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(54) REFILLABLE DISPENSING CARTON **SYSTEM**

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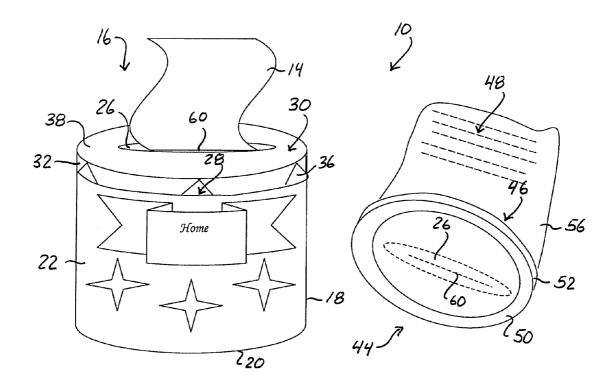
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ABSTRACT

A dispenser system for dispensing a clip of stack sheets of a web material includes an upright carton body with a clip of the stacked sheets carried within the carton body. A first lid is non-removably attached to the carton body such that the first lid cannot be removed from the carton body without permanent deformation of the first lid or the carton body. The first lid includes a sacrificial separation portion configured to allow a user to separate at least a section of the first lid from the carton body after depletion of the initial clip. A replacement lid assembly includes lid structure and a replacement clip of stacked sheets of web material. The lid structure is attachable to the carton body or a remaining portion of the first lid.



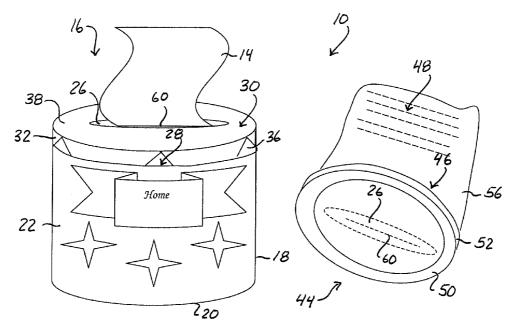


Fig. 1

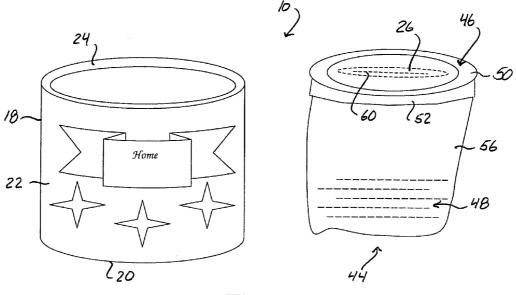
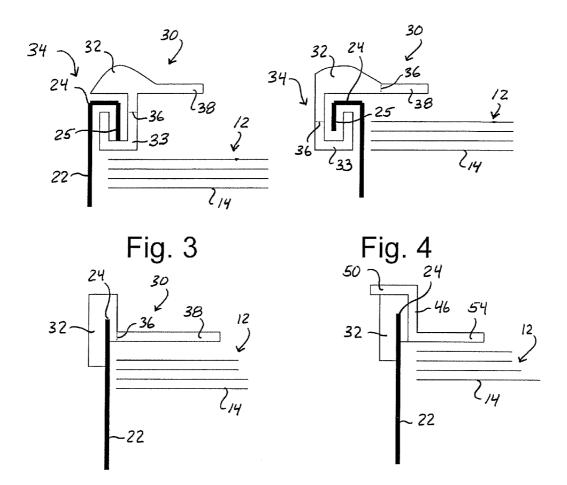
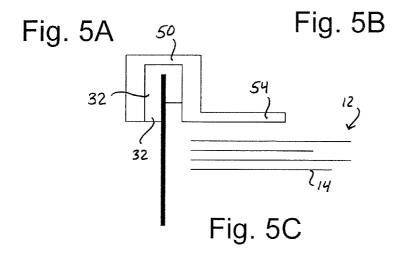


