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(54) **Pocket tray for kiwifruits.**

(57) A pocket tray (1) is disclosed, in which each pocket (2) has at one end a bottom portion (102) adapted for receiving one end of a kiwifruit (3) and from which a sloping surface (202) extends upwardly as far as the other end of the pocket (2), so that a kiwifruit (3) accomodated therewithin is maintained in an inclined position.

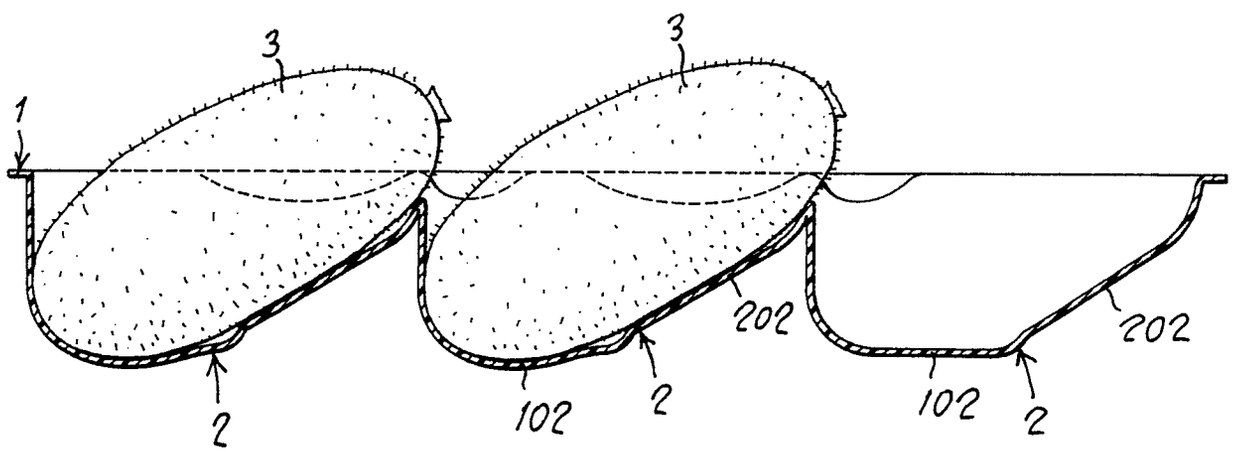


Fig. 2

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"Pocket tray for kiwifruits"

The object of the present invention is a particular type of pocket tray for kiwifruits.

In the known pocket trays for kiwifruits, each pocket in the tray is so formed and is so made that a kiwifruit housed therewithin is arranged in a fully recumbent position, i.e., with its longitudinal axis being oriented in a substantially horizontal position. The pocket tray is therefore capable to receive a determinate maximum number of kiwifruits, which corresponds to the size and the shape of the fully recumbent kiwifruits as seen in plan view.

The present invention aims to increase the number of kiwifruits that can be accomodated in a pocket tray, as compared with the number that was heretofore accomodatable at a parity of the kiwifruit size, and of the dimensions of the pocket tray itself. More particularly, the invention aims to solve the above stated problem in connection with kiwifruits having an elongated shape, wherefore in a pocket tray there is place only for a limited number of these fully recumbent kiwifruits.

This problem is solved by the invention in that at least part of the pockets in the pocket tray are so made that the kiwifruits accomodated therewithin are maintained in an inclined position. It is thus possible to take advantage to a higher degree of a predetermined overall area of the pocket tray, by increasing the number of kiwifruits arranged therein, since the top end of an inclined kiwifruit may reach, as seen in plan view, substantially to the bottom end of an inclined, adjacent, for example aligned, kiwifruit, and may even protrude beyond the said bottom end. At the same time, the kiwifruits in their inclined position still rest on such a sufficiently large surface that any specific pressure will be maintained at a low and safe value.

With the inclined arrangement of the kiwifruits the invention permits to better profit by the overall surface area in plan view of a pocket tray, to the cost of a certain increase in the height of a complete package, i.e., of the pocket tray with the kiwifruits accomodated within its pockets. Under this respect, the invention is based on the recognizance that the said height increase is relatively small and does not entail any practical drawback either in the case of packages with only one pocket tray, or in the case of packages with a plurality of superposed pocket trays.

The pocket tray for inclined kiwifruits, according to the invention, may be of any suitable material, preferably of plastics material, and is made by a thermoforming process.

A pocket tray for kiwifruits, according to the invention, is shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 diagrammatically shows a top plan view of the pocket tray.

Figure 2 is a vertical sectional view of said pocket tray, in an enlarged scale, taken on line II-II of figure 2.

