

Nov. 26, 1957

D. W. STEVICK

2,814,381

CONTAINER FOR DRESSED POULTRY AND THE LIKE

Filed Aug. 22, 1955

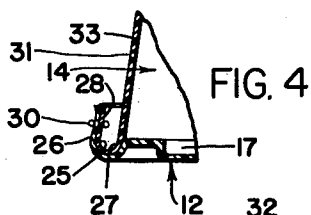
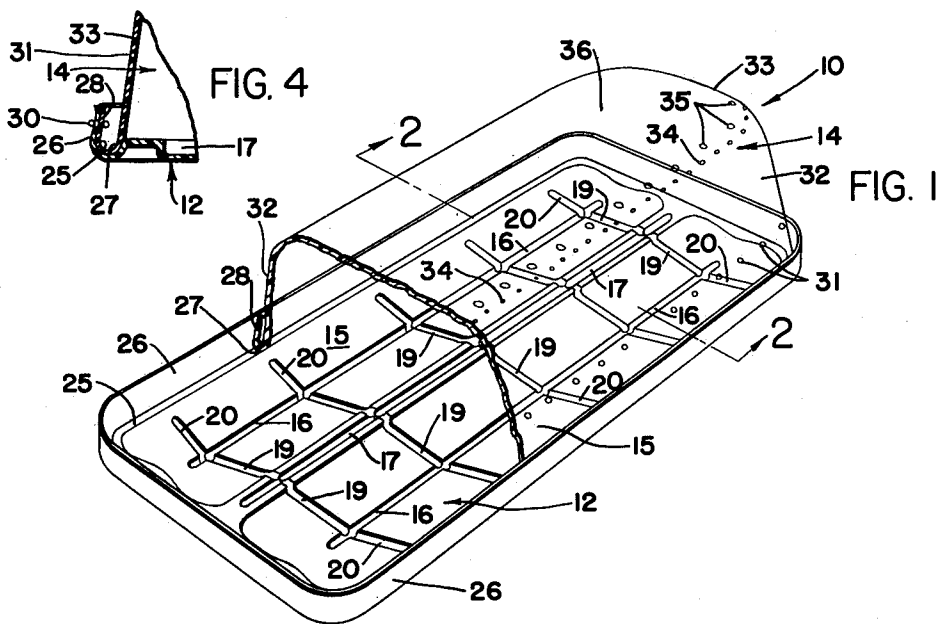


FIG. 4

FIG. 2

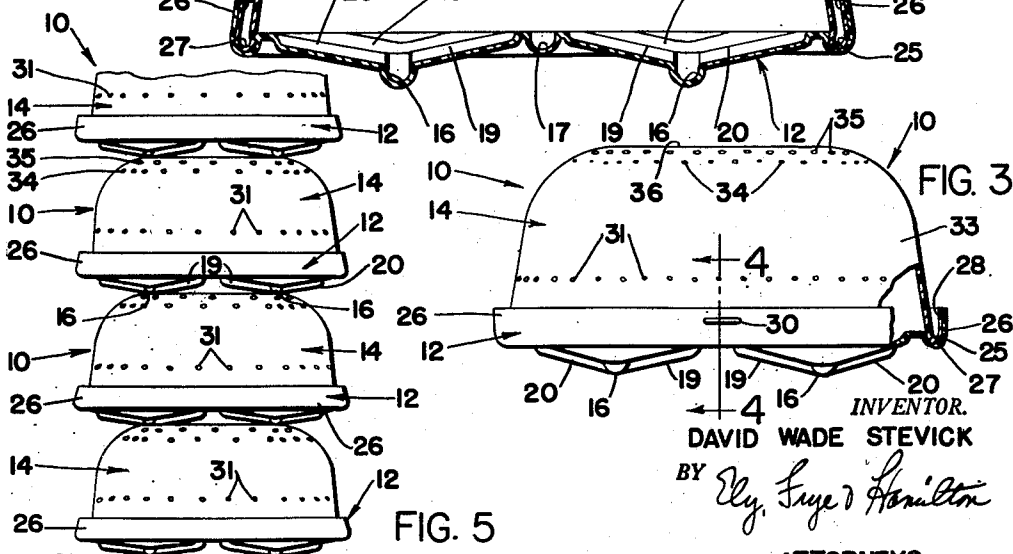
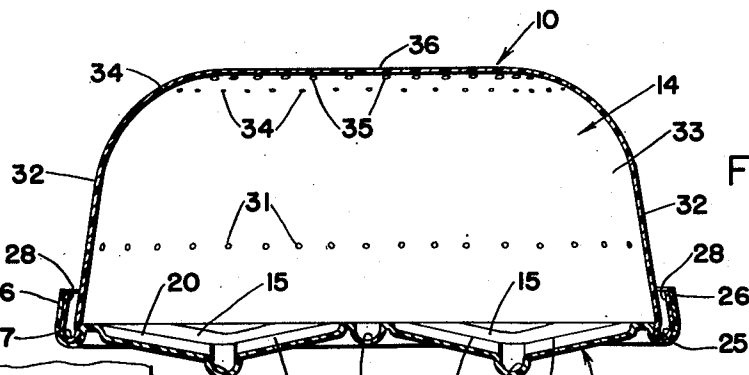
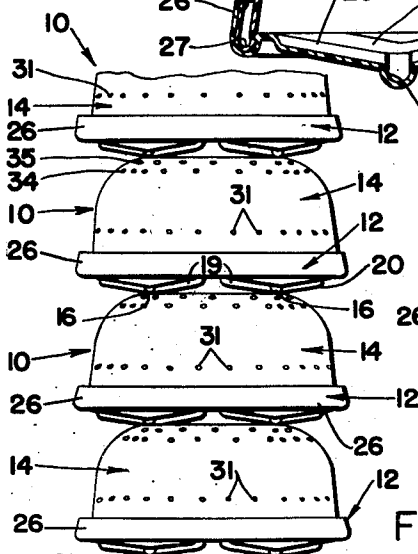