Fig. 2





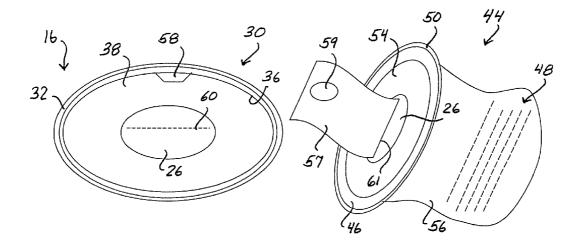


Fig. 6A

Fig. 6B

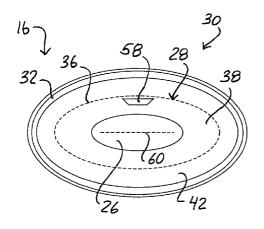


Fig. 7A

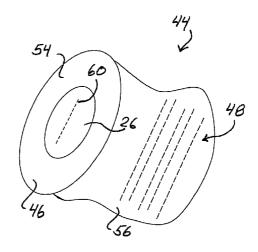


Fig. 7B

REFILLABLE DISPENSING CARTON SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] Facial tissue cartons come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but they can generally be classified as either one of two basic styles. One style is the flat carton and the other is the upright carton. In a flat carton, the tissues are laid flat into the carton and are withdrawn from the top of the carton or through an opening in the top which partially extends downward into the front sidewall. The tissues within the carton may be interfolded for pop-up dispensing or merely laid on top of one another for reach-in dispensing. In an upright carton, the tissues are folded into an inverted U-shaped clip and are typically interfolded for pop-up dispensing. Each tissue is singularly withdrawn through a dispensing opening in the top of the carton, which may contain a polymeric film having a slit to hold the popped up tissue in place.

[0002] Decorative upright dispensing cartons have gained wide acceptance by the consuming public, particularly cartons having a circular, oval, or some other rounded sidewall shape. Such cartons typically include decorative colors, graphics, or indicia on the visible sidewalls. The cartons may be designed to coordinate or compliment the user's home décor, and are often displayed in highly visible places as a decorative accessory item.

[0003] A clip of stacked web sheets, such as facial tissue sheets, is inserted into the decorative carton during manufacture, with the top or lid subsequently permanently attached to the carton sidewalls to define a complete disposable dispenser package. Located within or adjacent to the dispensing window in the lid is a dispensing window comprising a slit flexible film material. This material protects the upper tissue sheets that would otherwise be exposed through the dispensing slot, and also serves to hold a partially dispensed sheet within the window for subsequent withdrawal.

[0004] A potential drawback of the decorative upright dispensers is that, due to the carton size and rounded or curved shape, the size of the tissue clip and number of sheets carried in the dispenser is somewhat limited. The decorative dispenser thus has a limited life, and certain consumers may find it frustrating to have to dispose of the carton. Value perception issues may arise if consumers believe that they have paid a premium price for the decorative dispenser, yet have to dispose of the dispenser after a relatively short life.

[0005] Refillable dispensers having removable lids are well known and widely used for dispensing various embodiments of stacked sheets of web materials. For example, dispensers with removable lids are typically used for dispensing replaceable clips of pre-moistened wipes from a film bag inserted into the dispenser. These removable lid configurations are, however, easily recognized as removable and do not present the perception of a fresh or "new" product to the consumer. The perception of a "new" dispenser is far more valuable to a consumer than an easily recognized refillable container. Many consumers would rather have their guests believe that the tissue box presented to them is a new product rather that an old carton that has been refilled. This perceived extravagance may have particular appeal to consumers and marketing value to manufacturers.

[0006] Also, with upright carton dispensers, the clip of stacked sheets must typically be folded and oriented a certain way within the container, particularly with oval or other

rounded-shape decorative carton dispensers. This requirement would tend to make refilling such cartons burdensome and confusing for certain consumers.

[0007] Accordingly, a need exists for a dispenser system particularly suited for higher end decorative dispensers that provides the economy and value of a refillable dispenser without eliminating the perception of a fresh, new product with each refill.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] Objects and advantages of the invention will be set forth in part in the following description, or may be obvious from the description, or may be learned through practice of the invention.

