has been read as outwardly protruding member 5.

On page 9, line 9, passages has been read as passage.

On page 10, line 6, crate 5 has been read as crate 17.