FIG. 3

FIG. 5



INVENTOR.
DAVID WADE STEVICK
BY *Ely, Sayer & Hamilton*
ATTORNEYS

2,814,381

CONTAINER FOR DRESSED POULTRY AND THE LIKE

David Wade Stevick, Southern Pines, N. C.

Application August 22, 1955, Serial No. 529,864

4 Claims. (Cl. 206—45.34)

The present invention relates to a container or package for merchandising dressed, cut-up poultry, meats, fish, and the like. More particularly, the invention relates to a container of novel construction for packaging either fresh or frozen, ready-to-cook, cut-up poultry, and other cuts of meats and sea foods, so that such foods can be properly stored, shipped or displayed without rehandling after once being packed.

The containers or packages currently available for the marketing of dressed poultry and other cut-up meats and sea foods, are of many styles and varieties, including the well known paper or cardboard tray wrapped in cellophane, which is heat sealed to keep the package airtight. However, none of these has proven to be entirely satisfactory under all the varied conditions that are met with in the present day marketing of these products, in both the fresh and frozen state.

One of the objects of this invention is to provide a container or package that is sanitary, eye-appealing, and waterproof, and which constitutes a durable means for shipping, storing or displaying fresh or frozen, ready-to-cook, cut-up poultry, meats, fish, and the like, so as to preserve such foods from ordinary contamination due to handling or rehandling during the various stages of merchandising.

Another object is to provide a container or package of the character referred to wherein controlled ventilation means are provided so that when the contents are packaged and stored for a period prior to freezing, the container is not completely airtight and the possibility of spoilage which occurs rapidly in an unfrozen, airtight container is lessened.

A further object is to provide a container for packaging dressed poultry and other cuts of meat and the like, either fresh or frozen, which comprises a preferably opaque base or platter and a relatively deep, transparent cover permitting inspection of the contents without unpacking, both of which should be constructed preferably of plastic materials, impervious to moisture, with provision being made for draining excess body fluids away from the food into the bottom of the platter.

Another object is to provide means for ventilating the package in a controlled manner during the freezing thereof so as to minimize the accumulation of frost within the container which would obscure vision of the contents, without permitting any appreciable or noticeable "freezer burn" of the contents due to too rapid evaporation of moisture therefrom.

A further object is to provide a container of the character referred to wherein the base or platter is formed with a pattern of grooves therein which provide space for fluid draining from the contents of the package, and wherein the bottom of said platter is formed with parallel downwardly sloping areas that provide spaced longitudinal supports for the container, so that the latter may be properly supported in a display case or so that a plurality of same may be properly stacked one upon another,

while allowing the refrigerating medium to contact substantially all the outside area of the container.

