

[54] **FOOD STORAGE COMPARTMENT FOR REFRIGERATOR**

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312/330, 312/333

[51] Int. Cl.A47b 96/00

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312/122, 236, 330, 204, 333; 220/8, 46, 41;
52/716

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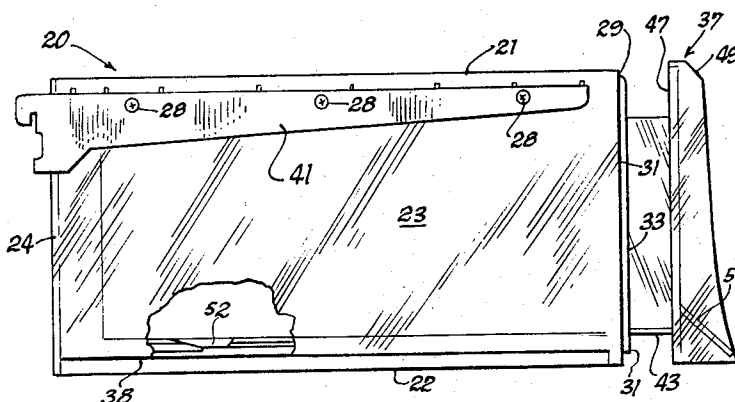
Primary Examiner—James T. McCall

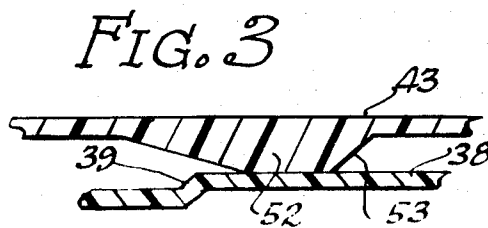
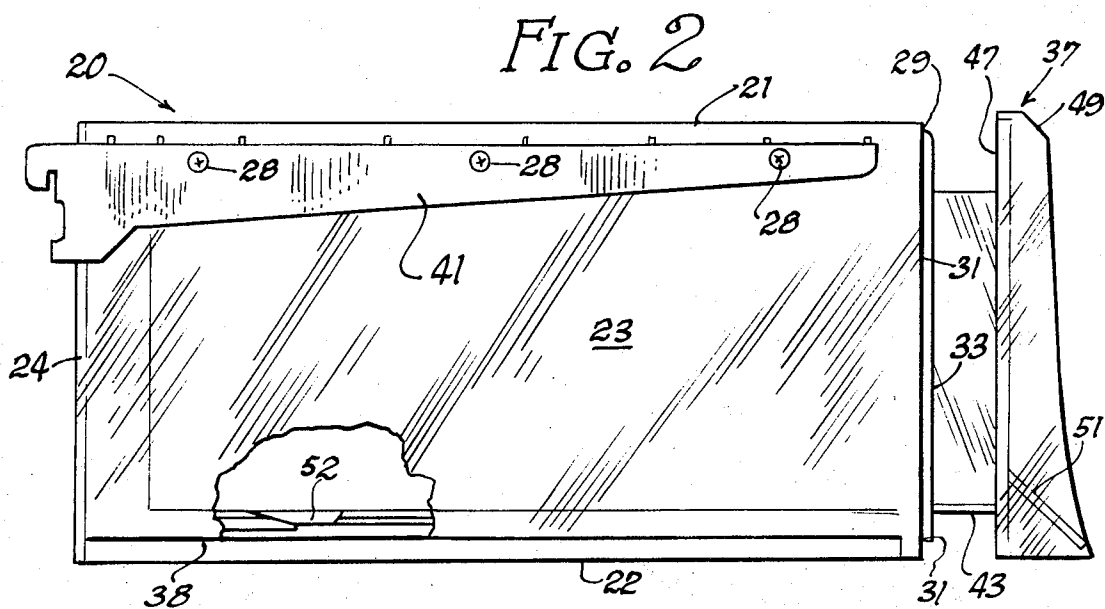
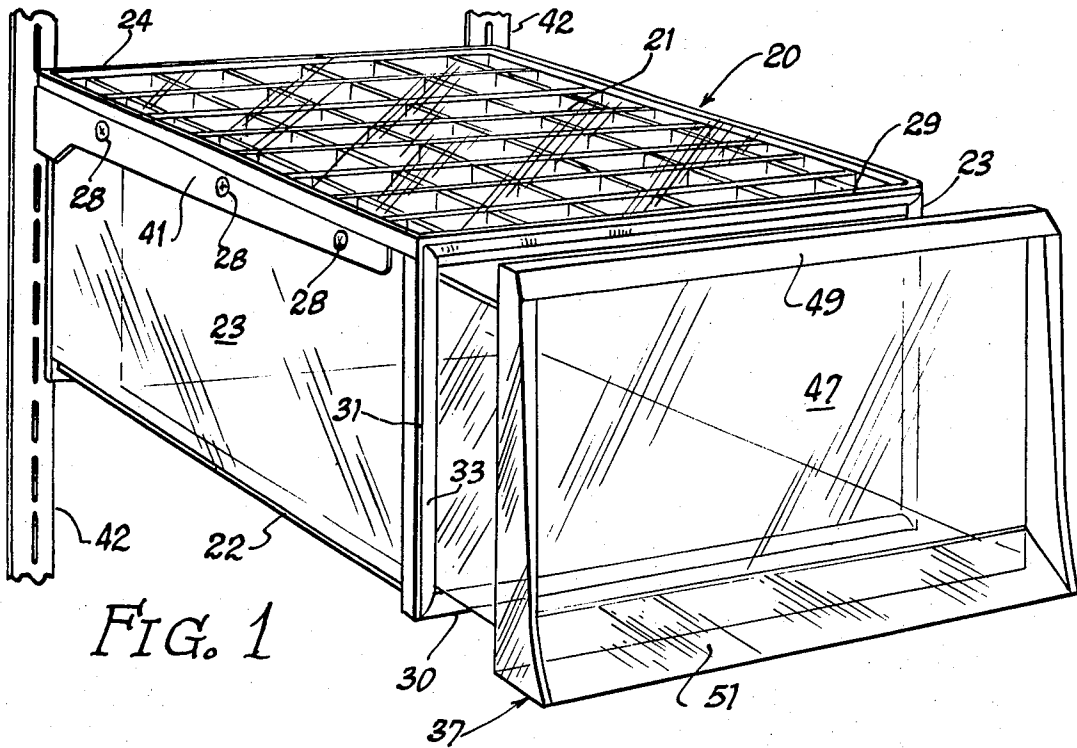
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

