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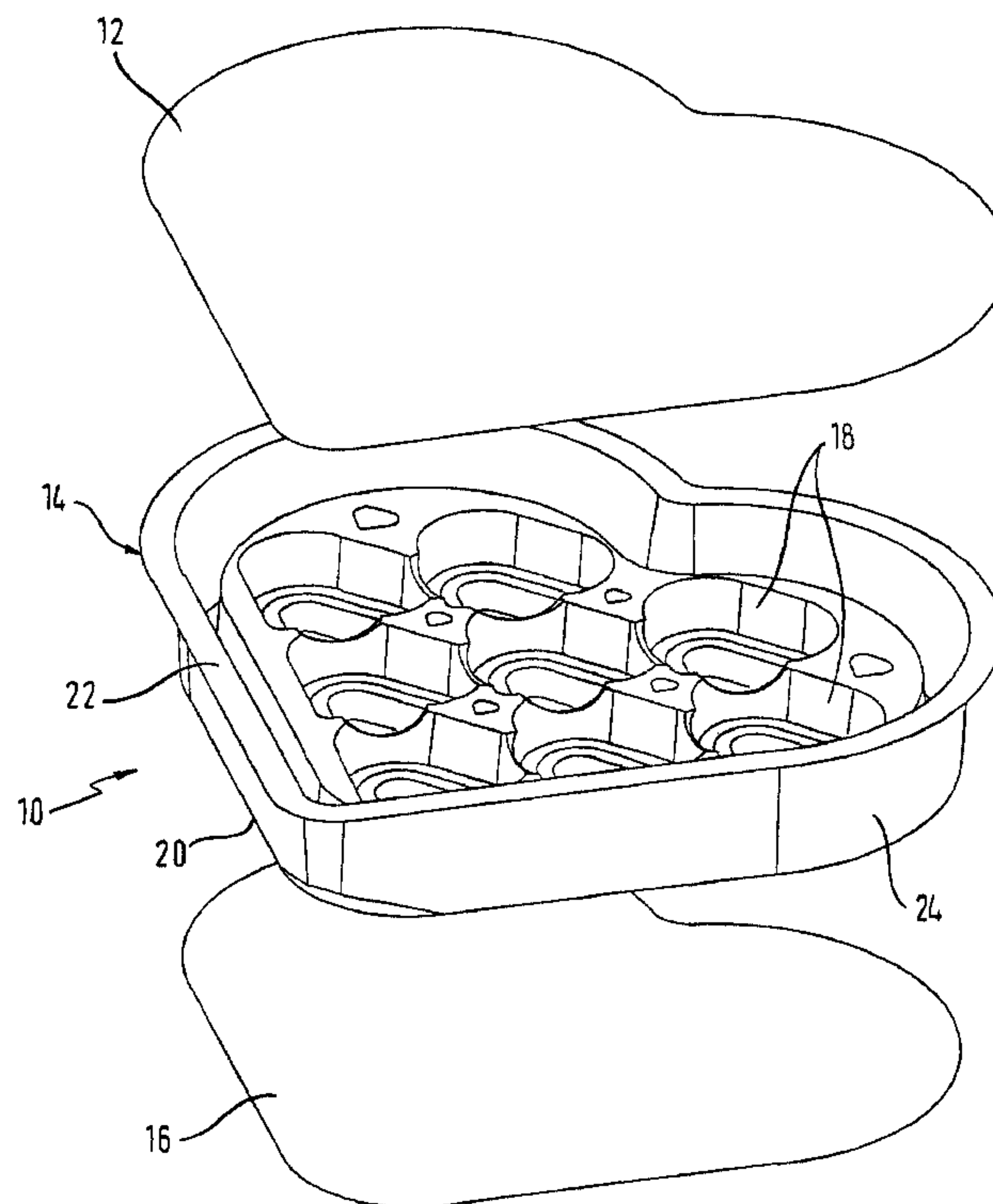
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(54) Title: PACKAGE CONTAINING FOODSTUFF



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A package (10) adapted to contain foodstuffs comprising a shaped tray (14), a flat card (16), retained at the bottom of the tray (14) by means of engaging portions and/or adhesive, and a membrane lid (12), which is sealed to the top of the tray.

