Jan. 8, 1974 F. WEITS ET AL Re. 27,873

DEBONING APPARATUS

Original Filed April 10, 1968 6 Sheets-Sheet 1

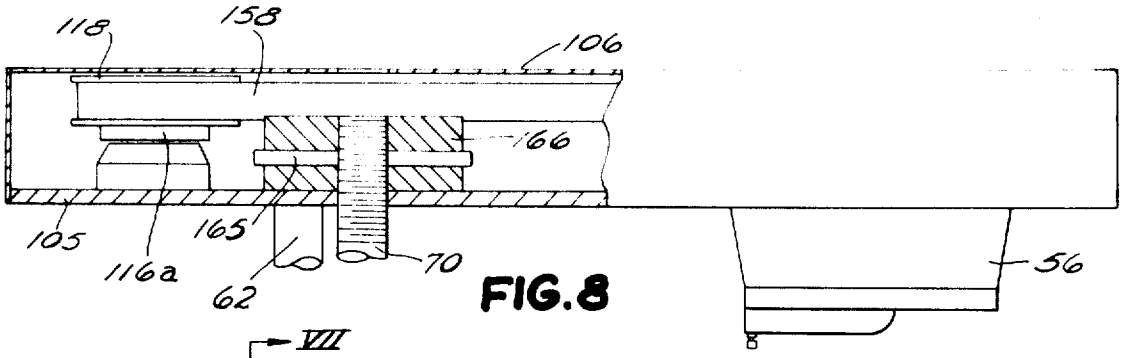


FIG.8

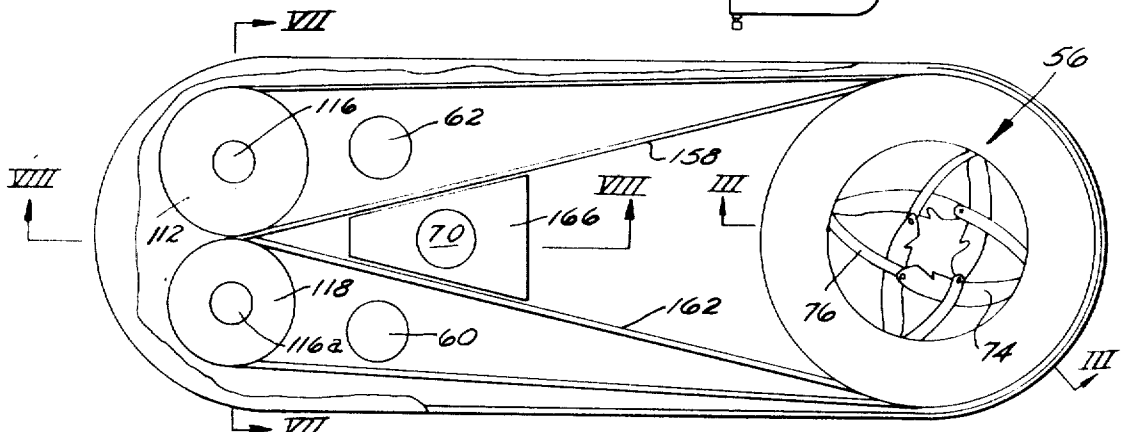


FIG.2.

