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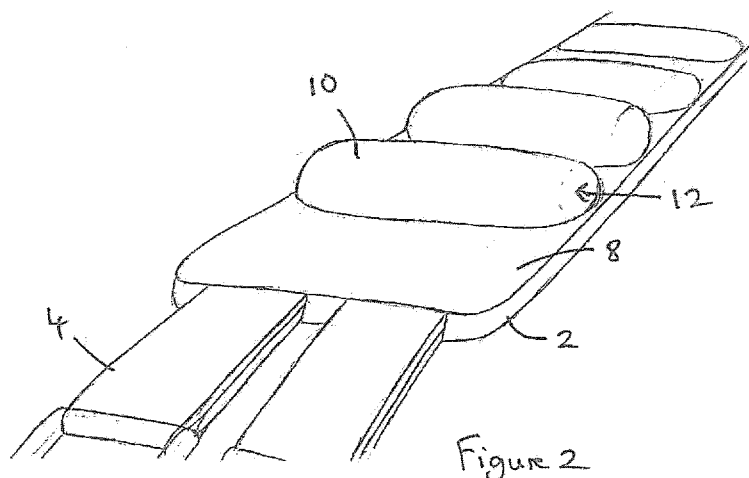
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(54) Title: SADDLE GIRTH



(57) Abstract: A girth for a saddle comprising a girth belt (2) having fasteners (4,6) at either end for attaching the girth belt to a saddle, in use, with the girth belt extending under the barrel or the horse, a cover member (8) attachable to the girth belt to be located between the girth belt and the horse's skin, in use, said cover member incorporating at least one pocket (10), at least one insert (12) comprising or incorporating a moisture absorbent material being removably inserted into said at least one pocket.



## **Saddle Girth**

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

- 5 This invention relates to a saddle girth for mounting a saddle on a horse.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A girth is used to keep a saddle in place on a horse or similar animal. The girth,  
10 typically formed from a flat leather belt, passes under the barrel of the horse behind the front legs and is typically attached to the saddle on both sides by two or three straps called billets.

Girth Galls are a swelling created just behind the horse's front legs and abdomen  
15 caused by increased temperature resulting in sweating and friction between the girth and the horse's skin. This is very painful and can cause the horse a lot of discomfort and may result in vet treatment and missed competitions.

A sheepskin girth sleeve is the current solution for girth galls, providing a soft and  
20 absorbent layer against the horse's skin. However, the sheepskin absorbs perspiration and traps moisture and the thermally insulating properties of the sheepskin increase sweating. This leads to conditions that are opposite of that needed on this sensitive area on the horse and requires the sheepskin girth sleeve to be frequently washed and dried. However, sheepskin is very difficult to wash and  
25 dry easily and it can take a couple of days for one sheepskin sleeve to dry out completely, making it very impractical.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

30 According to the present invention there is provided a girth for a saddle comprising a girth belt having fasteners at either end for attaching the girth belt to a saddle, in use, with the girth belt extending under the barrel of the horse, a cover member attachable to the girth belt to be located between the girth belt and the horse's skin, in use, said cover member incorporating at least one pocket, at least one insert

comprising at least one moisture absorbent material being removably inserted into said at least one pocket.

In a preferred embodiment said cover member is formed from a porous material, such as a fabric, for example a woven mesh. At least a portion of the cover member may be formed from an elasticated fabric, such as Lycra®.

In one embodiment said cover member may comprise a plurality of pockets, a plurality of inserts being provided to be removably inserted into selected pockets. Each pocket may have an opening to permit insertion and removal of a respective insert therefrom. Said opening may be provided with a closure means.

In one embodiment said pockets may extend transversely across the width of the cover member and are arranged parallel to one another. Each pocket may be open at one end to permit insertion and removal of a respective insert. The open ends of the pockets may be aligned along or adjacent one side edge of the cover member, said side edge being folded over to close the open ends of the pockets.

The cover member may be attached to the girth belt by releasable fastening means. In one embodiment said releasable fastening means may comprise hook and loop fasteners attached to mating faces of the girth belt and cover member, although other types of fastening means are envisaged.

