

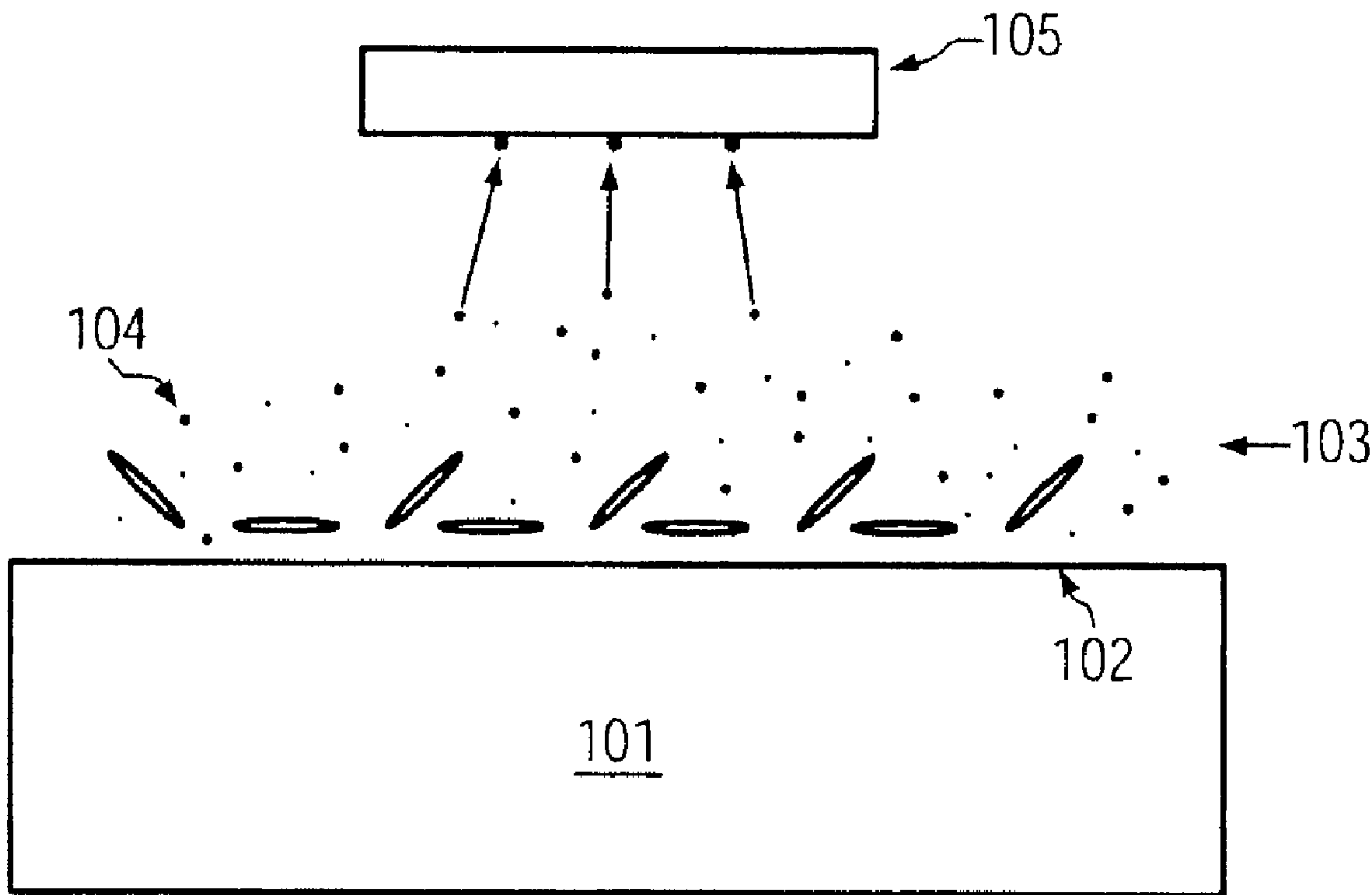


(22) Date de dépôt/Filing Date: 2011/04/19  
(41) Mise à la disp. pub./Open to Public Insp.: 2011/11/04  
(30) Priorité/Priority: 2010/05/04 (DE10 2010 028 555.2)

