ABSTRACT

In a folded wrapper, an elongated strip is positioned beneath the overlapping side seam and end flaps of the wrapper and extends exterior of the end flaps thereof. Pulling outwardly on the exposed ends of the strip unfolds the end flaps and lifting of the strip opens the side seam of the wrapper to expose the contents for use. For storage, the strip is repositioned and the wrapper refolded in position for the next opening.
DEVICE FOR OPENING WRAPPERS OF FOODSTUFFS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a device for opening wrappers of foodstuffs and the like and more particularly to a device for unfolding wrappers such as those used on butter, margarine and other dairy products and foodstuffs.

Commodities of this type are generally sold in cubes or in a block shape and are provided for storage and handling with a wrapper of paper or foil or plastic film. To use these commodities, the wrapper has to be removed or opened. Since these foodstuffs may not be consumed at one time, provision should be made to rewrap for storage any unused portion. Similarly, these products are of an oily nature and this, coupled with the necessity of cleanliness, make it desirable to handle the contents and wrapper interior as little as possible.

Heretofore, opening devices have been incorporated on some foodstuff wrappers to facilitate opening the wrapper. However, these openers have generally been of the tear-strip type wherein a pull strip is used to rip open the wrapper. This method of opening, of course, destroys the integrity of the wrapper and obviates its use for rewrapping the unused portion of the contents.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is, therefore, a principal object of the present invention to provide an opener for wrappers which will unfold the wrapper to present the enclosed contents for use without handling the contents and which allows the wrapper to be refolded around any unused portion.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a non-destructive opener for wrappers of foodstuffs wherein an elongated strip is positioned beneath the overlapping side edges of the wrapper and is folded along the end of the contents beneath the overlapping end flaps. From there, the strip extends from beneath the end flaps to an exterior position along the ends of the wrapper. Pulling outwardly on the exposed ends of the strip unfolds the end flaps and lifting of the strip unfolds the side edges of the wrapper to expose the contents.

It is still another object to provide such an opening strip made of a material impervious to the foodstuff and which is an economical addition to existing wrapper materials and modes of wrapping.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The preferred form of the invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawing forming part of this specification, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the present invention illustrating a block shaped commodity and wrapper incorporating the opening device;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the article of FIG. 1 wherein the opening device has been elevated to unfold the wrapper from the contents;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a block shaped commodity and its wrapper and the opening strip of the present invention prior to the folding of the wrapper and strip and illustrating the fold lines on each;

FIG. 4 is a partial plan sectional view of the folded end of the wrapper and included opener strip, illustrating in phantom line the unfolding of the end flaps by the strip; for clarity the overlapping top and bottom end flaps are not shown;

FIG. 5 is a partial elevational view of the folded end of the wrapper and included opener strip, illustrating in phantom line the unfolding of the end flaps by the strip; for clarity the overlapping side end flaps are not shown;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view with parts broken away similar to FIG. 1 and illustrating a modified form of the invention;

FIG. 7 is a partial elevational sectional view similar to FIG. 5 and illustrating the device of FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is a view similar to FIG. 6 of another modified form;

FIG. 9 is a view similar to FIG. 7 but of the device in FIG. 8;

FIG. 10 is a view similar to FIG. 6 of yet another modified form; and

FIG. 11 is a view similar to FIG. 7 but of the device in FIG. 10.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Looking to the drawings and particularly FIGS. 1 and 2, it will be seen that the device for opening wrappers of foodstuffs consists of an elongated strip 11 incorporated with wrapper 12 around a block shaped commodity 13 to facilitate unfolding the wrapper and expose the commodity or contents for use.

As mentioned, this invention is eminently suited to opening wrappers such as those used on cubed butter and margarine and other block shaped dairy products.

Such wrappers are commonly formed from sheet stock of wax paper, foil backed paper or thin film plastic. These wrappers are folded to encircle the product and isolate it from its environment. In cubed butter for instance, the cube 13 is positioned medially of the wrapper sheet 12 as shown in FIG. 3. The wrapper is folded, as at 14 and 15, up along the sides of the cube and further folded over the top of the cube, as at 16 and 17. The edges 18 and 19 of the wrapper overlap on the cube along a longitudinal seam 21. Generally, this seam is not fastened or otherwise secured together. Next, the ends of the wrapper are closed by inwardly folding end flaps 22. These end flaps include a first or top end flap 23 which incorporates the overlapping seam 21, second and third end flaps 24 and 26 which are those adjacent first flap 23, and a fourth or bottom flap 27 which is the flap opposite the first flap. Tucks 28 may be taken in the wrapper to facilitate forming the end flaps 22.