Referring to the figures, the pocket tray 1 for kiwifruits is made of plastics material and is obtained by a thermoforming process. The said tray has a plurality of pockets 2 which in plan view substantially have each the shape of a kiwifruit (in this instance, of a kiwifruit with a particularly elongated shape), and which are mutually aligned in parallel rows oriented in a substantially diagonal direction.

At one end of its longitudinal extent, each pocket 2 has a substantially planar or slightly concave bottom portion 102 from which there begins a sloping surface 202 extending as far as the other end of said pocket 2.

Each kiwifruit 3 inserted into a pocket 2 has one of its ends accomodated on the bottom portion 102 of said pocket 2 and rests on the sloping surface 202, so that it is arranged in an inclined position and has its other end protruding upwardly, out of the respective pocket and over the top plane delimiting the pocket tray 1, as it particularly appears from figure 2. Owing to this inclined position of the kiwifruits 3 in their respective pocket 2, each kiwifruit 3 has its top end substantially extending as far as the bottom end of a kiwifruit 3 accomodated within the adjacent pocket in the same pocket row, and it may even protrude beyond the bottom end of the successive kiwifruit.

Therefore, the kiwifruits 3 contained in pocket tray 1 will have an imbricated or almost imbricated arrangement, thus permitting to better take advantage of the predetermined plan view area of the pocket tray 1.

Both the bottom portion 102 and the sloping surface 202 of pockets 2 may be made so deformable as to confrom, at least partially, to the shape of the kiwifruits 3. More particularly, in a practical embodiment the bottom portion 102 may have a smaller thickness than the sloping surface 202 and the upper rims of pockets 2, as a result of thermoforming the pocket tray in a positive mold. As a consequence, the bottom portion 102 of a pocket 2 may even enwrap the bottom end of a kiwifruit 3, particularly when the pocket tray 1 is not supported on a rigid plane, as shown in the left-hand portion of figure 2.

Claims

1. A pocket tray (1) for kiwifruits, particularly for kiwifruits having an elongated shape, characterized in that at least part of the pockets (2) is so made that the kiwifruits (3) accomodated therewithin are maintained in an inclined position.

2. The pocket tray according to claim 1, characterized in that the pockets (2) are mutually aligned in rows which are parallel to the longitudinal axes of the kiwifruits (3), and are so made that the kiwifruits accomodated in an inclined position within the pockets (2) of one row are set in a slightly or almost imbricated relation with each other.

3. The pocket tray according to any one of claims 1 or 2, characterized in that each pocket (2) has at one end a bottom portion (102) which is adapted for receiving one end of a kiwifruit (3), and from which a sloping surface (202) extends upwardly as far as the other end of the pocket (2).

4. The pocket tray according to any one or more of the preceding claims, characterized in that the same is made of plastics material and is manufactured by a thermoforming process.