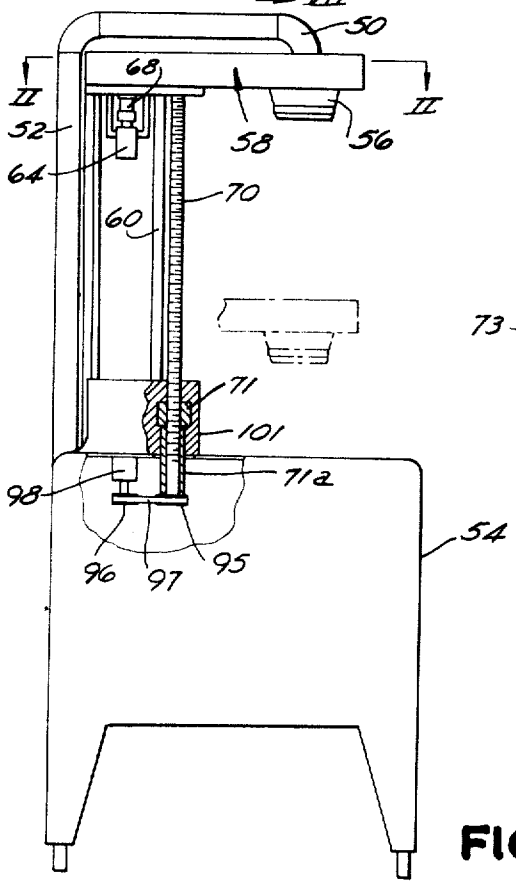


FIG.1.

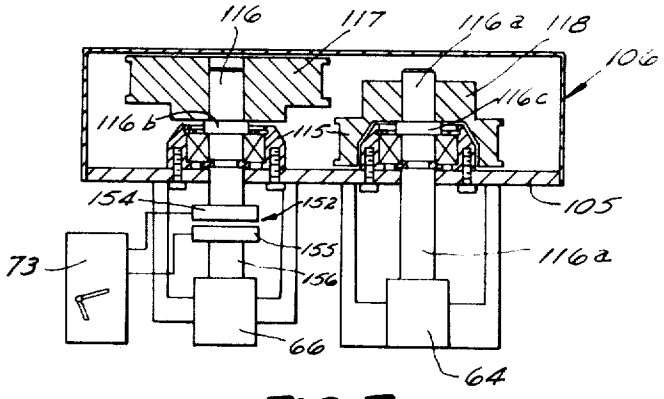


FIG. 7.

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DEBONING APPARATUS

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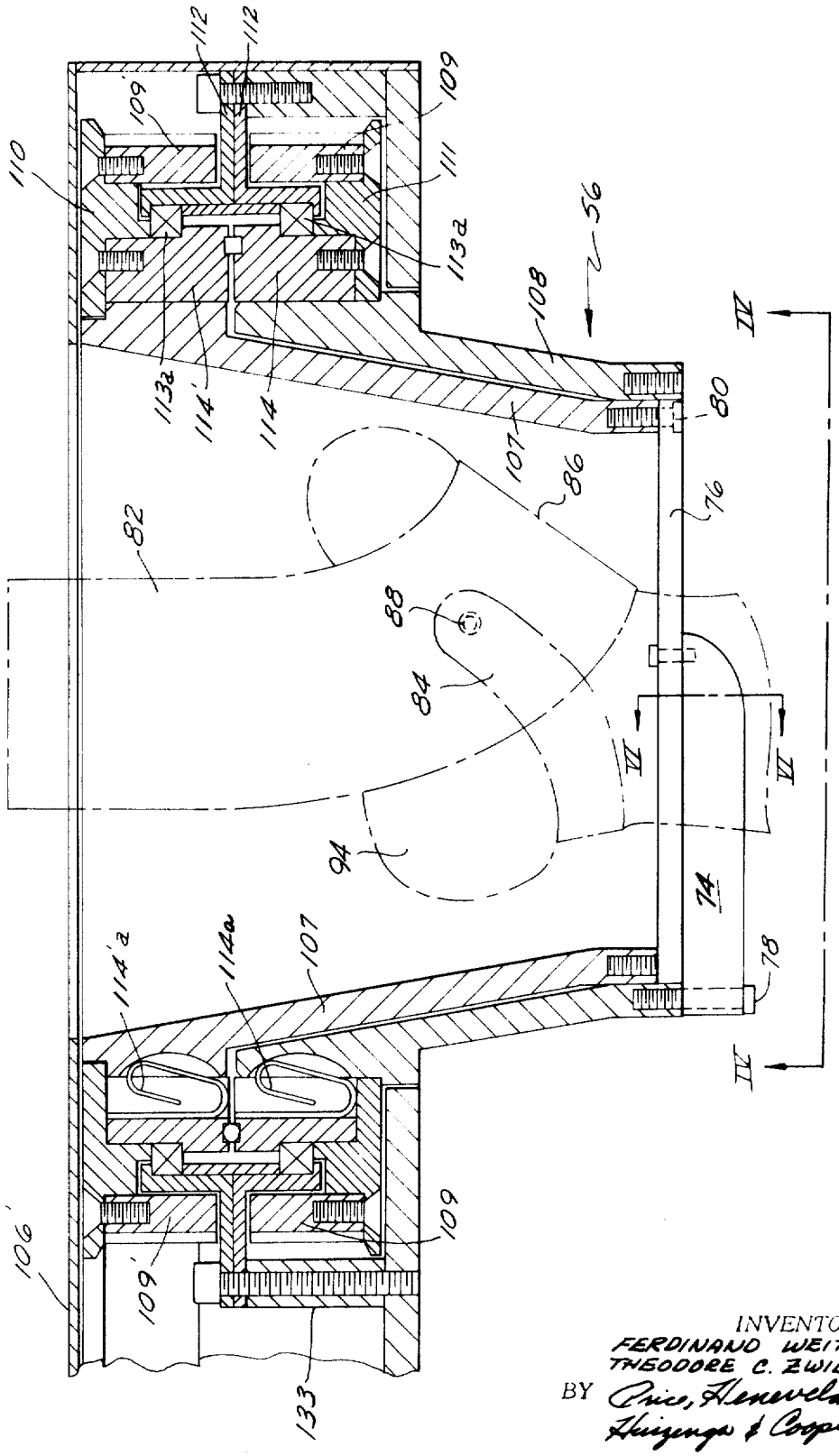


