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FRESH VEGETABLE PACKING

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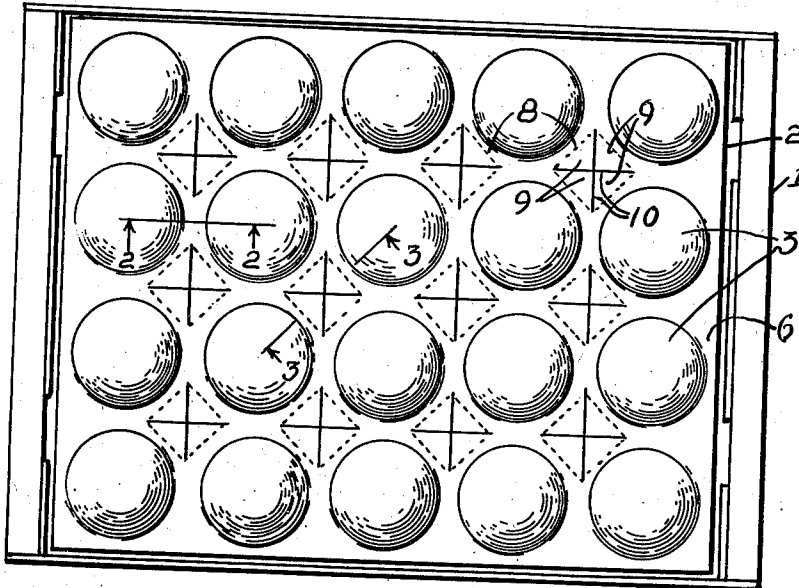


FIGURE 1

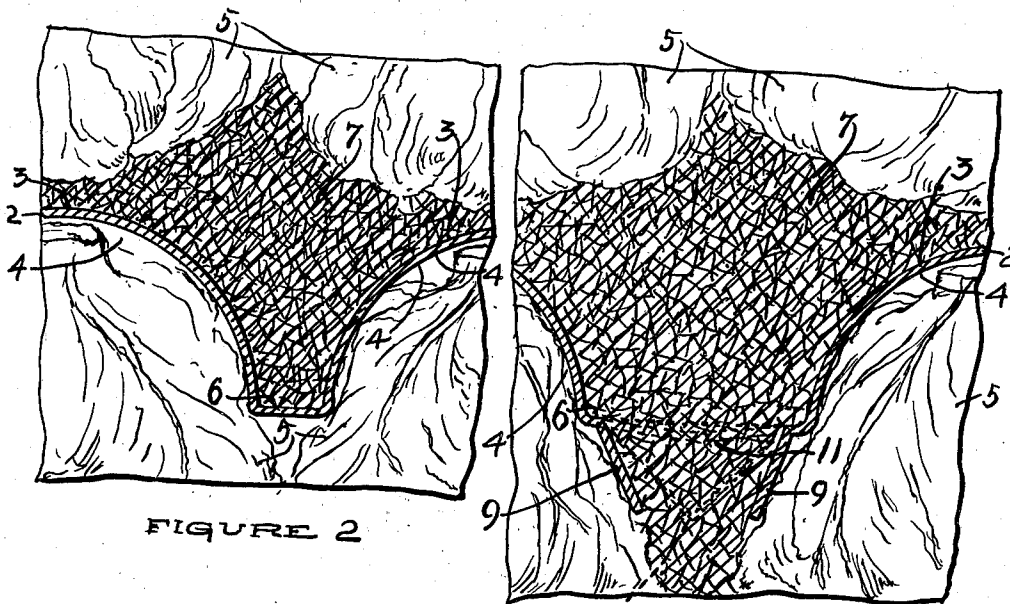


FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

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FRESH VEGETABLE PACKING

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2 Claims. (Cl. 99—193)

The present invention relates particularly to the packing of lettuce heads for shipping, and more particularly to the packing of such produce in iced crates for shipping over long distances, and is a continuation in part of my application bearing Serial No. 346,389, filed July 19, 1940.

It has been common practice to pack lettuce heads in layers in a crate in alternating relationship with layers of crushed ice. This method of packing has some very objectionable features as heretofore practiced, due to the fact that the ice is in intimate contact with the butt ends of the lettuce heads and leaves, causing them to be discolored and bruised as well as frozen. Freezing does, of course, render the leaf ribs brittle so they can be, and frequently are, broken.