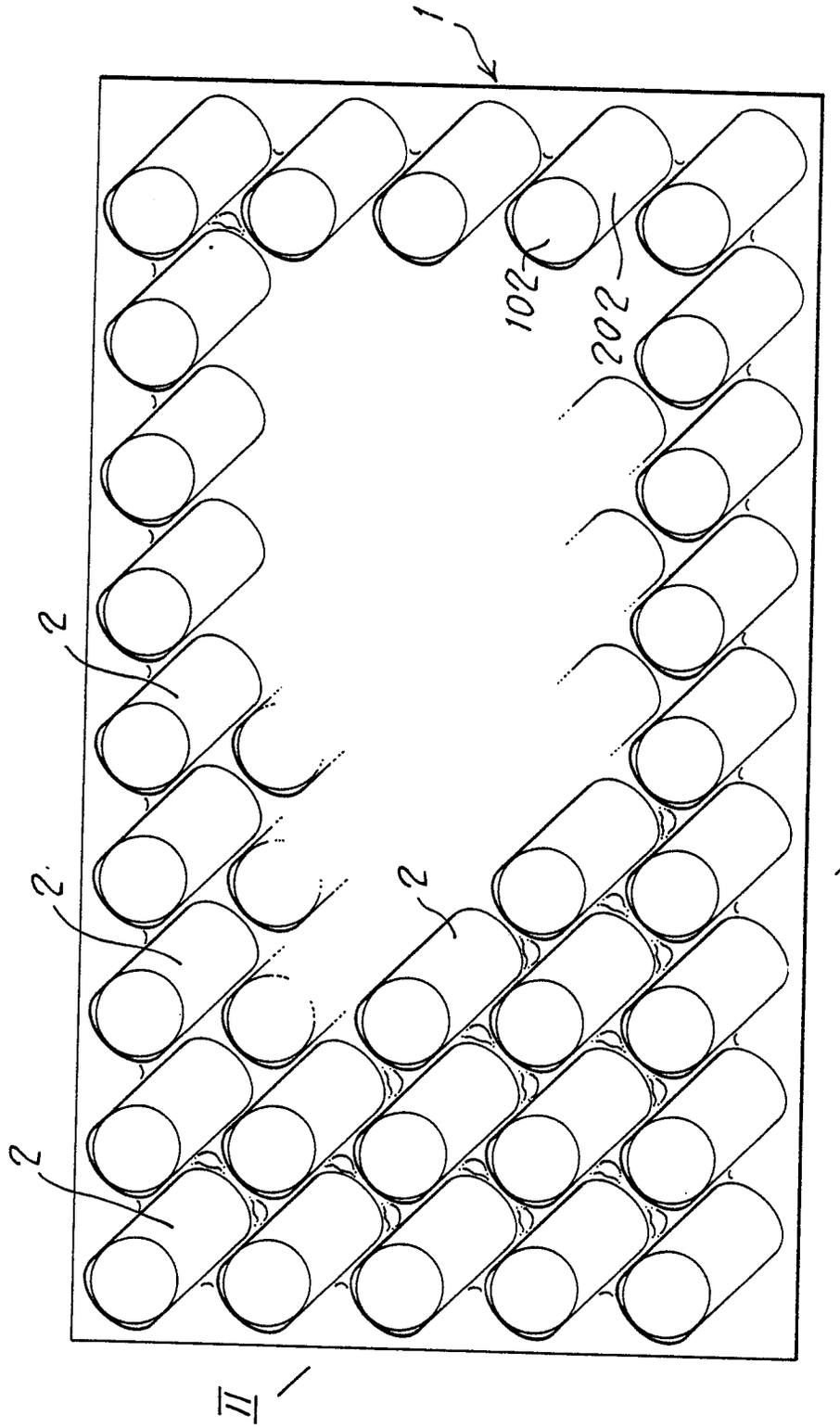


Fig.1

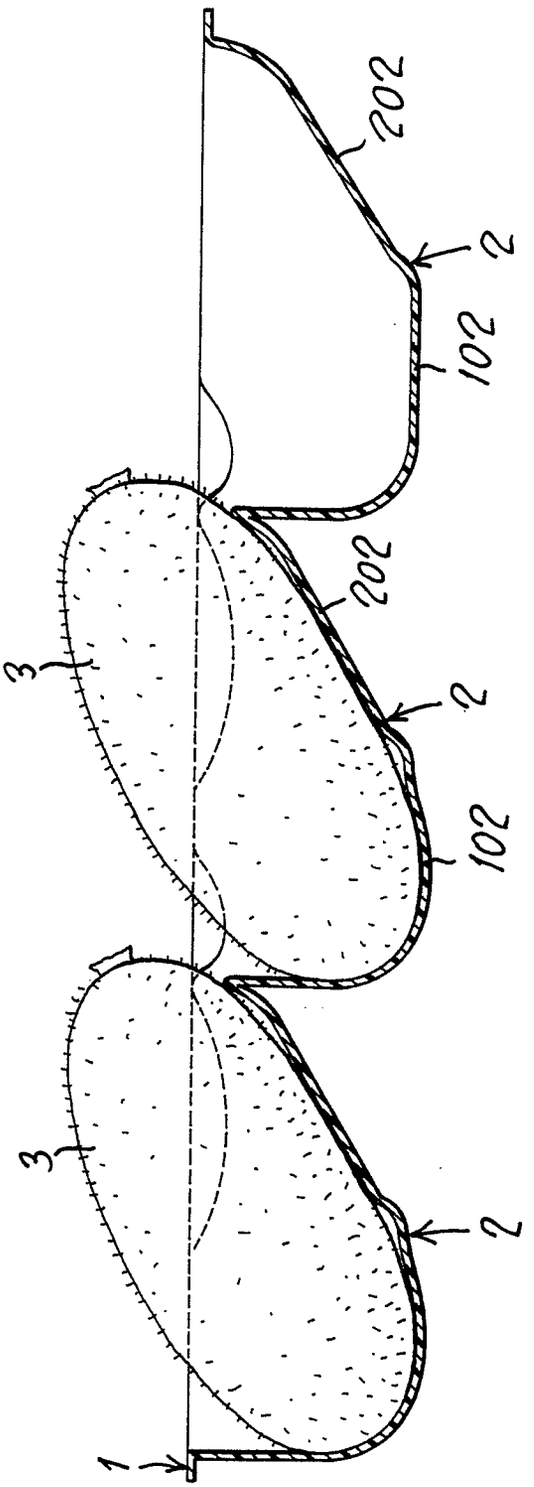


Fig. 2