FIG. 3.

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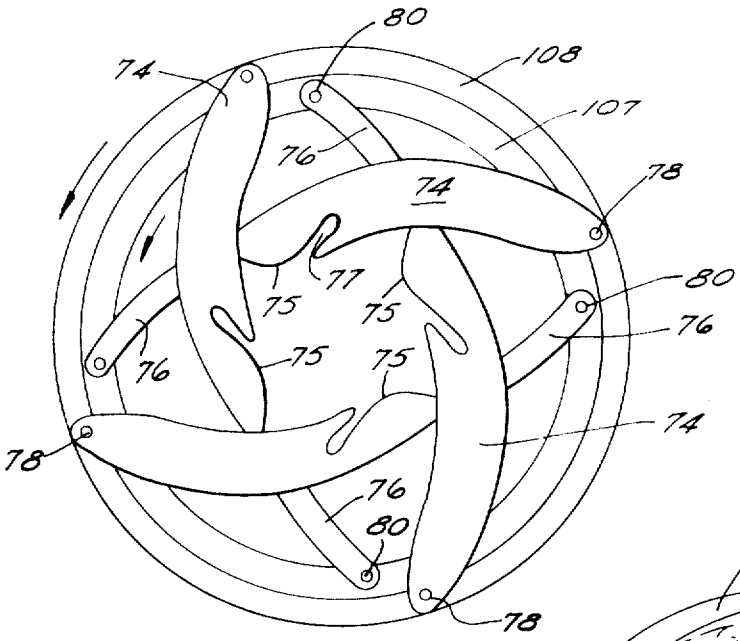


FIG.4.