As shown, the top flap 23 is folded in first and then side flaps 24 and 26 and finally the bottom flap 27. These flaps overlap centrally of the cube end to completely close the ends. While only one end of the wrapper has been described, it should be appreciated that the far end is also closed with similar end flaps. This manner of wrapping cubed or block shaped dairy products is well-known and is a standard practice in the industry with minor variations.

To provide easy access to the contents in such a wrapper the device of the present invention is employed. When practicing this invention, the elongated
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strip 11 is placed along the top of the block shaped product and is folded with the wrapper to provide an easy opening system.

In the drawings and particularly FIG. 1, it will be seen that the elongated strip 11 is positioned longitudinally beneath the overlapping side seam 21 and along the ends of the cube to a position beneath the overlapping end flaps 22 and from there extends exteriorly of the wrapper as at 29. Looking to FIG. 2, it will be noted that pulling outwardly on the exposed ends of the strip, as noted by arrow 31, will unfold the end flaps and by pulling laterally on the strip (see arrow 32) will open the side seam 21 of the wrapper.

Specifically, in the instant embodiment, the elongated strip 11 is positioned over the cube with its ends extending equidistantly beyond the ends of the cube. The wrapper 12 is folded up around the cube 13 with the edges 18 and 19 thereof forming an overlapping seam 21 over the strip 11. By proper positioning of the wrapper and strip, a central section 33 of the strip will be positioned longitudinally beneath the seam 21. Next, the first or top end flap 23 is folded inwardly along the end of the cube. The end of strip 11 will simultaneously be folded, as at 34, to form a section or leg 36 lying along the end of the cube. The adjacent end flaps 24 and 26 are next folded inwardly over flap 23 and strip section 36. The lower flap 27 is now folded inwardly toward the end of the cube and in so doing simultaneously folds strip 11 back along itself, as at 37, to form another section or leg 38.

Looking to FIGS. 1 and 5, it will be seen that the sections 36 and 38 form a loop or "V" between the end flaps and that section 38 extends outward from beneath flap 27 through the interstice formed by flap 27 and the underlying flaps. Strip 11 terminates at an exterior position along the ends of the cube with the exposed area of section 38 providing grasping area for the pulling operation. As mentioned earlier, the flaps 22 overlap at a point centrally of the end of the cube and proper placement of the strip should be made to ensure its passing beneath this point. Once again, while only one end has been described, it should be appreciated that the other end is formed in identical fashion.

Preferably, the elongated strip is made of a material which is impervious to the oily nature of the butter. Such materials include cellophane and certain plastics, aluminum foil and treated paper or string. Distinctive coloration or printing may also be incorporated on the strip. For a quarter pound cube of butter, the strip may be in the order of three-sixteenths to three-eighths inches wide and about 9 inches long. The length, of course, will be determined by the length of the block or cube but should be of sufficient length to extend over the side and ends of the block and still provide an exposed area for grasping.

If desirable during the operation of wrapping, the strip may be loosely attached to the wrapper so as to keep the strip in its proper position. This may be accomplished in several ways, one of which is to provide a tab connection between the wrapper and strip or a small amount of the wrapper may be folded around the strip.

To open the wrapper, the opposite exposed ends of the strip are grasped and an outward pull is applied away from the cube. This will cause sections 36 and 38 to be extended away from the cube and in so doing to unfold end flaps 22. Next, the extended strip is lifted or elevated from the cube wherein section 33 will open the overlapping side seam, see FIG. 2. The top side face and ends of the cube are now exposed and if desired the wrapper sides may be withdrawn to present the whole cube as it appears in FIG. 3. Subsequently, the wrapper and included strip may be refolded in the abovementioned sequence and thus be in the proper position for further easy openings.

While the pulling of the ends has been described as taking place with two motions, in actuality it is accomplished with one flowing motion.

FIGS. 6 and 7 illustrate a modified form of the present invention in which the elongated strip 11a is folded back as at 39 to form a section or leg 41. Section 41 is positioned along the side of wrapper 12a and presents an enlarged area of the strip for grasping when pulling on the strip.