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *B03C 7/02* (2006.01)  
(71) Demandeur/Applicant:  
KRONES AG, DE  
(72) Inventeur/Inventor:  
FRIEDLAENDER, THOMAS, DE  
(74) Agent: RICHES, MCKENZIE & HERBERT LLP

(54) Titre : DISPOSITIF ET PROCEDE PERMETTANT DE TRIER DES PARTICULES FINES DANS UN MELANGE DE PARTICULES

(54) Title: DEVICE AND METHOD FOR SORTING OUT FINE PARTICLES FROM A PARTICLE MIXTURE



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

The invention comprises a method for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture arranged on a surface of a support element wherein the particle mixture comprises particles of different sizes, in particular fine particles with a diameter of up to 1 mm, characterised in that the fine particles are at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture by means of an electrostatically charged separating element.

**Abstract**

**Device and method for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture**

The invention comprises a method for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture arranged on a surface of a support element wherein the particle mixture comprises particles of different sizes, in particular fine particles with a diameter of up to 1 mm, characterised in that the fine particles are at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture by means of an electrostatically charged separating element.

### **Device and method for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture**

The present invention relates to a device and a method for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture arranged on a surface of a support element.

Recycled PET plastic bottles are frequently used in the drink industry for producing new plastic bottles. For this purpose, the recycled old bottles are first shredded and then foreign particles, for example, particles of foreign plastics such as PVC, are sorted out from the ground material flow gained in this way. The PET particles or PET flakes obtained in this way are then used to manufacture new PET bottles.

During the sorting out process, large foreign substance particles can be separated out by means of an optical sorter or NIR sorter (near-infrared sorter). The ground material flow normally also comprises small foreign particles, however, which are not detected by the optical or NIR sorter. These fine particles can crystallise out during the further processing and so cloud the plastic bottles manufactured from the recycled material.

Therefore the object of the present invention is to provide a device and method which allow improved sorting out of the fine particles from a ground material flow. This problem is solved by means of a method in accordance with Patent Claim 1 and a device in accordance with Patent Claim 8.

The method according to the invention for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture arranged on a surface of a support element, whereby the particle mixture comprises particles of different sizes, in particular fine particles with a diameter of up to 1.00 mm, is characterised in that the fine particles are at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture by means of an electrostatically charged separating element.

Due to the fact that the fine particles are normally particularly strongly electrostatically charged due to friction, they can be sorted out from the particle mixture by means of the electrostatically charged separating element in a simple manner.

The particle mixture can particularly correspond to a ground material flow. The particle mixture can comprise different plastics, for example, PET (polyethylene terephthalate) or PVC (polyvinyl chloride). The particle mixture can comprise particles of different sizes, in particular particles with a maximum diameter of up to 3.0 cm.

Referred to as fine particles here are particle mixture particles that have a maximum particle diameter of up to 1.00 mm, in particular up to 0.50 mm.

The separating element, in particular a surface of the separating element, can be given an electrostatic charge, meaning it can be brought to a predetermined electrical voltage or placed under a predetermined electrical voltage.

In this process, the charge of the separating element can be selected such that an attractive force acts on the fine particles of the particle mixture. In other words, the separating element can consequently have a charge that is the opposite the charge of the fine particles.

The fine particles can have an electrostatic charge due to the friction among one another and / or with other particles of the particle mixture. Particles made of a certain material frequently display a predetermined charge.

In particular, two electrostatically charged separating elements can be provided, whereby the two separating elements have two different electrostatic charges, in particular opposite charges. In this way, both positively and negatively electrostatically charged fine particles can be sorted out or culled out from the particle mixture.

The separating element can be formed in such a way that the fine particles sorted out from the particle mixture can settle on a surface of the separating element due to an electrostatic attractive force.

The distance between the separating element and the particle mixture and / or the electrostatic charge of the separating element can be selected or adjusted in such a manner that fine particles can be at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture. In other words, the distance between the separating element and the particle mixture and / or the electrostatic charge of the separating

element can be selected in such a way that electrostatically charged fine particles of the particle mixture are accelerated in the direction of the separating element.

