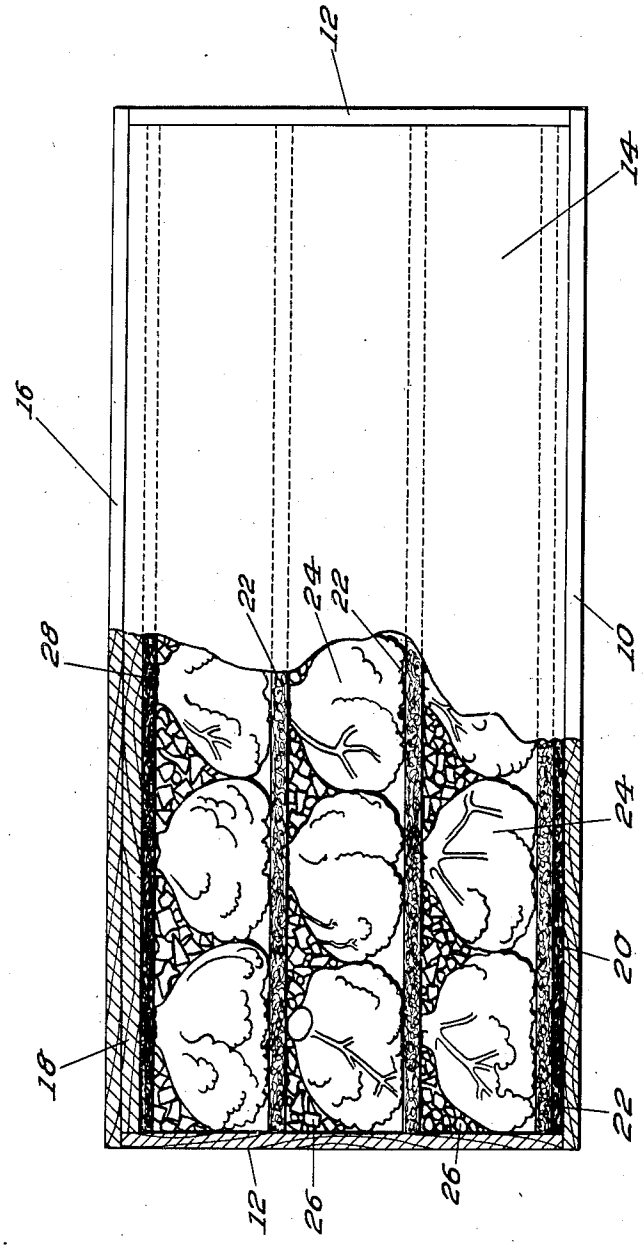
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REFRIGERATED PRODUCE PACKAGE

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REFRIGERATED PRODUCE PACKAGE

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This invention relates to an improved means and method for packing produce and the like, and has for one of its principal objects the provision of a shipping container for lettuce and similar vegetables which will effectively preserve the same even over considerable periods of time assuring the arrival of the product in good condition at its destination.

One of the important objects of this invention is to provide a means and method for packing head lettuce and the like which will eliminate discoloring and spoiling of the product, and which will further eliminate the possibility of bruising while at the same time keeping it in good condition over a maximum shipping period.

Still another and further important object of this invention is to provide a means and method of packing and shipping lettuce and similar vegetables which will be slightly, if any, more expensive than the ordinary methods now in use while at the same time enabling the shipper to consistently secure a top market price for the product.

Other and further important objects of the invention will be apparent from the disclosures in the accompanying drawing and following specification.

The invention, in a preferred form, is illustrated in the drawing and hereinafter more fully described.

In the drawing:

The figure is a side elevation, partly broken away, showing a crate of head lettuce packed in accordance with the improved principles of this invention.

As shown in the drawing:

The reference numeral 10 indicates generally the bottom of a wooden crate or the like such as is ordinarily used for shipping lettuce and similar produce. The crate is provided with end members 12 and sides 14, and has fitted thereinto the usual removable top 16, preferably having a cleat 18 forming a portion thereof. This insures a fairly tight fit between the top edges of the crate and the lid.

In use, the bottom of the crate is first covered with a lining of paper, cardboard, or pasteboard, the thickness or weight of which may be varied as occasion requires. Upon this lining is placed a layer of some absorbent material as cellu-cotton or the like which also provides a considerable cushioning effect.