Abstract

A package (10) adapted to contain foodstuffs comprising a shaped tray (14), a flat card (16), retained at the bottom of the tray (14) by means of engaging portions and/or adhesive, and a membrane lid (12), which is sealed to the top of the tray.

(Fig. 1)

PACKAGE CONTAINING FOODSTUFFS

Technical field

The invention relates to a package containing foodstuffs.

Packages, which contain foodstuffs, such as confectionary products or sweets, must fulfil a number of different requirements. Firstly, the contents of the package needs to be retained safely within the package. Secondly, the package must be sealed in a manner to maintain freshness of the contents and prevent them from spoiling. Furthermore the package should have sufficient stability so as to prevent the package from deforming which would also endanger the shape and outer appearance of the contents. Moreover, it is desired to provide outer surfaces on a package which can be used to display product information directed to the customer. Finally, the company offering the foodstuffs to the customer is interested in a smart outer appearance of the package and, at the same time, an inexpensive package design.

Prior art

Various attempts have been made in order to meet some or all of the above-mentioned requirements. DE-AS 1 246 533 discloses a package for a comparably large egg made of chocolate, which is placed in a shaped plastic tray such that it mostly extends beyond the upper rim of the tray. The egg is retained by means of a retaining sleeve, and the package is covered by a lid. The bottom of the package is constituted by a carton which is retained by means of a folded edge of the shaped tray.

DE-U-7122 012 discloses an open tray, which is made of a shaped plastic part reinforced by a shaped card member retained in the bottom of the plastic part. In DE-U-1 927 169 a shaped plastic part is disclosed comprising indentations for accommodating confectionary products, at the lower end of which a carton is attached by means of gluing or welding.

Finally, DE-AS 1 200 023 discloses a package made of a shaped plastic part engaging with a flat lid of card, which is retained by means of a projecting shape of the upper part of the plastic member.

Summary of the invention

The underlying objective of the invention is to provide a package adapted to contain foodstuffs, in particular confectionary products and/or sweets, being of a simple and at the same time rigid design, in which the contents can be retained safely and in a manner to securely prevent spoiling them.

This objective is solved by means of the package according to claim 1.

The inventive package, on the one hand, comprises a shaped tray, e.g. made of plastic. The tray is adapted to contain foodstuffs and could, e.g. comprise plural indentations, in which confectionary products can be placed. As the shaped tray itself will not be sufficiently stable, due to the plastic being comparably thin in order to save material and costs, the tray of the inventive package is reinforced by means of a flat card, preferably made of cardboard, carton, rigid paper or plastic, which is retained at the bottom of the tray. According to the invention, the engagement between the shaped tray and the flat card is achieved by means of engaging portions and/or adhesive. This type of connection

between the tray and the card can be formed in a simple manner and will, at the same time, provide a rigid combination of the mentioned members.

In order to securely retain foodstuffs in the package and seal these from the environment, a membrane lid is sealed, preferably hot-sealed to the top of the tray. In other words, the inventive package as such is essentially constituted by only three components, i.e. the tray, the base card and the membrane lid. Additional material can be placed in the package between the contents and the lid. In a similar manner as the connection between the tray and the base card, the bonding between the membrane lid and the tray, in particular the hot-sealing, can be produced in an inexpensive manner and can, at the same time, ensure a hermetic seal, so that spoiling or deterioration of the contents is securely prevented.

Although the inventive package is of a simple and inexpensive design, it fulfils the requirements with regard to stability and retaining of the contents. Furthermore, the inventive package does advantageously provide outer surfaces, which can be seen by the consumer, on which product information and commercial messages can be communicated to the consumer. In particular, both the membrane lid and the base card can contain such information. Furthermore, the membrane lid can both display product or other information and comprise transparent portions, through which the contents can be seen. This will advantageously address the consumer and provide an attractive product presentation.

Preferred embodiments of the inventive package are described in the dependent claims.

Generally, the membrane lid could be of an arbitrary shape, and could be sealed to the top of the tray at any portion thereof. However, it is currently preferred that the tray

comprises a continuous, flange-like upper edge or rim to which the lid is sealed. As the edge will be in one and the same plane, the step of sealing the membrane lid to the top of the tray is remarkably facilitated.