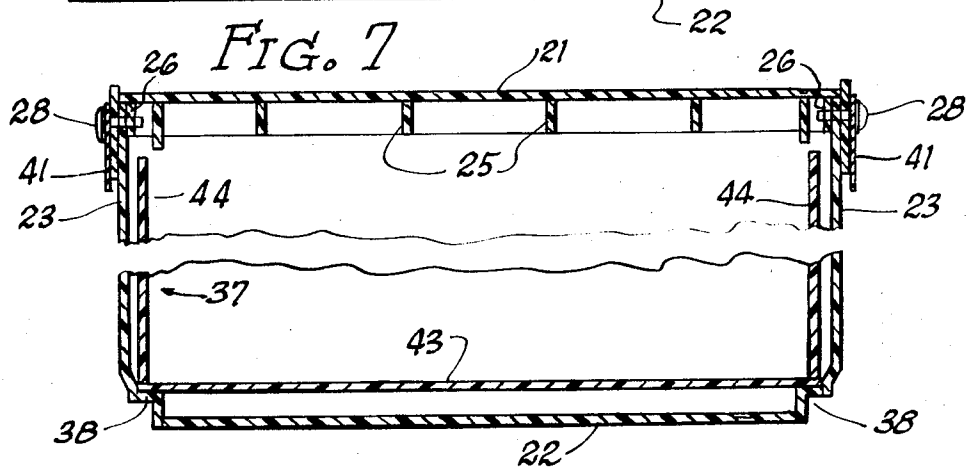
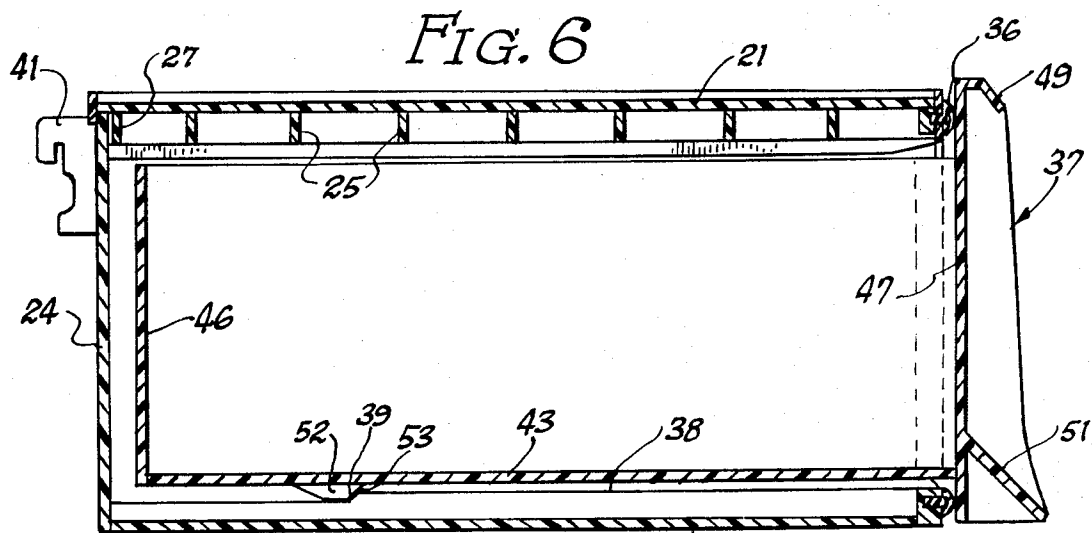
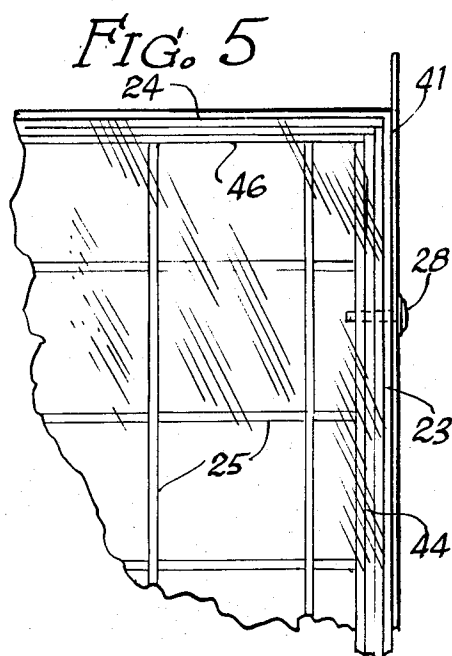
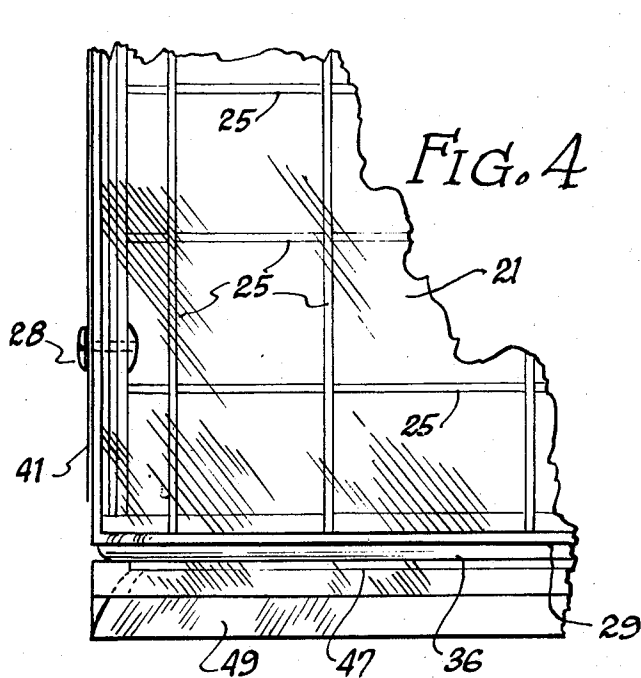
A food storage compartment arranged to be contained wholly within a refrigerator and comprising a housing having a forward opening and marginal edge portions surrounding said opening and carrying a gasket of elastomeric material. A drawer is slidably received in the housing and includes a forward wall having marginal edge portions arranged to abut the gasket to effect substantially sealing engagement therewith.