It is, therefore, one object of my invention to provide a means and method of packing lettuce heads in ice, that will keep the ice from coming in contact with the lettuce butts as above described, whereby the troubles indicated will be completely overcome.

It is another object of the invention to provide a means and method of the character indicated that will permit the use, in packing, of substantially the same quantity of ice as used heretofore, and that will permit the desired circulation of air and gases throughout the crate.

Finally, it is an object of the invention to provide a method and means of the character indicated that will not be materially more expensive than the methods heretofore in use, and that will enable the shipper to deliver his produce in distant markets in as good a condition as when first packed.

In the drawing:

Figure 1 is a top plan view of a lettuce crate with a separator or shield in position therein.

Figure 2 is an enlarged section of a portion of a lettuce pack at 2—2 on Figure 1.

Figure 3 is an enlarged section of a portion of a lettuce pack at 3—3 on Figure 1.

Now referring in detail to the specific form of the invention disclosed and its mode of application, I show at 1 a lettuce crate of ordinary construction, and in which the lettuce heads are packed in tiers or layers, in the present case each layer consists of twenty heads of lettuce.

On each layer of lettuce heads, as it is placed in the crate, is a shield or separator 2. This shield 2 is made of papier-mâché or any other suitable moisture absorbing substance that also provides the necessary strength and flexibility, and is formed into a rectangular sheet of slightly

smaller dimensions than the inside of the crate in plan.

In the substance of the shield 2 are formed a number of domes 3 corresponding in number and size to the lettuce heads packed, each dome forming a pocket or recess 4 proportioned to overlie and completely encompass the upper portion of a head of lettuce. In a pack of the character disclosed the shield 2 is provided with twenty domes, forming twenty recesses to overlie and shield a similar number of lettuce heads. When a layer of heads is completed and the shield 2 dropped thereon it is completely separated from the layer of heads placed thereover, the lettuce heads being shown, in part, at 5.

By forming and positioning the shield 2 as described the flat surface 6 of the shield is carried well down between the lettuce heads, and consequently when a layer of crushed ice as 7 is spread thereon it completely encompasses the upper portions of the heads without contacting the same.

When lettuce is packed in a crate for any period of time the processes of growth and decay are not entirely arrested, no matter how carefully the packing may be effected, consequently it is desirable that suitable ventilation be provided for the gases generated, so that such gases may readily find an exit and the proper shipping condition of the lettuce maintained.

To secure the desired ventilation without sacrificing any of the advantages gained by the use of the shield 2 I prepare the shield as follows.

In each portion of shield 2 lying between each set of four adjacent domes 3 I define a square or other shaped score-line 8, and the stock within this score-line is divided into triangular flaps as 9 by cutting the same through from corner to corner as indicated at 10. The line 8 may or may not be physically present in the stock, and when cut the flaps may lie in the plane of the shield or may be slightly depressed as indicated at 11. In the present instance the cuts 10 are at right angles to each other and parallel the sides of the shield so that when the flaps 9 are pressed downwardly as shown in Figure 3 they will overlie the adjacent heads 5.

The result of the above described construction and arrangement is, that when a shield 2 is placed in position and the crushed ice spread thereover, the pressure of the ice in packing will spread the flaps 9 and permit some of the ice to pass through the resulting opening into the space between the leafy portions of the adjoining heads where it can do no harm, the flaps 9 themselves

protecting the heads against contact with the ice for a material distance below the level of the shield.

While the opening of the flaps 9 permits the placing of more ice in the crate than a solid shield, their opening also permits a satisfactory degree of ventilation that insures maintenance of the lettuce in proper shipping condition.

Although but one specific embodiment of the invention has been herein illustrated and described, it will be understood that various alterations in the details of construction and mode of application may be made without departing from the scope of the invention as indicated in the accompanying claims.

I claim:

1. A lettuce pack comprising, a lettuce crate

having superimposed layers of lettuce heads arranged therein, each two layers of heads being separated by a flexible sheet of material formed to completely encompass the upper portion of each head in the under layer and having a passage formed therethrough between each set of four adjacent head-encompassing portions, and a layer of crushed ice disposed over said sheet and passing downwardly through each of said passages.

2. The pack set forth in claim 1 wherein flaps are extended downwardly from the edge of each passage to overlie and protect the sides of the adjacent lettuce heads from contact with the

ice.

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