Preferably each insert comprises at least one sheet or layer of absorbent material. Preferably said at least one sheet or layer of absorbent material comprises an outer layer of each insert. In one embodiment each insert comprises at least one sheet of absorbent material rolled into a cylindrical body. Each insert may comprise at least one sheet or layer of absorbent material provided around a core, more preferably a foam core. In one embodiment each insert may comprise one or more sheets of absorbent material wrapped around a foam core. Alternatively each insert may comprise a preformed body comprising or incorporating an absorbent material, said body being adapted to be insertable into a respective pocket.

The girth belt may be made from leather or any other material.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A girth for a saddle in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention will  
5 now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying  
drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a plan view from below of a girth for a saddle in accordance with an  
embodiment of the present invention;

10

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the girth of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a plan view of the girth of Figure 1 with the cover member removed from  
the girth belt; and

15

Figures 4 to 7 illustrate the steps of placing inserts into the pockets of the cover  
member and attachment of the cover member to the girth belt.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

20

As illustrated in the drawings, a girth for the saddle of a horse in accordance with  
the present invention comprises a leather girth belt 2 having straps or billets 4,6 at  
either end for attaching the girth belt 2 to a saddle with the girth belt 2 passing  
under the barrel of the horse behind the front legs thereof. The underside of the  
25 girth belt 2 has a cover member 8 attached thereto to be in contact with the horse,  
said cover member incorporating a plurality of pockets 10 into which absorbent  
inserts 12 are selectively located, wherein the cover member 8 and inserts 12 can  
be readily removed for cleaning and wherein the inserts 12 can be removed from or  
added to the pockets 10 of the cover member 8 to customise the fit of the girth.  
30 While the girth belt 2 is described above as being formed from leather it is  
envisaged that the belt may be formed from other materials.

The invention addresses the problem of sores caused by sweating and friction  
behind and adjacent a traditional leather girth.

The cover member 8 is releasably attached to the underside of the girth belt 2 by suitable fastening means, such as cooperating male and female hook and loop fasteners 14,16 of the type sold under the VELCRO (RTM) trade mark.

5 Alternatively the cover member might be integrally formed with the girth belt.

In the embodiment shown in the drawings the cover member 8 comprises a moisture and air permeable fabric sleeve, preferably comprising or incorporating an elastic material, such as Lycra®. The cover member 8 incorporates a row of

10 individual pockets 10, which may be defined by patterns of stitching through the fabric sleeve, whereby an absorbent insert 12 can be inserted into selected pockets 10 to provide tailored cushioning between the girth belt 2 and the horse's skin.

As illustrated in Figures 4 to 8, in one embodiment each pocket 10 has an open end

15 18 aligned with or arranged adjacent to one side portion 20 of the cover member 8 by means of which open ends 18 inserts 12 may be inserted into and removed from the pockets 10. The open ends 18 of the pockets 10 can be closed by folding over the side portion 20 of the cover member 8, as illustrated in Figures 6 and 7. A layer of hook and loop fastener 16, or any other suitable fastening means, may be

20 provided on an outer face of the side portion 20 of the cover member 8 to be affixed to the cooperating fastener 14 on the underside of the girth belt 2 when the cover member 8 is attached thereto. It is envisaged that the opening in each pocket may be provided along one side or at any other location in the respective pocket. Other fastening means, such as a zipper fastening may be provided for closing said

25 opening in the respective pocket.

Each insert 12 may be formed from or incorporate at least one sheet of highly absorbent and moisture wicking material adapted to fit inside a respective pocket. In one embodiment each insert 12 may comprise one or more sheets of highly

30 absorbent and moisture wicking fabric or other material rolled into a cylindrical body, optionally around a core, for example a foam core, before being inserted into a selected pocket 10 of the cover member 8. Alternatively each insert may be formed from a preformed cylindrical body rather than a sheet of material, wherein at least an outer layer of the insert is formed from a highly absorbent moisture wicking

material. For example, each insert may comprise a tubular layer of highly absorbent and moisture wicking material provided around a central core. The central core may be formed from a compressible material, such as a polymeric foam.