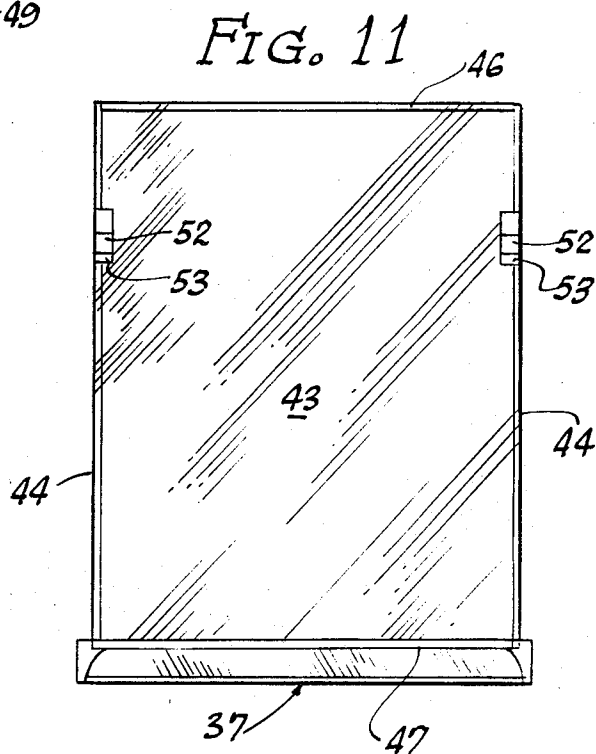
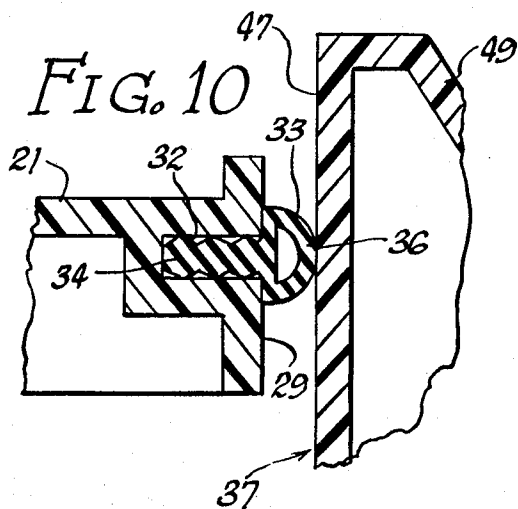
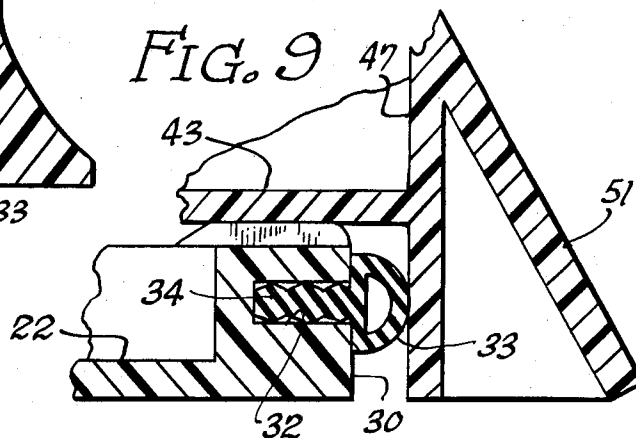
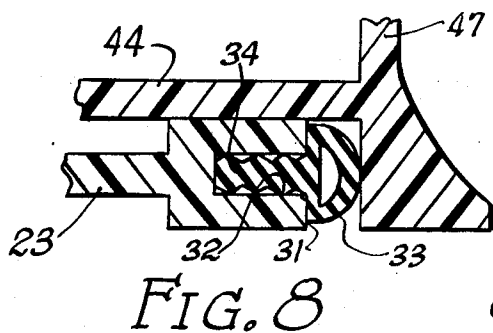
2 Claims, 11 Drawing Figures