The separating element can be located next to and / or above the particle mixture. In particular, the method can comprise an arrangement of the separating element next to and / or above the particle mixture.

The particle mixture can be moved relative to the separating element, in particular along a direction parallel to the surface of the support element on which the particle mixture is arranged. In other words, the particle mixture can be directed below and / or next to the separating element. For example, the support element can be a conveyor medium, for example, a conveyor belt. In this way, the fine particles can be sorted out from the ground material flow directly.

Alternatively or additionally, the separating element can also be moved. For example, the separating element can be moved along above the surface of the support element on which the particle mixture is arranged, and in the process sort out the fine particles.

Alternatively or additionally, the support element can be moved in such a way that the particle mixture separates at least partially from the surface of the support element. By means of such a loosening and / or whirling up, the charged fine particles can be more easily moved by the electric force action to the separating element and settled on this.

The movement of the support element can particularly comprise shaking, teetering and / or oscillating of the support element. For example, the support element can vibrate, particularly at a predetermined frequency.

The separating element can be electrostatically charged by means of a charging device. In particular, the separating element can be held at a predetermined potential by means of the charging device. The charging device can, for example, be a ribbon generator or Van-de-Graaff generator.

Fine particles that stick to the separating element can be removed from the separating element. In particular, the fine particles can be removed away from the particle mixture. This makes it possible to permanently free the particle mixture of the fine particles.

In particular, the separating element can comprise a film or a film roll. In the case of a film roll, the film can be moved on the film roll and be freed of the fine particles away from the particle mixture.

The invention furthermore provides a device for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture that comprises particles of different sizes, in particular fine particles with a diameter of up to 1.00 mm, wherein the device comprises a support element for arranging the particle mixture on a surface of the support element and an electrostatically charged separating element that is formed and / or arranged in such a way that the fine particles can be at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture by means of the electrostatically charged separating element.

An above-described method for sorting out fine particles can be carried out with a device of this kind. In particular, the particle mixture, the support element and / or the separating element can display one or more of the above-described characteristics.

The separating element can be arranged at least partially above and / or next to the surface of the support element for arranging the particle mixture.

In particular, the support element can be movable in such a way that a particle mixture arranged on the surface of the support element separates at least partially from the surface due to the movement. For this purpose, the device can comprise, for example, a shaking element and / or a teetering element.

The support element and the separating element can be movable relative to each other. In particular, the support element can comprise a conveyor medium, for example, a conveyor belt.

The device can furthermore comprise a charging device for electrostatically charging the separating element. The charging device can, for example, be a ribbon generator or Van-de-Graaff generator.

The separating element can comprise a film, in particular a film roll.

The device can furthermore comprise a cleaning element, for example, a brush, for removing fine particles arranged on the separating element.

An above-described device can in particular be a part of a recycling system, in particular a system for PET recycling.

Further characteristics and advantages of the invention are explained in the following on the basis of explanatory figures. Shown are:

Figure 1 A side-view of an exemplary device for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture;

Figure 2 A side-view of a further exemplary device for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture; and

Figure 3 A side-view of a further exemplary device for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture.

Figure 1 shows an exemplary support element 101, whereby a particle mixture 103 is arranged on a surface 102 of the support element 101.

The particle mixture comprises particles of different sizes, in particular particles with a maximum diameter of up to 3.0 cm. Particles with a maximum diameter of up to 1.00 mm are designated here as fine particles.

The particle mixture 103 comprises particles of PET as well as fine particles 104 of foreign plastics, such as PVC.

The fine particles 104 normally display a strong electrostatic charge caused by friction. The friction here can be friction resulting within the particle mixture and / or friction resulting from treatment equipment for processing and / or transporting the particle mixture.

For this reason, the fine particles 104 can be at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture 103 by means of an electrostatically charged separating element 105. In particular, the separating element 105 can be formed and / or arranged in such a way that fine particles 104 are accelerated by an electric force action toward the separating element 105 and settle on a surface of the separating element 105. The separating element 105 can thereupon be slowly moved farther and freed of the fine particles 104 away from the particle mixture 103.