5

Each insert 12 may comprise or incorporate a temperature regulating material, such as a phase change material, further reducing the occurrence of sweating under the girth. In one embodiment each insert comprises multiple layers or sheets, respectively comprising at least one highly absorbent and moisture wicking material  
10 and at least one temperature regulating material. Additionally, or alternatively, said at least one layer or sheet of highly absorbent and moisture wicking material of each insert may incorporate a temperature regulating material, such as a phase change material.

15 In use, a selected number of inserts 12 are inserted into selected pockets 10 of the cover member 8 to suit the size and shape of the horse to which the girth is to be fitted to provide tailored cushioning and moisture absorption/wicking as required. Next the side portion 20 of the cover member 8 is folded over and the cover member 8 is attached to the girth belt 2 by means of the cooperating male and  
20 female hook and loop fasteners 14,16, or any other suitable fastening means. In use, moisture, such as perspiration from the horse's skin, can pass readily through the material of the cover member 8 and is absorbed into the inserts 12 contained in the selected pockets 10, wicking such moisture away from the horse's skin.

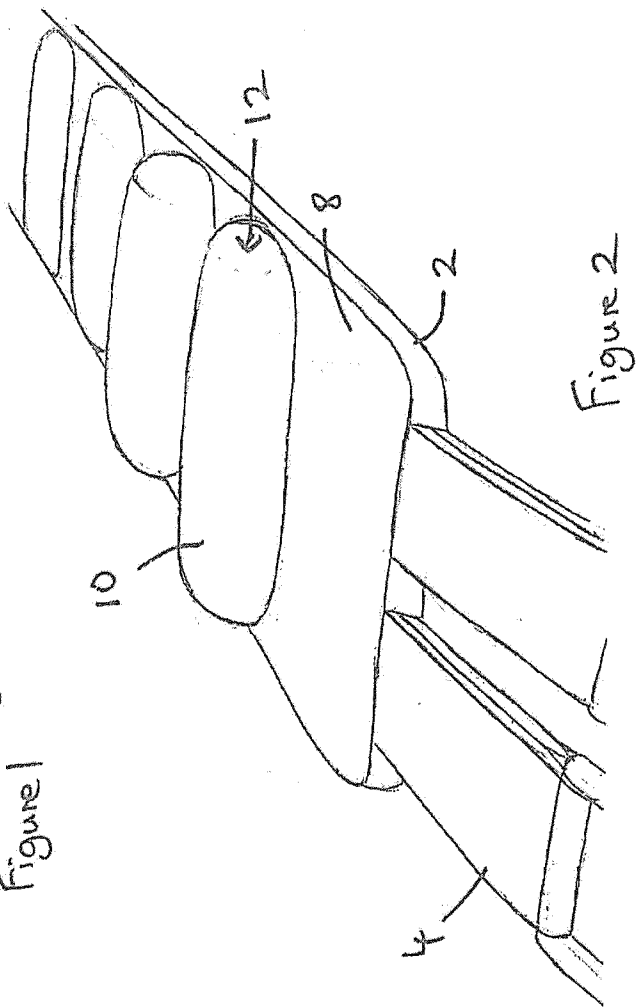
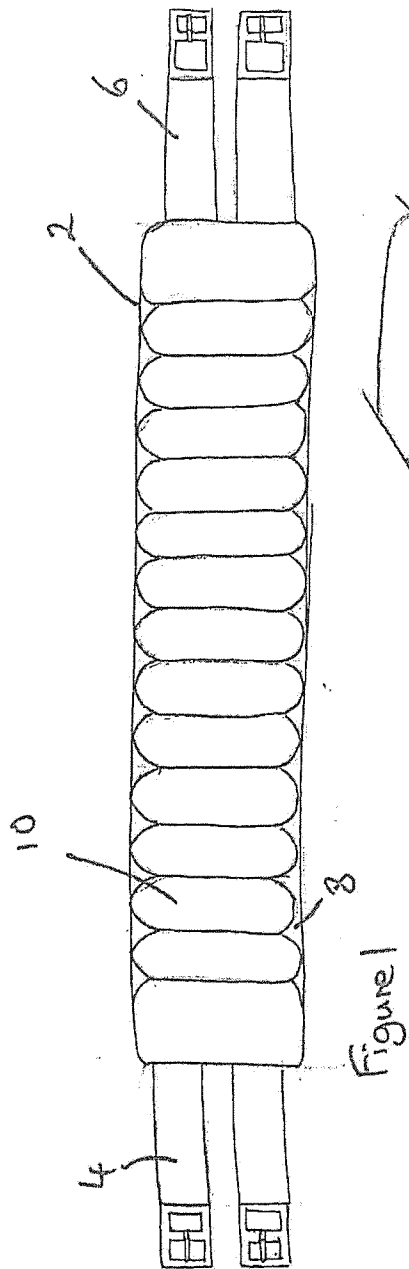
25 After use, the cover member 8 may be readily removed from the girth belt 2 by virtue of the hook and loop fasteners 14,16 and the inserts 12 can be removed from the pockets 10. The cover member 8 and inserts 12 can then be easily and quickly washed and dried prior to reuse.