As regards the engaging portion retaining the flat card at the bottom of the tray, it is preferred that the shaped tray comprises plural short, inwardly extending engaging projections, which engage with the edge of the card. The projections can be of any length and can have the shape of projecting points or ridges with a length of up to a few centimetres. Advantageously, such engaging portions can be formed integrally with sidewalls of the shaped tray at the lower portion thereof.

As regards the membrane lid, it is currently preferred that the lid is made of paper, carton, plastic or a composite thereof. These materials can easily and reliably be sealed to the top of the tray.

As mentioned, the membrane lid can be generally of any shape. However, it is preferred to provide the membrane lid with a flat shape, which facilitates sealing thereof to the tray.

In particular with regard to the possibility to view the contents of the inventive package which might be desired by the customer, it is preferred that the membrane lid comprises a transparent portion which means that it could also be entirely transparent.

Generally, the tray, the base card and the membrane lid can be of any shape. In particular, the shapes of these components can differ from each other, e.g. the bottom carton and/or the membrane lid could be shaped such that they cover only a part of the bottom or the top of the tray. However, it is preferred, with regard to the general appearance of the inventive package, that the mentioned members shape are the

same shape as for all of the mentioned components. In particular, the membrane lid will preferably have a shape, which - in a plane view thereof - is identical to the shape of the tray in a plane view thereof. Furthermore, the bottom carton will have an identical shape with the exception that it could be somewhat smaller since it engages with projections of the tray, which extend somewhat inwards. As regards the particular shape of the mentioned components as well as the resulting package, it is currently preferred that the shape thereof is a symbol, such as a heart or a drop. However, any other recognizable shapes, preferably representing a symbol, are possible.

The aesthetic concept of the inventive package leads to advantages and it is expected to achieve good consumer acceptance, as the shape of the contents of the package responds to the shape of the tray. In other words, if the contents of the package, e.g. the confectionary products are heart-shaped, a heart shape for the entire package is preferred. In another embodiment a drop-shaped package contains plural drop-shaped confectionary products or sweets.

In order to ensure that the contents of the inventive package, which have a special shape, will not be damaged, it is preferred that the tray of the inventive package comprises plural indentations which have a shape which again corresponds to the shape of the tray as a whole. In other words, a heart-shaped tray might comprise plural heart-shaped indentations for receiving plural heart-shaped confectionary products.

As mentioned, the inventive package is intended to attract the consumer's eye. For this purpose, it is advantageous if the inventive package, in particular the tray and/or the lid thereof, comprises an opening, which is adapted to receive a holder of a presentation device. For example, the inventive package might comprise a so-called euroslot, which is a

transverse elongated slot comprising a somewhat widened centre portion. In the preferred embodiment comprising such a slot, the inventive package can advantageously be presented on common holders so as to address the customer.

Brief description of the drawings

The invention will now be described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof as shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 shows an exploded view of a first embodiment of the inventive package; and

Fig. 2 shows an exploded view of a second embodiment of the inventive package.

Best mode for carrying out the invention

Fig. 1 shows the method (from top to bottom) how the novel package 10 is made comprising a membrane lid 12, a shaped tray 14 and a card 16. As the shaped tray comprises portions, which are adapted to cooperate with the lid 12 and the base card 16, the shaped tray 14 will be described first. The shaped tray 14 is in the depicted embodiment, generally, as seen in a plan view, heart-shaped. However, it should be noted that the tray could be of any other desired shape. In the embodiment as shown the centre portion of the tray 14, which is adapted to receive a plurality of, in the depicted case eight, confectionary products, comprises eight indentations 18, which are also heart-shaped, so that they are adapted to receive heart-shaped confectionary products. Towards the outside of the tray the plastic material, from which the tray 14 is made, extends downwards to a lower edge 20 of the tray and then again upwards towards the upper edge of the tray 14. At the very top of the tray the plastic material is extended outwards for a few millimetres so as to

form a perimeter flange-like rim 22, to which the membrane lid 12 is sealed. As the level of the rim 22 is above the top surface of the confectionary products (which are not shown in Fig. 1), an entirely flat membrane lid 12 can be sealed to the rim 22 so as to cover the products contained in the package as well as seal these from the environment in order to keep their freshness.