[0009] In general, the present invention is directed to an upright carton dispenser system for dispensing individual sheets from a clip of stacked sheets contained within the dispenser. Although the dispenser system is particularly suited as a high-end decorative dispenser for dispensing facial tissues, this use is not a limitation of the system. The clip of stacked sheet material may comprise, for instance, any suitable tissue product or textile product. For instance, the sheet material may comprise a tissue product, such as a facial tissue, a stacked bath tissue product, pre-moistened wipers, industrial wipers, napkins, stacked paper towels, other various wipers, and the like. In other embodiments, the sheet material may comprise stacked layers of nonwoven webs, such as meltblown webs, spunbond webs, hydroentangled webs, webs containing a mixture of cellulose fibers and synthetic fibers, and laminates thereof. The clips may contain the sheet material as individual sheets that can be interfolded together or as a folded continuous sheet that includes perforation lines for separating one sheet from the stack.

[0010] In a particular embodiment, the dispenser includes a carton body defined by a bottom, sidewall(s), and a lid, the carton body defining an internal volume for receipt of a clip of stacked sheets of a web material. Although the dispenser has particular usefulness as a curved wall dispenser, such as an oval shaped carton, it may also be embodied as a rectangular shaped carton. The lid has a dispensing window through which individual sheets from the clip of stacked sheets are pulled by a user.

[0011] The dispenser system includes a first lid non-removably attached to the carton body such that the lid cannot be removed without permanent deformation of the first lid or the carton body. In other words, the lid or the carton body would be deformed or essentially destroyed so as not to be usable. The first lid has a sacrificial separation portion configured to allow a user to break, bend, tear, separate, or otherwise disengage at least a section of the first lid from the carton body after depletion of the clip. The complete first lid or sections thereof are then easily removable from the carton body.

[0012] The dispenser system includes a replacement lid assembly that includes lid structure and a replacement clip of stacked sheets of web material. The replacement clip is insertable into the internal volume of the carton body once the first lid has been removed, and the lid structure is then non-removably attached to the carton body or a remaining portion of the first lid.

[0013] In a particular embodiment, the first lid comprises an outer ring that is locked to an upper edge of the carton sidewalls by non-releasable interlocking structure. The sacrificial separation portion may include a weakened section in the ring that allows a user to separate the ring in order to

release the interlocking structure and remove the complete ring from the carton body. The weakened structure may include any combination of a notch, score line, perforation, or thinned section of the ring.

[0014] The lid structure of the replacement lid assembly may include various configurations. In one embodiment, the structure includes an outer ring and engaging structure for non-releasable attachment to the carton body. The lid structure may include the same or a different type of sacrificial portion as the first lid so as to also be removable from the carton body.

[0015] In still another embodiment, the first lid includes an outer ring that is permanently attached to an upper edge of the carton sidewalls and a plate circumscribed by the ring through which the dispensing window is defined. The sacrificial portion may include a weakened section between the ring and the plate that allows a user to separate the plate from the ring. For example, this weakened portion may include any combination of a score line, perforation, or thinned section between the ring and the plate that allows a user to pull the plate away from the ring, or push the plate into the carton body to separate it from the ring. With this embodiment, the lid structure of the replacement lid assembly may include a plate member that attaches to the outer ring of the first lid that remains attached to the carton body. For example, the plate member may attach to a circumferential flange on the outer ring of the first lid, and may include a ring of adhesive for this purpose. In an alternative embodiment, the lid structure of the replacement lid assembly may include a ring and plate member, with the ring attachable to the ring of the first lid, for example by fitting over the ring of the first lid, or by attaching to an inner circumferential surface of the ring of the first lid.

[0016] The replacement clip of stacked sheets may be contained within a film bag that is attached to an underside of the replacement lid structure. This film bag may extend across the dispensing window in the lid structure and include a dispensing slit formed therein through which the sheets are withdrawn.

[0017] The invention also encompasses embodiments of the replacement lid assembly alone that are provided for subsequent configuration with a dispenser carton.