30 The invention is not limited to the embodiments described herein but can be amended or modified without departing from the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

## Claims

1. A girth for a saddle comprising a girth belt having fasteners at either end for attaching the girth belt to a saddle, in use, with the girth belt extending under the barrel or the horse, a cover member attachable to the girth belt to be located between the girth belt and the horse's skin, in use, said cover member incorporating at least one pocket, at least one insert comprising or incorporating a moisture absorbent material being removably inserted into said at least one pocket.
2. A girth as claimed in claim 1, wherein said cover member is formed from a porous material.
3. A girth as claimed in claim 2, wherein said cover member is formed from a fabric.
4. A girth as claimed in claim 3, wherein at least an portion of said cover member is formed from or incorporates an elastic material.
5. A girth as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said cover member comprises a plurality of pockets, a plurality of inserts being provided to be removably inserted into selected pockets.
6. A girth as claimed in claim 5, wherein each pocket has an opening to permit insertion and removal of a respective insert therefrom.
7. A girth as claimed in claim 6, wherein said opening is provided with a closure means.
8. A girth as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said pockets extend transversely across the width of the cover member and are arranged parallel to one another.
9. A girth as claimed in claim 8, wherein each pocket is open at one end to permit insertion and removal of a respective insert.

10. A girth as claimed in claim 9, wherein the open ends of the pockets are aligned along or adjacent one side edge of the cover member, said side edge being folded over to close the open ends of the pockets.
- 5 11. A girth as claimed in any proceeding claim, wherein the cover member is attached to the girth belt by releasable fastening means.
12. A girth as claimed in claim 11, wherein said releasable fastening means comprise hook and loop fasteners attached to mating faces of the girth belt and  
10 cover member.
13. A girth as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein each insert comprises at least one sheet or layer of absorbent material.
- 15 14. A girth as claimed in claim 13, wherein said at least one sheet or layer of absorbent material comprises an outer layer of each insert.
15. A girth as claimed in claim 13, wherein each insert comprises at least one sheet of absorbent material rolled into a cylindrical body.  
20
16. A girth as claimed in any of claim 13, wherein each insert comprises at least one sheet or layer of absorbent material provided around a foam core.
17. A girth as claimed in claim 13, wherein each insert comprises a preformed body  
25 comprising or incorporating an absorbent material, said body being adapted to be insertable into a respective pocket.
18. A girth as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the girth belt is made from leather.  
30
19. A saddle incorporating a girth as claimed in any preceding claim.