FIGS. 8 and 9 illustrate another modified form of the invention in which the strip is folded along the side in a manner similar to the form of FIG. 6 but wherein the distal ends of the strip are tucked in the side seam 21b. It will be noted that the side seam 21b is produced by the edges 18 and 19 of the wrapper overlapping along their margins and is defined by overlapping upper and lower margin areas 42 and 43. Furthermore, in this form, the wrapper edges overlap over an enlarged area, such that edge 18 lies along the edge of the cube.

The ends of the strip are folded to be in a position that is partially between the upper and lower margin areas. Looking to FIG. 9, it will be seen that the strip is positioned along the cube as at 33b, folded at 34b to form section 36b along the end of the cube and beneath the end flaps 22b. From there the strip is folded at 37b to form section 38b and folded again at 39b to form section 41b. Sections 38b and 41b are positioned between the upper and lower margin areas 42 and 43. This presents a tidy package and serves to confine the exposed ends of the strip. A portion or edge of the strip is left exposed so the ends may be slipped from between the seam along the path of arrows 44 when it is desired to open the wrapper. If desired, the ends of the strip may be angled out from under the seam area.

Another modified form of the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 10 and 11. In this form the strip is an integral part of the wrapper 12c. The strip takes the form of two elongated extensions 46 and 47 extending from the lower margin area 43c. Together, they, in effect, form a single strip in which the lower margin area 43c is contiguous with sections 33c and 36c and in which sections 38c and 41c are formed from folded portions of extensions 46. Also shown in FIGS. 10 and 11 is a manner of cutting or relieving the area of the wrapper as at 48 adjacent the side seam to more fully expose the ends of the strip thereunder.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that I have invented a new and unique system for opening folded wrappers.

I claim:

1. In a wrapper for block shaped commodities wherein the wrapper is folded around the commodity and forms an overlapping side seam and inwardly folded end flaps, the improvement comprising, an elongated strip positioned beneath the overlapping side
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5 seam and folded beneath the end flaps and extending externally of the end flaps, the end flaps being folded in overlapping relation toward the end of the block and including a first end flap incorporating the side seam, second and third end flaps adjacent to the first flap and a fourth flap opposite to the first flap, the said elongated strip being positioned longitudinally beneath the overlapping side seam and folded therefrom to a position along the ends of the block to form a first section lying along the inner side of the first flap and beneath the overlapping second and third flaps, said strip being folded back on itself to form a second section in a position lying along the inner surface of the fourth flap and extending through the interstice formed between the fourth flap and underlying end flaps with said strip terminating at a position exterior of the wrapper and along the ends thereof.

2. In a wrapper for block shaped commodities wherein the wrapper is folded around the commodity and forms an overlapping side seam and inwardly folded end flaps, the improvement comprising, an elongated strip positioned beneath the overlapping side seam and folded beneath the end flaps and extending externally of the end flaps such that pulling outwardly on the exposed ends of the strip will unfold the end flaps and pulling laterally on the strip will open the side seam of the wrapper, the side seam being provided by the edges of the wrapper overlapping along their margins to provide overlapping upper and lower margin areas, the ends of the elongated strip being folded into a position that is partially between the upper and lower margin areas.

3. A non-destructive opener for folded wrappers wherein the wrapper may be opened from a storage condition to a use condition and subsequently refolded to a storage condition without destroying the integrity of the wrapper and wherein the wrapper is folded to form an overlapping side seam and overlapping end flaps with the end flaps folded inwardly in the sequence in which a first end flap, coextensive with the side seam, is folded inwardly, the end flaps adjacent with said first flap are folded inwardly and the end flap opposite the first flap is folded over the other end flaps, the improvement comprising, an elongated strip positioned beneath the overlapping side seam and extending beyond the end flaps in their unfolded condition and wherein said strip is folded with the first flap beneath the overlapping end flaps, said strip being further folded with the said last end flap in a position exterior of the wrapper such that pulling on the exposed ends of the strip elevates the folded end flaps to an unfolded position and further lateral movement of the strip unfolds the side seam to open the wrapper to a use condition and wherein replacement of the strip and refolding of the wrapper and included strip in the aforesaid sequence restores the wrapper to a storage condition and ready for the next opening sequence.

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