[0018] Other features and aspects of the present disclosure are discussed in greater detail below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] A full and enabling disclosure of the present invention, including the best mode thereof to one skilled in the art, is set forth more particularly in the remainder of the specification, including reference to the accompanying figures, in which:

[0020] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a dispensing system according to the invention;

[0021] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 1 after removal of the lid from the dispenser;

[0022] FIG. 3 is a side plan view of an embodiment of locking structure between the dispenser lid and carton body; [0023] FIG. 4 is a side plan view of an alternative embodiment of interlocking structure between the dispenser lid and carton body;

[0024] FIG. 5A is a side plan view of a dispenser lid and associated removable plate member;

[0025] FIGS. 5B and 5C are side plan views of embodiments of replacement lid structure that may be configured with the structure of FIG. 5A:

[0026] FIGS. 6A and 6B are partial perspective views of an alternative embodiment of a dispensing system;

[0027] FIGS. 7A and 7B are partial perspective views of a different embodiment of a dispensing system in accordance with aspects of the invention.

[0028] Repeat use of reference characters in the present specification and drawings is intended to represent the same or analogous features or elements of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0029] Reference will now be made in detail to one or more embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the figures. It should be understood that each embodiment is provided by way of explanation of the invention, and not meant as a limitation of the invention. Features illustrated or described with respect to one embodiment may be used with another embodiment to yield still a further embodiment.

[0030] In general, a dispenser system 10 is illustrated for dispensing individual sheets 14 of a web material from a clip 12 of stacked sheets contained within the dispenser. Although the dispenser system 10 is particularly suited for dispensing facial tissues, this use is not a limitation of the dispenser. The clip of stacked sheet material 12 may comprise, for instance, any suitable tissue product or textile product. For instance, the sheet material may comprise a tissue product, such as a facial tissue, a stacked bath tissue product, premoistened wipers, industrial wipers, napkins, stacked paper towels, other various wipers, and the like. In other embodiments, the sheet material may comprise stacked layers of nonwoven webs, such as meltblown webs, spunbond webs, hydroentangled webs, webs containing a mixture of cellulose fibers and synthetic fibers, and laminates thereof. The clips may contain the sheet material as individual sheets that can be interfolded together or as a folded continuous sheet that includes perforation lines for separating one sheet from the stack.

[0031] In particular embodiments, the dispenser system 10 includes an initial dispenser 16 and a replacement lid assembly 44. The dispenser 16 includes a carton body 18 defined by a bottom 20, sidewall 22, and a lid 30. The sidewall may include a continuous sidewall structure, such as in an oval carton, or a segmented sidewall structure, such as in a rectangular carton. The carton body 18 may be made of any conventional material known and used in the construction of dispenser cartons. The carton body 18 defines an internal volume for receipt of an initial clip of stacked sheets, which may be interfolded. Although the dispenser 16 has particular usefulness as a curved wall dispenser, such as the oval dispenser illustrated in the figures, the dispenser 16 may embody a rectangular shaped carton. The lid 30 has a dispensing window 26 through which individual sheets 14 from the clip of stacked sheets 12 are pulled by a user. This window 26 may be initially sealed by a removable paperboard "surfboard", and may further include a film barrier sheet over exposed portions of the underlying sheets, with the film having a slit 60 through which individual sheets 14 are pulled by the user.

[0032] The lid 30 initially provided with the dispenser 16 is not removable from the carton body 18 without permanent deformation of the lid 30 or the carton body 18. The lid 30 cannot be removed from the carton body 18 and then reattached to the carton body without destroying either the carton body 18 or lid 30. The lid 30 does, however, have a sacrificial separation portion 28 that is configured to allow a user to break, bend, tear, separate, or otherwise permanently

deform and disengage at least a section of the first lid 30 from the carton body 18 after depletion of the clip. Activation or use of this separation portion 28 results in a permanent deformation of the lid 30 and renders the lid essentially unusable. The separation portion 28 is designed to allow removal of the complete lid 30, or sections thereof, from the carton body 18. [0033] The dispenser system 10 includes a replacement lid assembly 44 that includes lid structure 46 and a replacement clip 48 of stacked sheets of web material. The replacement clip 48 is insertable into the internal volume of the carton body 18 after the first lid 30 has been removed. The lid structure 46 is then attached to the carton body 18, or a remaining portion of the first lid 30.