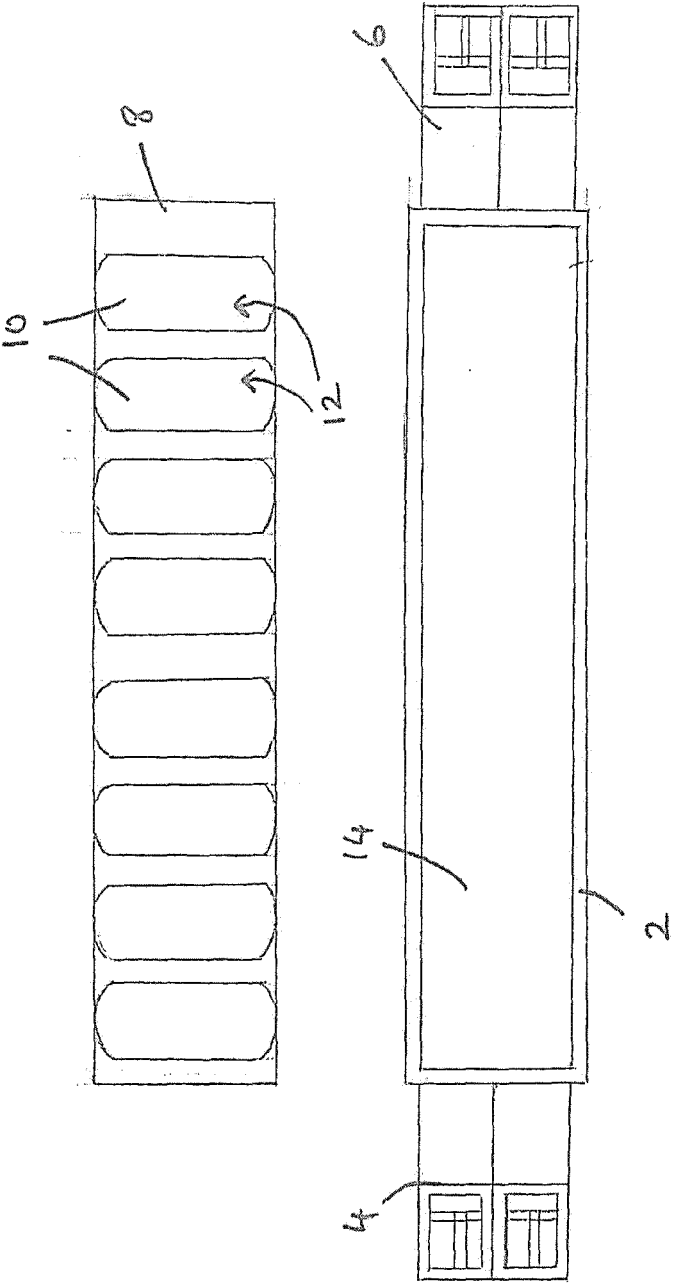
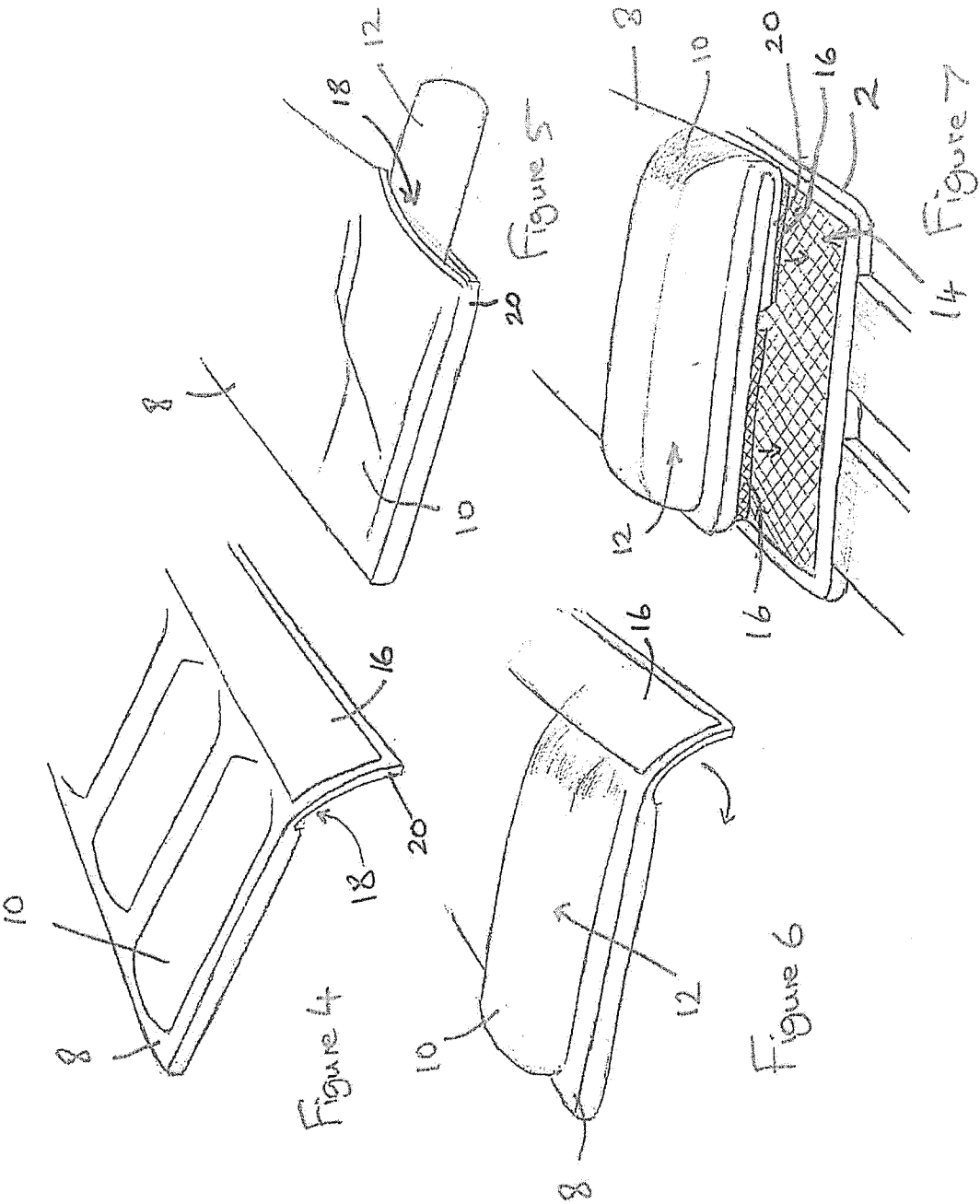