A layer of heads of lettuce 24 or the like is then packed upon the bottom, each head being placed with the butt upward as illustrated in the drawings, and the layer of heads is then covered with a coating or packing of crushed ice 26. It will be noted that practically all of the ice is placed on top of the heads of lettuce adjacent the butts, thereby eliminating much of the tendency to bruise.

Another layer of cellu-cotton or similar absorbent material 22 is then placed over the packed lettuce whereupon a further layer of heads of lettuce 24 is placed in the crate, and again covered with crushed ice 26. This process is repeated until the interior has been built up to approximately the level of the top of the crate whereupon a layer or liner of paper or cardboard 28 is placed on top just underneath the cover 16.

The absorbent fabric of cellu-cotton or the like as shown at 22 acts to both retain practically all of the water drippings from the ice and also to cushion the lettuce. This eliminates the necessity of re-icing the package while enroute, as the layers of absorbent material are preferably watersoaked before being placed in the crate. They are then kept moist during transit by drippings from the melting ice, the drippings gravitating over the lettuce and then being absorbed and retained by the pads. This absorbent material is inherently of such a nature that a very considerable amount, if not all, of the drippings from the melting ice will be absorbed and then evaporated on account of the circulation of air through the cells of the material, and in and around the package itself. This constant evaporation measurably, if not completely, equals the melting of the ice, and further the vegetable, such as lettuce, cabbage, or the like, is positioned with the butts upward, whereby the severed stem, from which the circulatory system of the vegetable springs, is continuously in contact with the somewhat water-soaked absorbent material,

and a certain amount of this water is accordingly drained into the vegetable, thereby aiding in keeping it fresh. This provides thorough refrigeration from both above and below the produce, and additionally the absorbent qualities of the cellu-cotton retain practically all of the water from the melting ice instead of allowing the same to run off through the bottom of the crate, this result being noticeable even in very hot weather. Any consequent evaporation of the absorbed water will also tend to keep down the temperature of the package, thereby rendering the melting of the ice more slow.

Further, the cushioning effect of the absorbent pads prevents the striking of the lettuce against the crushed ice whereby bruising is eliminated, and the fact that the cushioning pads are absorbent allows the water from one layer to drip down through the pads into the butts of the lettuce in the next layer, thereby the butts are kept moist and discoloration prevented.

It will be seen that herein is provided a novel and useful means and method of packing and shipping lettuce and similar produce, which even though slightly more expensive at the outset, will save its cost many times over in that the necessity for re-icing during shipment is eliminated, and further the fact that the product will almost invariably reach its destination in prime condition, enabling the shipper to command the top market price.

Again the consumer is assured of a much more superior product wherein any spoiling or tendency to spoil has been positively prevented.

I am aware that many changes may be made and numerous details of construction varied throughout a wide range without departing from the principles of this invention, and I therefore do not purpose limiting the patent granted hereon otherwise than as necessitated by the prior art.

I claim as my invention:

1. A refrigerated package for shipping vegetable products, comprising a crate, layers of non-absorbent material at the top and bottom of the crate, a layer of cellu-cotton on the bottom layer of non-absorbent material, a layer of vegetable products on the cellu-cotton, and crushed ice filling the interstices between the vegetable products.

2. A refrigerated package for shipping vegetable products, comprising a crate, layers of non-absorbent material at the top and bottom of the crate, a layer of cellu-cotton on the bottom layer of non-absorbent material, a layer of vegetable products on the cellu-cotton, and crushed ice filling the interstices between the vegetable products, a further layer of cellu-cotton above the layer of vegetable products, and another layer of vegetables products and crushed ice above the said cellu-cotton layer.

3. A refrigerated package for shipping vegetable products, comprising a crate, layers of non-absorbent material at the top and bottom of the crate, a layer of cellu-cotton on the bottom layer of non-absorbent material, a layer of vegetable products on the cellu-cotton, and crushed ice filling the interstices between the vegetable products, a further layer of cellu-cotton above the layer of vegetable products, and another layer of vegetable products and crushed ice above the said cellu-cotton layer, the alternate layers being repeated until the crate is full.

In testimony whereof I affix my signateure.

SAMUEL J. GALLAGHER.