As seen in a cross-sectional view, the edge portion of the shaped tray is formed, generally U-shaped, in that the rim 22 is formed adjacent to a perimeter sidewall 24, which is formed in a U-shape at the bottom of the package so as to define a lower edge. From that edge, generally extending vertically, a sidewall of the receiving section comprising the indentations 18 is formed. The bottom of the space, which is defined underneath the indentations is covered by the base card 16, which provides the inventive package 10 with stability and, furthermore, allows product information to be displayed on the underside of the package. The card 16 can be glued to the lower edge of the package.

However, as shown in Fig. 2, the card 16 can also be retained at the bottom of the shaped tray 14 by means of engaging projections, which extend inwards so as to keep the card 16 from falling out in a downward direction. In this embodiment, the tray 14 is shaped somewhat differently compared to the tray 14 of the embodiment of Fig. 1.

Firstly, the tray is of a drop-like shape and so are also the base card 16 and the membrane lid 12. In order to realise a complete concept regarding the appearance of the package and the confectionary products contained therein, these shapes correspond to each other in that the drop-shaped tray of Fig. 2 is adapted to receive - in the depicted embodiment - six drop-shaped confectionary products.

Secondly, unlike the embodiment of Fig. 1, the free outer edge of the tray 14 is not formed around the top rim 22, but at the bottom of the tray 14. In particular, a few millimetres above the free edge of the tray, which defines the lower end of the tray, the engaging projections 26 are formed so as to retain the base card 16. In the attached state, the base card 16 will be located a few millimetres above the level of the lower edge of the tray 14. In the embodiment of Fig. 2, the edge of the tray is, as seen in a cross-sectional view, formed in an inverted U-shape, in that the plastic material extends - beginning from the free edge - upwards and sideways so as to define the upper rim 22. Inside the tray, a short inner wall is formed extending vertically downwards from the rim 22 and delimiting the so-called receiving section, in which the indentations 18 are formed. Also in this embodiment, the base card 16 can be attached to the shaped tray 14 so as to retain the card safely in its place, provide the tray with the required stability and provide the inventive package with a surface, on which product or other information can be displayed. This last mentioned aspect also applies to the membrane lid 12, which is hot-sealed to the rim 22 so as to safely retain the confectionary products within the package and ensure their freshness. The membrane lid 12, can in both embodiments, be entirely transparent or comprise transparent portions, so as to allow the consumer to view the contents.

It should additionally be mentioned that the shaped tray could, e.g. at the narrow end of the drop-shape, i.e. according to Fig. 2 the front right-hand corner, be extended to a flat section comprising a slot, by means of which the inventive package could be put on elongated, horizontally extending holding members. In particular, such an extended flat section could lie in a plane parallel to the plane of the card 16, so that the inventive package can be put onto the described holding elements, so as to be vertically oriented. Finally, it should be emphasized that the inventive

package constitutes a package suitable for foodstuffs, such as confectionary products, sweets or the like, which is made of a low number of components and avoids the need of any outer carton or additional packaging as well as sealable sleeves in order to keep the freshness of the products.