Figure 2 shows a further exemplary device for sorting out fine particles 204 from a particle mixture 203 arranged on a surface 202 of a support element. In this case, the support element corresponds to a conveyor element, for example, a conveyor belt or a vibration conveyor trough. The particle mixture 203 is moved by this conveyor element under and past a separating element 205.

The conveyor element is furthermore deflected perpendicularly to the surface 202, as indicated by the double-sided arrow in Figure 2. As a result of this vibration of the support element, the particle mixture 203 is swirled up, meaning at least partially separated from the surface 202. Due to the lower mass of the fine particles 204, these are more strongly swirled up, meaning they are more strongly separated from the surface 202. In particular, this increases the average distance of the fine particles 204 from the surface 202 and from neighbouring particles of the particle mixture 203. In this way, the fine particles 204 can be more easily arranged on the separating element 205.

Due to the attractive electric force, which acts on the electrostatically charged fine particles 204 by means of the electrostatically charged separating element 205, these particles are moved on to a surface of the separating element 205 and settled there. The movement of the fine particles 204 is illustrated by several exemplary arrows in Figure 2.

In Figure 2, the separating element 205 is a film roll. This comprises an electrostatically charged, meaning placed under an electric voltage, film 206, which can be moved over deflection rollers 207 or 208.

The exemplary particle mixture in Figure 2 corresponds to a ground material flow of a PET recycling system. The ground material flow largely freed of fine particles 204 is transported away on a tilted plane in Figure 2 and is available for further processing. The fine particles 204 arranged on the film 206 can be removed from the film 206 and thereupon disposed of.

Figure 3 shows an exemplary device for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture 303 arranged on a surface of a support element. The device substantially corresponds to the device shown in Figure 2. The device in Figure 3 furthermore comprises a cleaning element 309, for example, a brush.

The film 306 of the separating element 305 can be moved by the deflection rollers 307 or 308. In this example, a counter-clockwise movement is indicated by two arrows. The film 306 can consequently be slowly moved farther and freed of the fine particles 304 by the cleaning element 309. The fine particles 304 removed from the film 306 can be caught in a collecting element 310 and fed to a means of disposal. The film 306 freed of fine particles 304 is moved farther after the cleaning element 309, until it is arranged at least partially above the particle mixture 303 and can attract and settle new fine particles 304.

The exemplary device can furthermore comprise a charging device, for example, a ribbon generator, which electrostatically charges the film 306 of the separating element 305, meaning the generator places the separating element under a voltage.

In this example, the particle mixture 303 is moved on a conveyor element relative to the separating element 305. Alternatively or additionally, the separating element 305 can also be moved.

The abovementioned exemplary devices can be part of a recycling system for PET bottles. Such a system can furthermore comprise optical sorters and / or NIR (near-infrared) sorters for sorting out large foreign substance particles.

The above-described devices can also display a plurality of separating elements, in particular, two separating elements. The two separating elements can, in particular, display opposite charges. In this way, fine particles with different charges can be sorted out from the particle mixture.

The two separating elements can be fully or partially arranged next to each other and / or behind each other.

It is understood that characteristics mentioned in the previously described embodiments are not restricted to these special combinations and are also possible in any other combinations.

### Patent Claims

1. Method for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture arranged on a surface of a support element, wherein the particle mixture comprises particles of different sizes, in particular, fine particles with a diameter of up to 1 mm,  
  
**characterised in that**  
  
the fine particles are at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture by means of an electrostatically charged separating element.
2. Method according to Claim 1, characterised in that the separating element is located next to and / or above the particle mixture.
3. Method according to Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the support element is moved in such a way that the particle mixture separates at least partially from the surface of the support element.
4. Method according to Claim 3, wherein the movement of the support element comprises a shaking, teetering and / or oscillating of the support element.
5. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the particle mixture is moved relative to the separating element, in particular along a direction parallel to the surface of the support element on which the particle mixture is arranged.
6. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterised in that the separating element is electrostatically charged by means of a charging device.
7. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterised in that fine particles adhering to the separating element are removed from the separating element.
8. Device for sorting out fine particles from a particle mixture that comprises particles of different sizes, in particular, fine particles with a diameter of up to 1 mm, comprising:

a support element for arranging the particle mixture on a surface of the support element;  
and

an electrostatically charged separating element that is formed and / or arranged in such a way that the fine particles can be at least partially sorted out from the particle mixture by means of the electrostatically charged separating element.