[0034] In particular embodiments illustrated in the figures, the first lid 30 includes an outer ring component 32 that is locked to an upper edge 24 of the carton sidewalls 22 by non-releasable interlocking structure 34. This structure 34 may be any configuration of structure between the sidewalls 22 or top edge 24 of the carton body 18 and complimentary structure on the ring 32 that prevents the ring (and thus the lid 30) from being pulled off of the carton body 18. For example, in the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 3, the ring component 32 of the lid 30 includes a downwardly extending hook member 33 that engages within an oppositely oriented hook member 25 formed in the upper edge 24 of sidewall 22. In this embodiment, the ring member does not extend circumferentially beyond the sidewall 22. In the embodiment of FIG. 4, the ring 32 extends beyond the sidewall 22, and the hook member 33 on the underside of the ring 32 extends radially inward and engages with the oppositely oriented hook 25 formed in the upper edge 24 of the sidewall 22. The components have a sufficient degree of flexibility to allow the lid 30 to be pressed onto the carton body 18 during initial manufacture of the dispenser 16. However, once the hook portions have engaged, they cannot be readily separated without damaging the lid 30 or carton body 18.

[0035] It should be readily appreciated that the engaging structures represented in FIGS. 3 and 4 are merely exemplary of any number of interlocking engaging structures that may be used between the components within the scope and spirit of the invention.

[0036] In other embodiments, the lid 30 may be attached to the carton body or sidewalls 22 by other means. For example, in the embodiment of FIG. 5A, the ring 32 includes a slot on the underside thereof and is press fitted onto the upper portion of the sidewall 22. An adhesive may be used to permanently set the components.

[0037] The sacrificial separation portion 28 can vary widely. In the embodiments of FIGS. 1 through 4, the separation portion 28 includes one or more weakened sections 36 in the ring 32 or another component of the lid 30 that allows a user to remove or separate a part of the ring 32 in order to release the interlocking structure 34 and remove the complete ring 32, or portion of the ring 32, from the carton body 18. The weakened structure 36 may include any combination of a notch, score line, perforation, or thinned section of the ring. For example, in the embodiment of FIG. 1, the weakened structure 36 includes a series of notches formed around an outer circumferential band of the lid 30. By grasping the band between the notches 36, a user can bend or break away sections of the band and release the engaging structure 34 between the lid 30 and upper edge 24 of the carton sidewall 22. Similarly, in the embodiment of FIG. 4, the weakened section 36 includes a score line defined around the outer circumferential band of the ring 32 along which a user can completely separate the hook member 33 from the rest of the ring 30 and thus release the lid 30. The hook member 33 may also be removed or may remain attached to the carton sidewall. In the embodiment of FIG. 3, the weakened section 36 is also defined as a score line that allows a user to essentially peel the upper portion of the ring 32 away from the hook member 33. A pull-tab (such as the tab 58 illustrated in the embodiment of FIG. 6A) may be provided at any location on the ring 32 for this purpose.

[0038] The lid structure 46 of the replacement lid assembly 44 may include various configurations. For example, in various embodiments illustrated in the figures, the structure 46 includes an outer ring 50 and engaging structure 52 for attachment to the carton body 18. The engaging structure 52 may include the same or similar structure discussed above with respect to lid 30 such that, once attached to the carton body 18, the replacement lid structure 46 is not releasable from the carton body without deformation of the lid structure 46 or carton body 18. In still other embodiments, the engaging structure 52 may be releasable from the carton body 18. For example the engaging structure 52 may be a downwardly extending annular ring that simply is press fitted to the inner circumferential surface of the carton body 18 (FIG. 2) onto or within a remaining ring 32 from the initial lid 30. The lid structure may also include the same or a different sacrificial portion as compared to weakened sections 36 discussed above with respect to the first lid 30 so as to also be removable from the carton body 18.

[0039] In the embodiment of FIGS. 5A through 5C, the first lid 30 includes an outer ring 32 that is permanently attached to the upper edge 24 of the carton sidewalls 22 and an interior plate 38 circumscribed by the ring 32. The dispensing window 26 is defined through this plate 38. The sacrificial portion may include a weakened section 36 defined between the ring 32 and the plate 38 that allows a user to separate the plate 38 from the ring 32. For example, this weakened section may include any combination of a score line, perforation, or thinned section between the ring 32 and the plate 38 that allows a user to pull the plate 38 away from the ring 32, or push the plate 38 into the carton body 18 to separate it from the ring 32. In FIG. 5a, a score line 36 is provided for this purpose.