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FOOD STORAGE COMPARTMENT FOR REFRIGERATOR

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an improved food storage compartment for refrigerators. The compartment may be adjustably mountable within a refrigerator and affords a sealed space for the storage of perishable foods without requiring wrapping or bagging of the same. The compartment retains the ambient moisture of the space and precludes the ingress of dry air and any odors which normally may be present in the refrigerator interior. Thus, the foods are maintained in fresh moist condition and desirable appearance for extended periods of time. The compartment preferably is provided with clear transparent walls so that the contents may be readily viewed without exposing the same to outside air.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One of the objects of my invention is the provision of a food storage compartment arranged to be mounted within a refrigerator and affording a sealed space for storing perishable foods without requiring wrapping of the same.

Another object of my invention is the provision of a food storage compartment which effectively prevents dehydration of the food contained therein and which maintains the food contents in desirable moist condition and appearance.

Still another object of my invention is the provision of a food storage compartment in a refrigerator in which the contents are readily accessible and which includes clear transparent walls through which the contents of the compartment may be viewed.

Still a further object of my invention is a provision of a food storage compartment which may be adjustably mounted within the refrigerator interior.

Other and further objects and advantages of my invention will become apparent from the following description when the same is considered in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a food storage compartment, in accordance with my invention, and showing the same in partly opened condition.

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the storage compartment illustrated in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary cross-sectional view, on an enlarged scale, of a structural detail.

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary top plan view of the forward left corner portion of the compartment illustrated in FIG. 1 but showing the same in closed condition.

FIG. 5 is a similar view of the rearward left corner of the compartment.

FIG. 6 is a longitudinal vertical cross-sectional view taken on a line substantially medially of the compartment.

FIG. 7 is a transverse vertical cross-sectional view of the compartment.

FIG. 8 is a fragmentary horizontal cross-sectional view, on an enlarged scale, of a corner portion of the compartment.

FIG. 9 is a vertical cross-sectional view, on an enlarged scale, illustrating the structural features shown in the lower righthand corner portion of FIG. 6.

FIG. 10 is a similar view showing the structural features of the upper righthand corner portion of FIG. 6, and

FIG. 11 is a bottom plan view of the drawer of the compartment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to the drawings, the numeral 20 indicates, generally, a housing preferably formed of a transparent clear plastic material and including a top wall 21, a bottom wall 22, side walls 23 and a rear wall 24, the front of the housing 20 being open. The top wall 21 on its underside is provided with integral spaced ribs 25 which extend both longitudinally and transversely and provide a reinforcing grid substantially over the entire surface. The top wall 21 is preferably formed as a separate member and is provided with depending side and rear flanges 26 and 27 which are arranged to overlap the top portions of the side and rear walls 23 and 24, respectively, the top wall 21 being attached to the side and rear walls by means of suitable fasteners, such as rivets or screws 28.

