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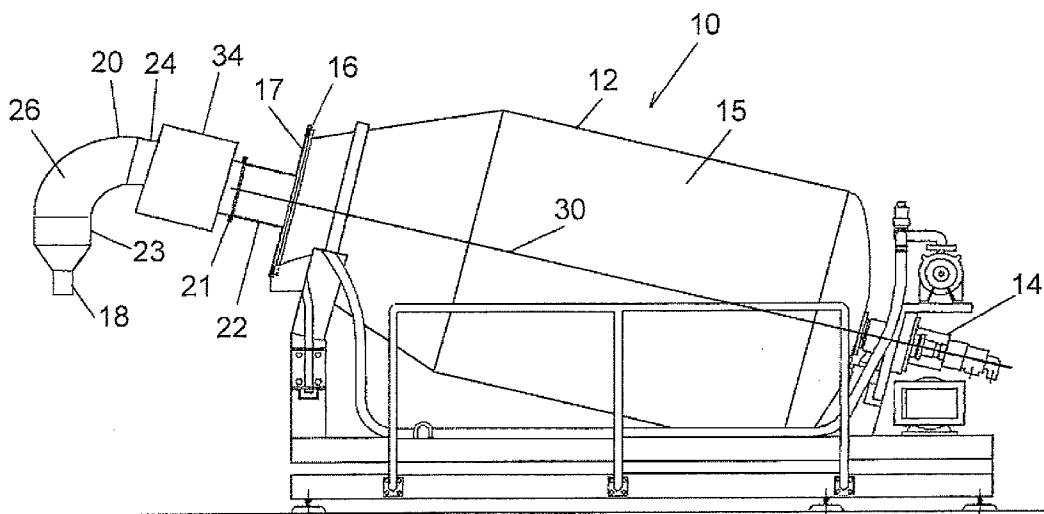
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- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: THERMAL PROCESSOR



(57) Abstract: Thermal processing apparatus (10) and a method for the defrosting of meat are disclosed. A vessel (12) includes an opening (16), and a rotation assembly (14) is adapted to rotate the vessel (12) such that the opening (16) is disposed on the axis of rotation. The vessel (12) preferably comprises electrically conductive walls. An RF source (18) is adapted to direct electromagnetic energy into the vessel (12) through the opening. Preferably, the electromagnetic energy is in the microwave spectrum. The apparatus (10) includes a waveguide (20) which couples electromagnetic energy from the RF source (18) to the opening in the vessel (12). A rotary coupling (34) is used to couple electromagnetic energy from the RF source to the opening in the vessel (12). The process includes tumbling and radiating the product, with microwave energy to bring the product from below the latent heat stage to fully defrosted.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - H05B 6/74 (2007.10)

USPC - 219/751

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
USPC: 219/751Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched.
USPC: 219/678, 752 ? text word limited ? see belowElectronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
WEST (PGPB,USPT,USOC,EPAB,JPAB); google.com
Search terms: microwave, RF, radiation, meat, rotate, tumble, angle, tilt

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| X | US 3,777,095 A (Muranaka) 04 December 1973 (04.12.1973) see entire doc, esp figure 3 | 1-2 |
| Y | | 3-4 and 9-11 |
| Y | US 3,261,959 A (Connell et al.) 19 July 1966 (19.07.1966) figure 3 | 3-4 |
| Y | US 5,859,412 A (Yagi) 12 January 1999 (12.01.1999) column 1, ln 5-15 | 9-11 |

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US 06/61921

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.: 5-8
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.