Figure 3



# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No  
PCT/EP2019/060128

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER  
INV. B68C1/14  
ADD.

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)  
B68C

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages                                                           | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| X         | US 5 566 533 A (LARISCH LINDA G [US])<br>22 October 1996 (1996-10-22)                                                                        | 1-4,<br>11-19         |
| Y         | abstract<br>column 1, lines 5-6<br>column 2, lines 4-8<br>column 2, line 47 - column 3, line 12<br>figures 2-4                               | 5-10                  |
| Y         | -----<br>US 306 420 A (WILLIAM H. OSMER)<br>14 October 1884 (1884-10-14)<br>page 1, line 25 - page 2, line 39<br>figures 1-7<br>-----<br>-/- | 5-10                  |



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents :

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"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

21 June 2019

Date of mailing of the international search report

01/07/2019

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No  
PCT/EP2019/060128

| C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT |                                                                                                                                                                            |                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Category*                                            | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages                                                                                         | Relevant to claim No. |
| A                                                    | EP 1 232 995 A2 (MONDIAL IND LTD [US])<br>21 August 2002 (2002-08-21)<br>abstract<br>paragraphs [0021], [0026], [0031] -<br>[0036]<br>figures 1-7<br>claims 16-20<br>----- | 1                     |
| A                                                    | US 4 999 980 A (MCGOWAN JOHN C [GB])<br>19 March 1991 (1991-03-19)<br>abstract<br>column 2<br>figures 1a-2a<br>-----                                                       | 1                     |

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/EP2019/060128

| Patent document<br>cited in search report | Publication<br>date | Patent family<br>member(s) | Publication<br>date                                                                                                                                              |
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| US 5566533                                | A                   | 22-10-1996                 | NONE                                                                                                                                                             |
| US 306420                                 | A                   | 14-10-1884                 | NONE                                                                                                                                                             |
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| US 4999980                                | A                   | 19-03-1991                 | NONE                                                                                                                                                             |