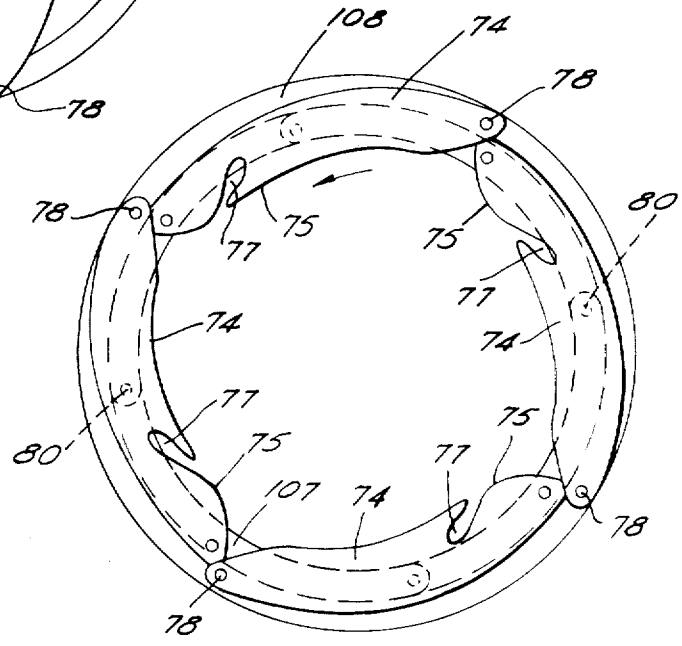


FIG.5.

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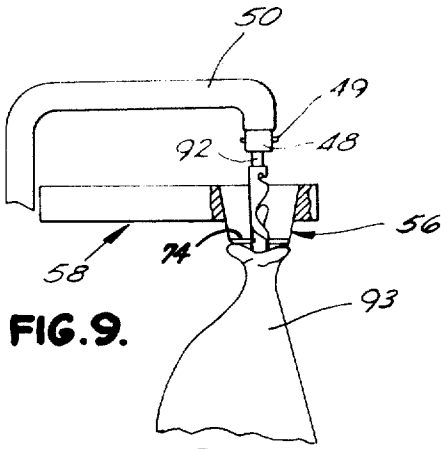


FIG.9.

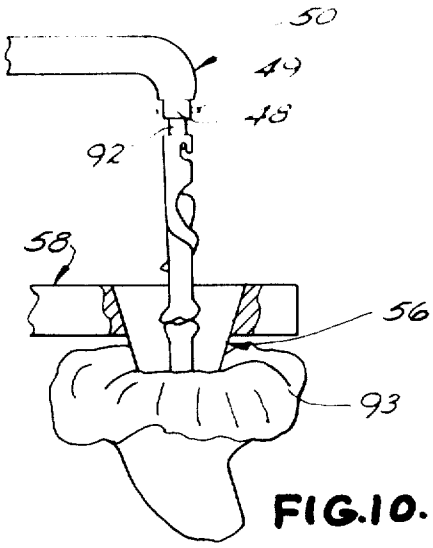


FIG.10.

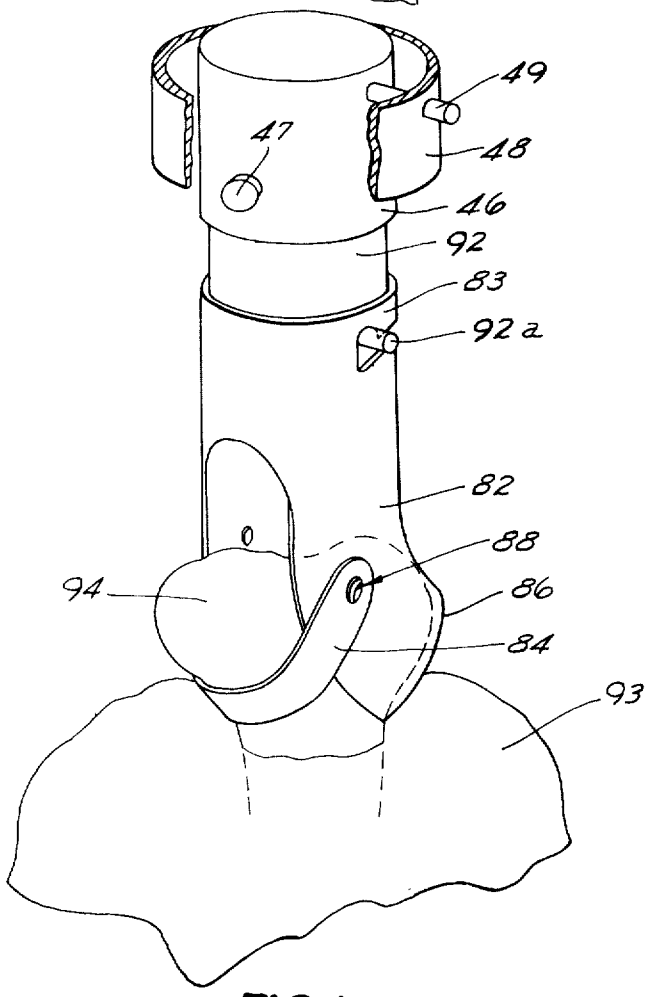


FIG.11.