The forward edges 29, 30 and 31 of the top, bottom and side walls respectively, are each formed in a channel configuration immediately adjacent the opening of the compartment as seen clearly in FIGS. 8-10. Thus, there is provided a continuous groove or recess 32 opening forwardly and surrounding the opening. A unitary gasket 33 formed of rubber or any suitable elastomeric material and having a suitable cross-sectional form is anchored in the recess 32. The gasket as illustrated, in cross section, may have a generally T-formation with the vertical leg 34 of the T being received in the groove 32 and the transverse leg 36 of the T affording a resilient sealing surface adapted to engage the sliding drawer 37, hereinafter to be described.

The bottom wall 22 of the housing is provided along each longitudinal edge with an offset marginal portion 38. These portions together provide co-planar shoulders arranged to support the sliding drawer 37. Each of the shoulders 38 is downwardly offset near the rear wall, as illustrated in FIG. 3, to provide a vertically inclined shoulder 39 for a purpose, as will be hereinafter explained.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 1, the housing 20 is provided with a pair of metal cantilever brackets 41 secured to the side walls 23, as by rivets 28. The brackets 41 are provided with conventional hooked ends which are received in the slots of vertical standards 42 which are mounted on the rear wall of the refrigerator space. The housing 20 may be adjustably mounted on the standards within the refrigerator space.

In a modified embodiment, not shown, the brackets 41 are eliminated and, in such case, the housing is intended to be supported on a suitable surface, such as the bottom of the refrigerator space or on a shelf.

Received within the housing 20 is a slideable drawer 37 which preferably is formed of the same transparent material as the housing so that the contents may be clearly viewed without requiring opening of the drawer. The drawer 37 includes a bottom 43, side walls 44, a

rear wall 46 and a forward wall 47, all of which are preferably molded integrally. The forward wall 47 overlaps the forward edges 29, 30 and 31 of the housing 20, as seen clearly in FIGS. 8 through 10. Thus, there is provided a perimetral area which overlaps the gasket 33 of the housing and affords a flat smooth surface arranged to abut against the gasket in sealing engagement therewith, when the drawer 37 is in closed position. The forward wall 47 of the drawer, along its upper edge, is provided with an integral flange 49 which extends both forwardly and downwardly so as to provide a drawer pull which may be readily engaged by a hand to draw the drawer outwardly of the housing. Integrally formed with the lower portion of the forward wall 47 is an angularly inclined flange 51 which similarly affords a hand engageable pull for manipulating the drawer.

The drawer 37 is provided on its bottom wall 43 with a pair of depending protrusions 52 (FIG. 3), each arranged to engage a respective shoulder 39 of the housing. The forward edges of the protrusions 52 are inclined, as illustrated in FIG. 3, so as to facilitate movement of the drawer within the housing 20. The rearward edge 53 of each protrusion is inclined at an angle corresponding to the angle of the shoulder 39 so that when the drawer is in fully closed position the two surfaces are interengaged to releasably secure the drawer in closed position wherein the gasket is in substantial sealing engagement with the perimetral surface area of the drawer. Thus, inadvertent opening of the drawer which would defeat the purpose of the seal is

precluded.

I have found that food stored in a sealed compartment, in accordance with my invention, has a higher weight retention and generally superior visual appearance than similar food stored in a conventional crisper drawer which is part of the conventional refrigerator.

I claim:

1. A food storage compartment for a refrigerator comprising a housing arranged to be contained wholly within the refrigerator and having a forward opening, a drawer slideably received in said housing, said housing having marginal edge portions surrounding said opening, said drawer having a forward wall having marginal edge portions arranged in confronting relation to the marginal edge portions of said housing, and a gasket of elastomeric material carried on one of said marginal edge portions and adapted to abut the other confronting marginal edge portions to effect substantially sealing engagement therewith, said housing having a longitudinally extending shoulder along each side, each shoulder being upwardly offset from the bottom wall and the drawer being supported on said shoulders, said shoulders and the bottom wall of said drawer having interengaging surfaces for releasably securing said drawer in closed position.

2. The invention as defined in claim 1, in which the surfaces are inclined in a direction to draw said drawer to closed position.

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