Other objects are to provide a container of the character referred to which is inexpensive and capable of reuse in a home refrigerator; which is so constructed as to permit continued refrigeration during shipping to the market and display for the consumer; which permits the contents to be visible from all sides, except the bottom; and which has sufficient inherent structural strength that it may be stacked or placed in shipping boxes or in display cases without damage to the contents.

These and other objects will be apparent from the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the container, the transparent top being partially broken away.

Fig. 2 is a transverse sectional view of the container, taken substantially on line 2—2 of Fig. 1,

Fig. 3 is an end view of the container,

Fig. 4 is a fragmentary sectional view taken substantially on line 4—4 of Fig. 3, and

Fig. 5 is a view showing a plurality of containers stacked as for shipping or display.

The package or container made according to the invention, is indicated generally by the numeral 10 and includes but two parts, a preferably opaque platter or base 12 of generally rectangular shape, and a preferably transparent, relatively deep, top or cover 14. The cover 14 is formed with an open bottom and with outwardly and downwardly sloping sides, the lower edges of which cooperate with the base 12 to form the container, as will be later explained.

The base member 12 is formed in one piece of a suitable material by conventional molding and forming techniques. The material may be a plastic material such as a rigid acetate or styrene, or other similar materials; or it may be a metallic material such as aluminum sheet or foil. In any event, the material forming the base 12 should be impervious to moisture, not insulative to cold to any marked degree, light in weight and should have an inherent structural strength to enable it to retain the formed configuration as shown in the drawing.

The base 12 includes a pair of spaced, downwardly sloping areas 15, extending longitudinally for almost the entire length of the base, the lower portion of each area 15 terminating in a longitudinal groove or channel 16. Between the sloping areas 15 and in a higher plane, is a central longitudinal groove 17, and a plurality of spaced, transverse grooves 19 connect the central groove 17 to both of the grooves 16, while a plurality of shorter transverse grooves 20 extend opposite each of the transverse grooves 19 from both of the grooves 16 to points adjacent the side edges of the base member 12.

The grooves 16, 17, 19 and 20 form a network or lattice of drainage channels which convey excess fluids away from the contents of the package and distribute the fluids over a wide area, so that such fluids are completely out of contact with the contents and will not form unsightly pools or puddles. Any freshly killed meat, especially poultry, contains body fluids which drain out of the meat when being dressed for packaging. If the meat were to be quick frozen while in contact with a pool of liquid or even a small quantity of moisture, the quality and grade of the product could be materially affected. The drainage, provided by grooves 19 and 20 and the reservoir provided by the channels 16 removes a sufficient amount of body fluids so that the meat may be quick frozen without injury to the quality of the product. It is apparent that the sloping areas 15 between the network of drainage grooves will also drain fluids into the lower channels 16.

Inwardly of the outer periphery of the base 12 is a continuous circumferential groove 25, and outwardly of the latter groove is a continuous raised edge or flange 26. The groove 25 and flange 26 provide locking and positioning means for the cover member 14 when placed over the base, as will be later referred to.

The cover member 14 is formed in one piece of a suitable transparent or translucent material by conventional molding and forming techniques. The material may be a plastic material such as an acrylic or acetate, or other similar materials. In any event, the material forming the cover member 14 should be impervious to moisture, not insulative to cold to any marked degree, light in weight and should have sufficient rigidity to retain the formed configuration as shown in the drawings.

The continuous lower edge of the top 14 is formed as a bead 27 and includes an upstanding flange 28 which is preferably slightly smaller than flange 26 of the base, and this edge of the cover 14 is preferably of such dimensions as to be frictionally held within the groove 25 and against the flange 26 of the base member 12. However, to ensure that the top will remain fastened to the base during use of the container, wire clamps or staples 30 may be inserted at selected locations through the engaged flanges 26 and 28 (see Fig. 4). Also, conventional "Scotch" tape, or the like, may be wrapped around the container to assist in holding the two parts tightly together.