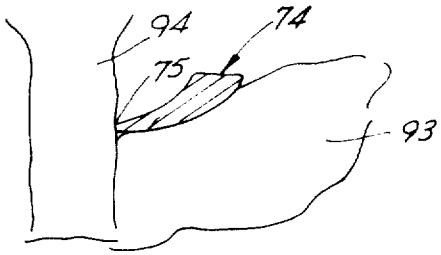


FIG.6.

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DEBONING APPARATUS

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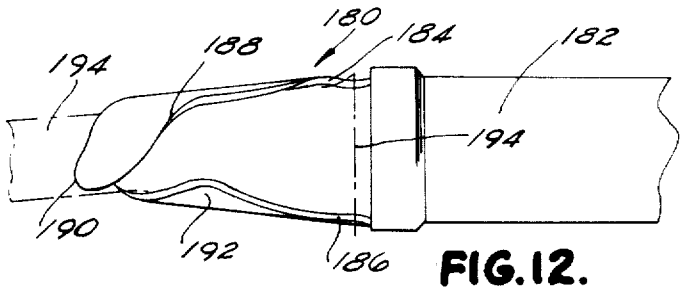


FIG.12.

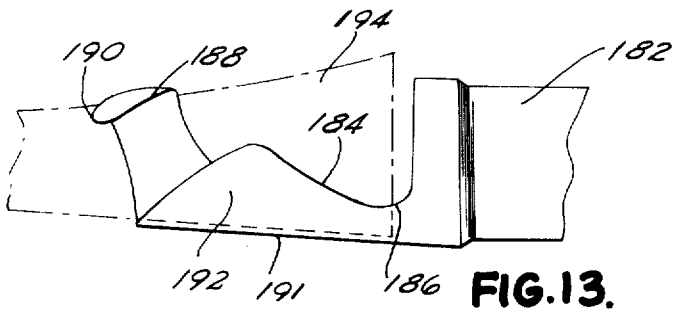


FIG.13.

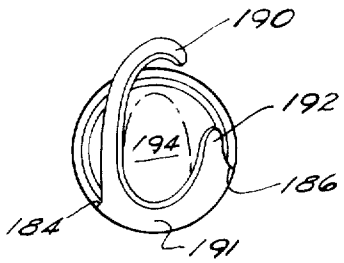


FIG.14.

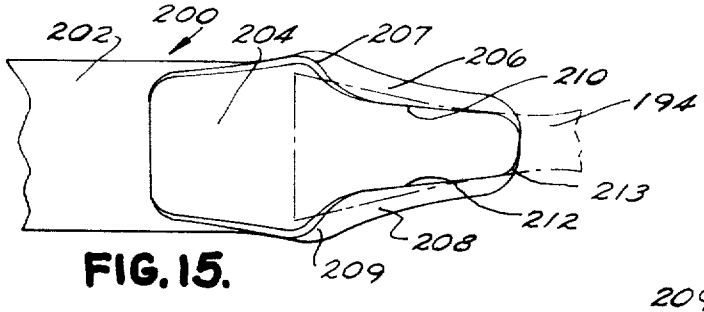


FIG.15.

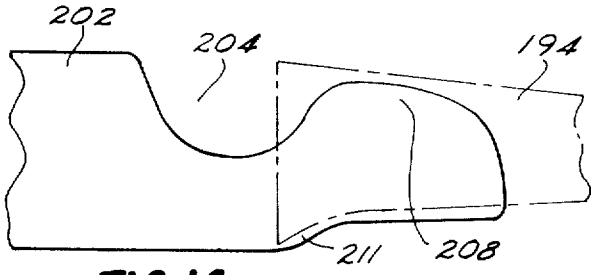


FIG.16.