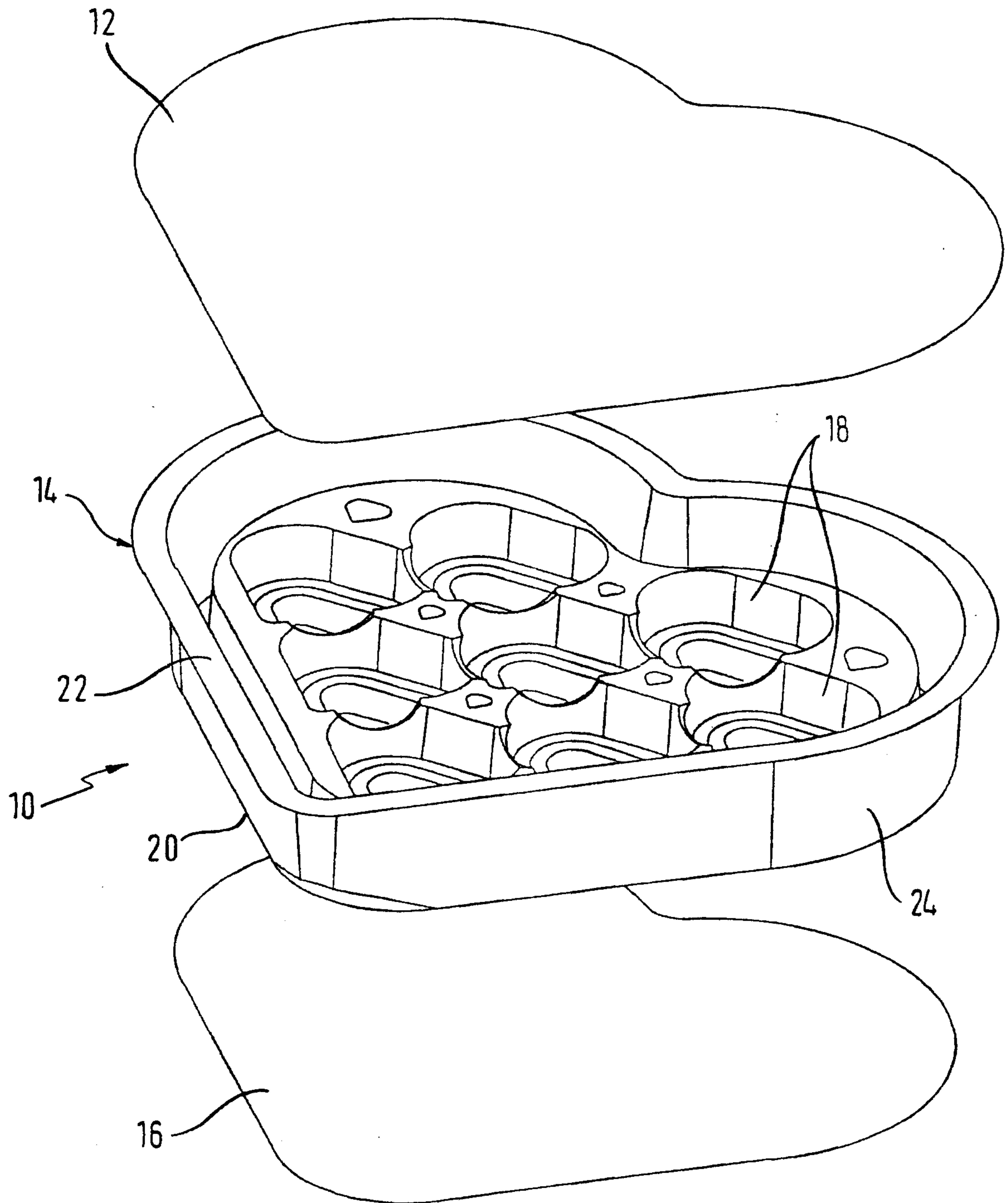
Claims

1. A package (10) adapted to contain foodstuffs, comprising:
 - a shaped tray (14),
 - a flat card (16) retained at the bottom of the tray (14) by means of engaging portions (26) and/or adhesive, and
 - a membrane lid (12) which is sealed to the top of the tray (14).
2. A package according to claim 1, characterized in that the shaped tray (14) comprises a continuous, flange-like upper edge, to which the lid (12) is sealed.
3. A package according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the shaped tray (14) comprises plural short, inwardly extending engaging projections (26) engaging with the edge of the card (16).
4. A package according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the membrane lid (12) is made of paper, carton, plastic or a composite thereof.
5. A package according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the membrane lid (12) is entirely flat.
6. A package according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the membrane lid (12) comprises a transparent portion.

7. A package according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the tray (14), preferably also the card (16) and/or the lid (12), the shape of a symbol, such as a heart or a drop.
8. A package according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the shape of the contents of the package (10) corresponds to the shape of the tray (14).
9. A package according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the tray (14) comprises plural indentations (18) of a shape corresponding to the shape of the tray (14).
10. A package according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the tray (14) and/or the lid (12) comprise an opening adapted to receive a holder of a presentation device.

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Fig. 1



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Fig. 2