[0040] Referring to FIG. 5B, the lid structure 46 of the replacement lid assembly 44 includes an L-shaped ring 50 that circumscribes a plate member 54. The ring 50 engages along the top and inner circumferential surface of the first ring 32 that remains attached to the carton side wall 22. An adhesive strip may be provided on the L-shaped ring 50 for a more secure attachment.

[0041] In the embodiment of FIG. 5C, the ring 50 has an inverted U-shape and fits over the ring 32 from the initial lid 30. Again, an adhesive may be provided on one of the interior surfaces of the ring 50 for a more secure attachment between the components.

[0042] FIGS. 6A and 6B reflect an embodiment of the dispenser system 10 that may incorporate the features of FIGS. 5A through 5C. Referring to FIG. 6A, the first lid 30 includes a weakened section 36 between the ring 32 and plate 38. Once the initial stack of sheets has been depleted from the dispenser 16, a user can unfold and grasp a tab 58 attached or formed as a component of the plate 38 to pull the plate from the lid 30 with the ring 32 remaining attached to the carton body 18. A replacement clip of sheets can then be loaded into

the carton body 18. This replacement clip may be provided separate from the lid structure 46 of the replacement lid assembly 44, or may be an attached component thereof. The lid structure 46 includes an outer ring 50 and associated plate member 54, with the ring 50 fitting onto the ring 32, as discussed above.

[0043] For example, in the illustrated embodiments, the replacement clip of stacked sheets is contained within a film bag 56 or other suitable receptacle that is attached to an underside of the replacement lid structure 46. This film bag 56 may extend across the dispensing window 26 in the lid structure 46 and include a dispensing slit 60 formed therein through which the individual sheets are withdrawn.

[0044] Referring to FIG. 6B, the film bag 56 may also include an extension portion 57 that extends through the dispensing window 26. This portion 57 may include a hanging member 59, such as the illustrated hole, a hook, an adhesive patch, or any other suitable hanging structure that allows the assembly 44 to be hung from another member, such as a display or storage rack. The extension portion 57 may be removable along a score line 61 that also defines the slit 60 once the portion 57 is removed.

[0045] In the embodiment of FIGS. 7A and 7B, the weakened section 36 is defined in the plate 38 of the first ring 30 such that the user removes a portion of the plate upon pulling the tab 58, leaving the ring 32 and a portion of the plate 38 attached to the carton body 18. The remaining plate portion may be considered as forming a flange 42 on the ring 32. The lid structure 46 of the replacement lid assembly 44 includes a plate member 54 without ring structure. The plate 54 is simply pressed into the ring 32 and supported by the flange 42. A band or bead of adhesive may be provided on the underside of the plate along the circumferential edge thereof for a more secure attachment to the flange 42.

[0046] Modifications and variations to the embodiments illustrated and described above may be practiced by those of ordinary skill in the art, without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. In addition, it should be understood that aspects of the various embodiments may be interchanged both in whole or in part. Furthermore, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the foregoing description is by way of example only, and is not intended to limit the invention so further described in such appended claims.

What is claimed is:

- 1. A dispenser system for dispensing a clip of stack sheets of a web material, comprising:
 - an upright carton body defined by a bottom and sidewall and defining an internal volume for receipt of a clip of stacked sheets of a web material;
 - a clip of stacked sheets of web material carried within said carton body;
 - a first lid non-removably attached to said carton body such that said first lid cannot be removed from said carton body without permanent deformation of said first lid or said carton body, said first lid comprising a dispensing window through which individual sheets from said clip are pulled by a user;
 - said first lid further comprising a sacrificial separation portion configured to allow a user to deform and separate at least a section of said first lid from said carton body after depletion of said clip;
 - a replacement lid assembly comprising a lid structure and a replacement clip of stacked sheets of web material,