The top may also be provided with a series of small diameter holes, such as pin holes, to permit controlled ventilation of and evaporation of excess moisture from the packaged contents, so that food will not spoil therein as it frequently does in an airtight container. As shown in a preferred embodiment of the invention, a circumferential band of such small spaced holes, indicated at 31, is located on the sides 32 and ends 33 of the top member 14, just above the top of flange 28. A second band of small spaced holes 34 may be located in sides 32 and ends 33 near the upper part thereof for the same purpose. If desired, a third band of such spaced holes 35 may be located in the upper surface 36 of the cover. With this ventilated container, if it becomes desirable to freeze the fresh contents packaged therein, the freezing operation can be performed without unpacking the contents of the container. Also the ventilation of the container provided by the holes minimizes accumulation of frost on the inside of the package, without providing sufficient ventilation to cause appreciable "freezer burn" of the contents.

Referring to Fig. 5, it will be observed that a plurality of containers 10 may be readily stacked one upon another in a compact manner. The lower surfaces of the base in which grooves 16 are formed provide spaced supports for each container to rest on the upper surface 36 of the top of the next lower container in such a manner that cold air can freely circulate around the packages, even when stacked, and thus ensures that the containers can be kept as cold as may be desired during storage, shipment or display. In fact, even chipped or flaked ice or the like may be readily packed substantially completely around the stacked containers as a refrigerant.

When dressed, cut-up poultry, or other cuts of meat or sea food, are to be packaged, the cover 14 may be inverted and the contents placed therein. The base 12 is then inverted and quickly applied to the cover, after which the entire package is turned over to put the base on the bottom in position to receive any fluid seepage from the contents.

Obviously it is possible that my improved package could be used by a processor of frozen foods where the contents is being frozen immediately after packaging and kept frozen until it reaches the ultimate consumer, and in such case no ventilating holes would be required.

While a preferred embodiment of my invention has been shown and described, it will be apparent that changes

and modifications could be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention. All such changes and modifications are intended to fall within the scope of the subjoined claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A container of the character described comprising a non-insulative base having a peripheral flange and groove, a pair of spaced, longitudinal, downwardly sloping areas, each of which areas terminates in a longitudinal groove, a central longitudinal groove located between said sloping areas and in a higher plane than said first longitudinal grooves, and a plurality of spaced transverse grooves connecting said central longitudinal groove with said other longitudinal grooves, and a non-insulative cover for said base engaging said base within said peripheral flange and groove, and said cover having a series of spaced pin holes and the like therethrough.

2. A container of the character described comprising a non-insulative base having a peripheral flange and groove, a central longitudinal groove, downwardly sloping areas on each side of said central groove and each area terminating in a longitudinal groove in a plane below said central groove, and spaced transverse grooves connecting said central groove with said other longitudinal grooves, and a non-insulative transparent cover for said base, said cover having a lower edge terminating in a continuous flange and bead that fits within said peripheral flange and groove of said base, and said cover having a series of spaced small diameter holes therein, and means for fastening said cover to said base.

3. A container of the character described comprising a non-insulative substantially rectangular rigid base having a peripheral flange and groove, a medial longitudinal groove, a longitudinal groove on each side of and in a plane below said medial groove, spaced transverse grooves connecting said medial groove with said other longitudinal grooves, and additional transverse grooves connecting with said other longitudinal grooves and extending outwardly thereof, and a non-insulative sloping, box-like, transparent cover for said base, said cover having a beaded lower edge and flange engageable within said peripheral flange and groove of said base, the top and side surfaces of said cover having a series of spaced small diameter holes therein.

4. A container for the packaging of fresh and frozen, cut-up poultry, meats, sea foods and the like, comprising a non-insulative substantially rectangular rigid platter having a peripheral flange and groove, a medial longitudinal drainage groove, longitudinal drainage grooves on each side of and below said medial groove, transverse drainage grooves connecting said medial groove with said other longitudinal grooves, and additional transverse drainage grooves arranged outwardly of and connecting with said other longitudinal grooves, and a non-insulative downwardly and outwardly sloping, box-like, transparent cover for said platter, said cover having a beaded lower edge and flange frictionally engageable within said peripheral flange and groove of said platter, the top and sides of said cover having a series of spaced small diameter holes therein, and means for additionally fastening said cover to said platter.

References Cited in the file of this patent

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,404,154	Lee	Jan. 17, 1922
1,516,582	Spalding	Nov. 25, 1924
2,452,969	Victor	Nov. 2, 1948
2,673,003	Stewart	Mar. 23, 1954

FOREIGN PATENTS

320,710	France	Aug. 23, 1902
---------	--------	---------------