9. Device according to Claim 8, wherein the separating element is arranged at least partially above and / or next to the surface of the support element for arranging the particle mixture.
10. Device according to Claim 8 or 9, wherein the support element is movable in such a way that a particle mixture arranged on the surface of the support element separates at least partially from the surface due to the movement.
11. Device according to one of the Claims 8 - 10, wherein the support element and the separating element can be moved relative to each other.
12. Device according to one of the Claims 8 - 11, furthermore comprising a charging device for electrostatically charging the separating element.
13. Device according to one of the Claims 8 - 12, wherein the separating element comprises a film.

1/2

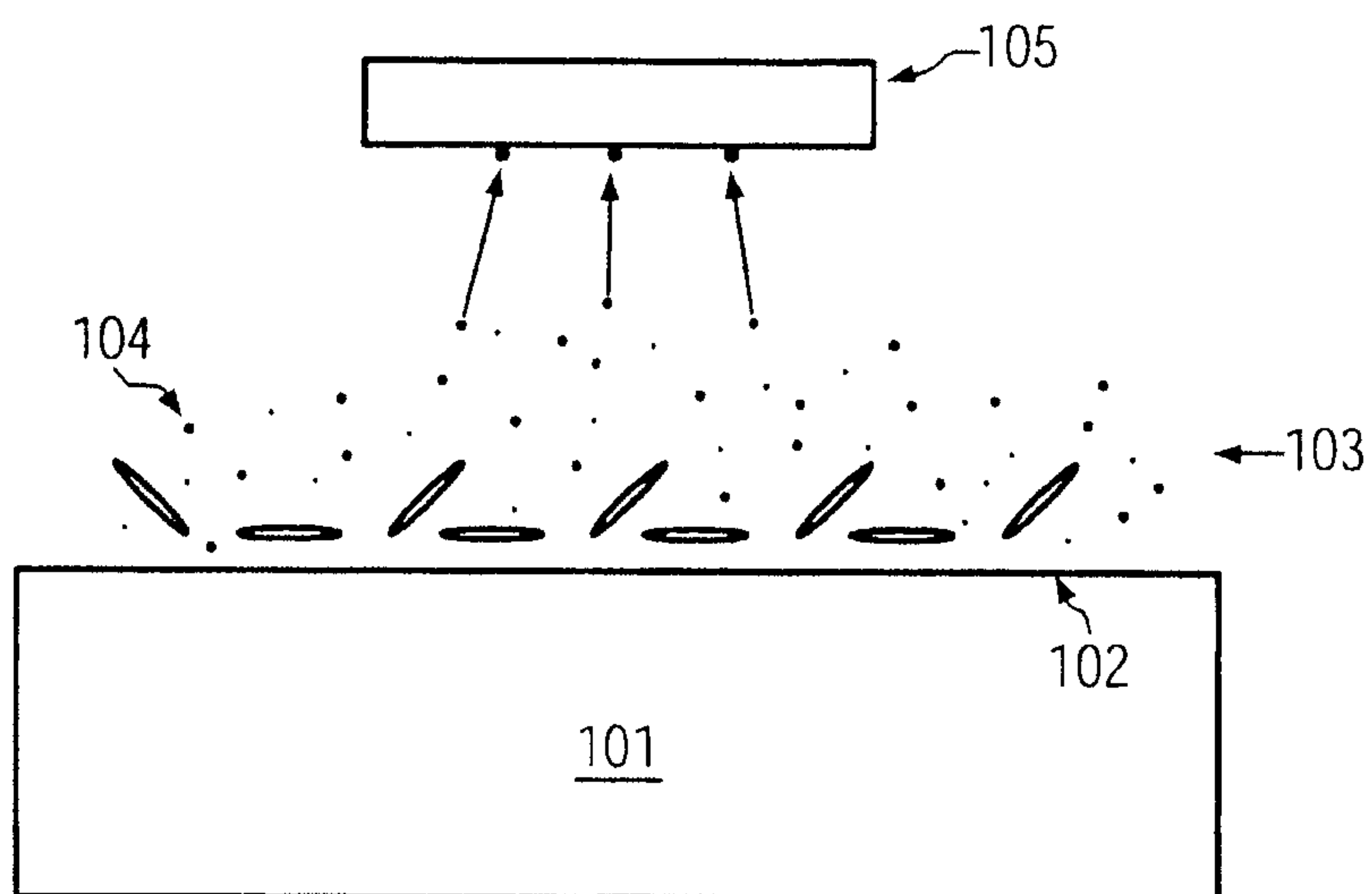


FIG. 1

2/2

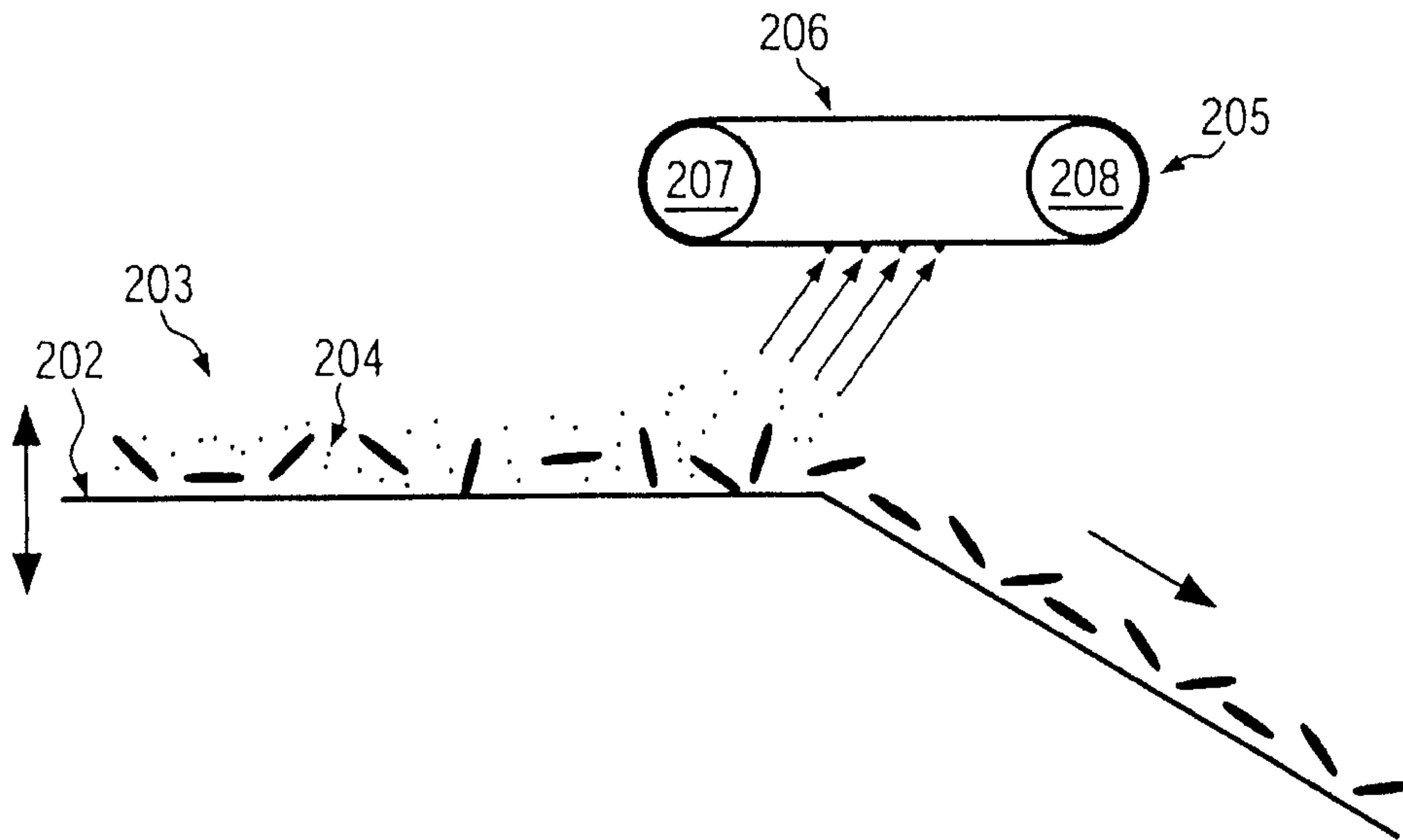


FIG. 2

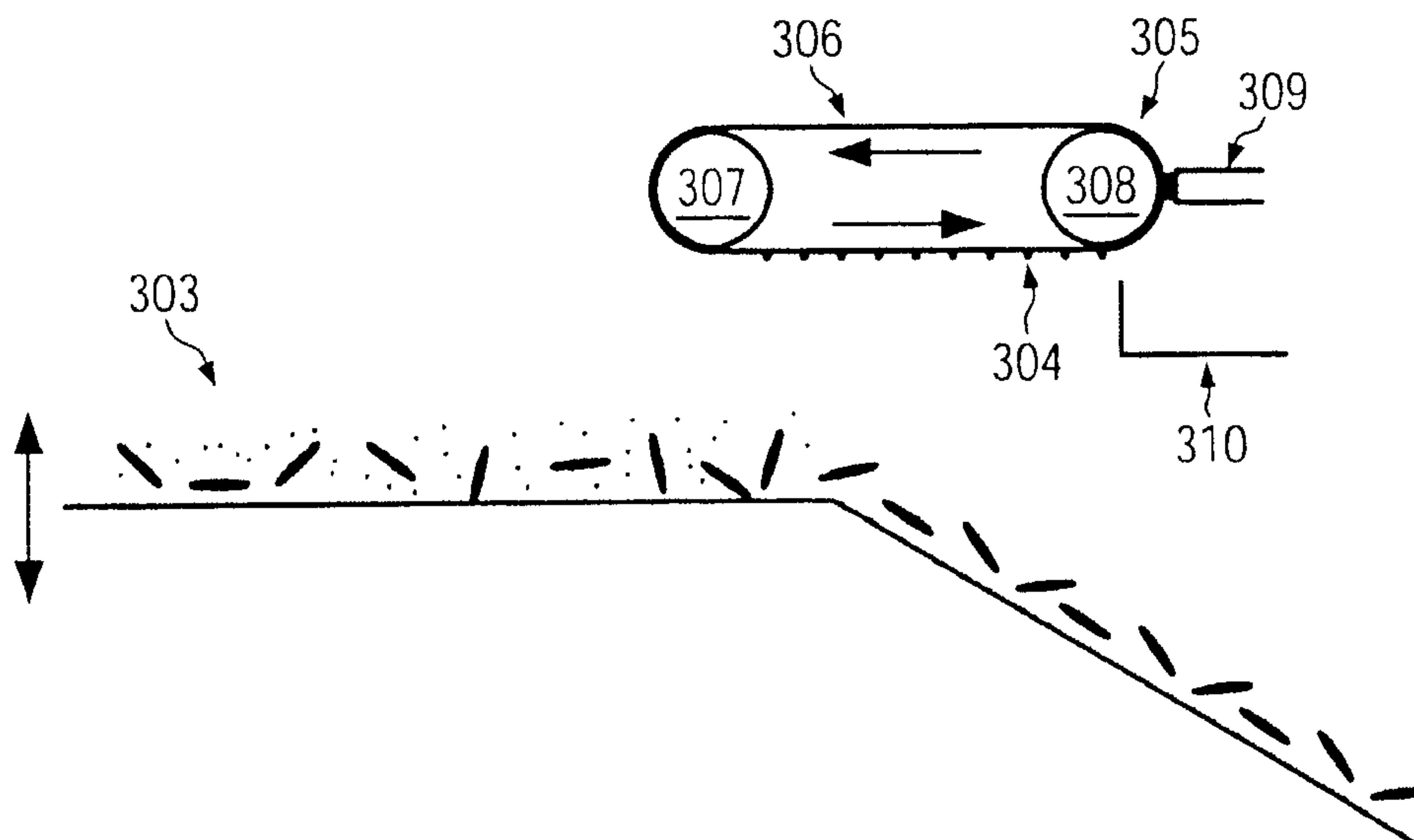


FIG. 3