- said replacement clip insertable into said internal volume through the space left by said removed portion of said first lid, and said lid structure being attachable to said carton body or a remaining portion of said first lid.
- 2. The dispenser system as in claim 1, wherein said first lid comprises an outer ring that is locked to an upper edge of said sidewalls by non-releasable interlocking structure, said sacrificial separation portion comprising a weakened section in said ring that allows a user to separate said ring to release said interlocking structure and remove said ring from said carton body.
- 3. The dispenser system as in claim 2, wherein said weakened structure comprises any combination of a notch, score line, perforation, or thinned section of said ring.
- **4**. The dispenser system as in claim **2**, wherein said lid structure of said replacement lid assembly comprises an outer ring and engaging structure for non-releasable attachment to said carton body.
- 5. The dispenser as in claim 1, wherein said first lid comprises an outer ring that is permanently attached to an upper edge of said sidewalls and a plate circumscribed by said ring through which said dispensing window is defined, said sacrificial separation portion comprising a weakened section between said ring and said plate that allows a user to separate said plate from said ring.
- 6. The dispenser as in claim 5, wherein said weakened structure comprises any combination of a score line, perforation, or thinned section between said ring and said plate.
- 7. The dispenser as in claim 5, wherein said lid structure of said replacement lid assembly comprises a plate member that attaches to said outer ring of said first lid.
- 8. The dispenser as in claim 5, wherein said lid structure of said replacement lid assembly comprises a ring and plate member, with said ring attachable to said ring of said first lid.
- **9**. The dispenser as in claim **8**, wherein said ring of said replacement lid assembly attaches over said ring of said first lid.
- 10. The dispenser as in claim 8, wherein said ring of said replacement lid assembly attaches to an inner circumferential surface of said ring of said first lid.
- 11. The dispenser as in claim 1, wherein said replacement clip is contained within a film bag attached to an underside of said lid structure.
- 12. The dispenser as in claim 11, wherein said film bag extends across a dispensing window in said lid structure and has a dispensing slit formed therein.
- 13. The dispenser as in claim 11, wherein said film bag comprises a portion that extends through said dispensing window in said lid structure, said portion comprising a hanging member and being removable from said film bag.
- 14. A replacement lid assembly for use with a dispenser for dispensing a clip of stack sheets of a web material, the dispenser having an upright carton body with an internal volume defined by a bottom and sidewalls, said replacement lid assembly comprising lid structure and a replacement clip of stacked sheets of web material carried within a receptacle configured on an underside of said lid structure, said receptacle and replacement clip insertable into the internal volume of the dispenser with said lid structure being attachable to the dispenser.
- 15. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 14, wherein said lid structure comprises an outer ring and engaging structure for non-releasable attachment to the carton body of the dispenser.

- 16. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 13, wherein said lid structure comprises a sacrificial separation portion configured to allow a user to deform and remove at least a section of said lid structure from said dispenser after depletion of said replacement clip.
- 17. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 16, wherein said lid structure comprises an outer ring with engaging structure that non-releasably locks to an upper edge of the carton, said sacrificial separation portion comprising a weakened section in said ring that allows a user to separate said ring to release said interlocking structure and remove said ring from said carton body.
- 18. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 17, wherein said weakened structure comprises any combination of a notch, score line, perforation, or thinned section of said ring.
- 19. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 14, wherein said lid structure comprises a plate member that attaches to an outer ring on the dispenser carton body.
- 20. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 14, wherein said lid structure comprises a ring and plate member.

- 21. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 20, wherein said ring is configured to attach over a ring on the dispenser carton body.
- 22. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 20, wherein said ring is configured to attach to an inner circumferential surface of a ring on the dispenser carton body.
- 23. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 14, wherein said receptacle comprises a film bag attached to an underside of said lid structure.
- **24**. The replacement lid assembly as in claim **23**, wherein said film bag extends across a dispensing window in said lid structure and has a dispensing slit formed therein.
- 25. The replacement lid assembly as in claim 23, wherein said film bag comprises a portion that extends through a dispensing window in said lid structure, said portion comprising a hanging member and being removable from said film bag.

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