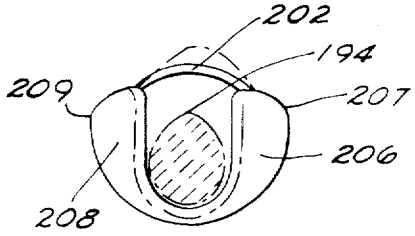


FIG.17.

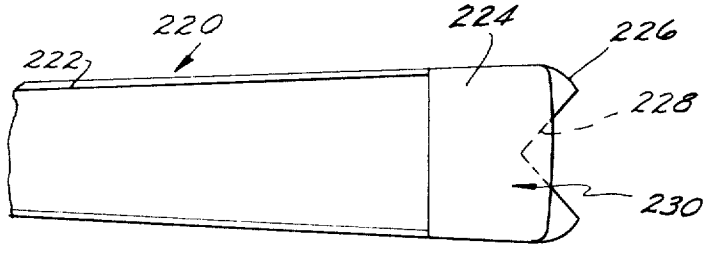


FIG.18.

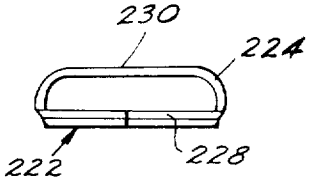


FIG.19.

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DEBONING APPARATUS

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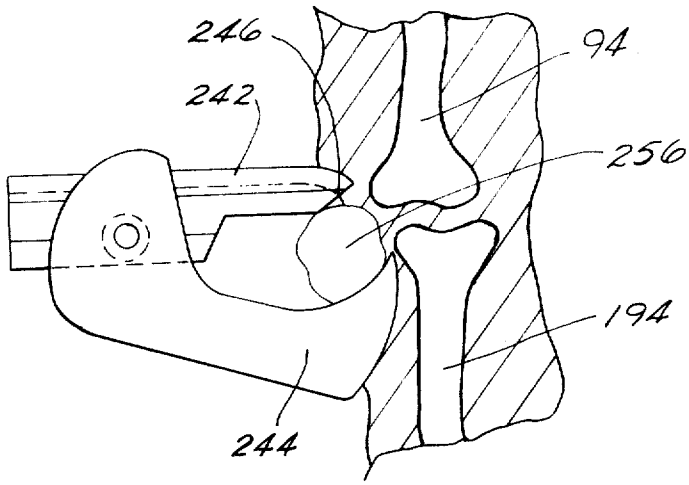


FIG. 24.

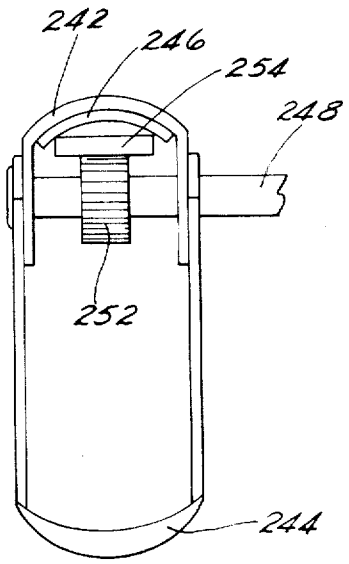


FIG. 23.

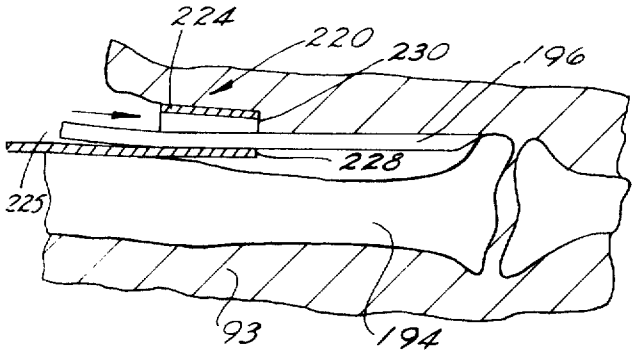


FIG. 20

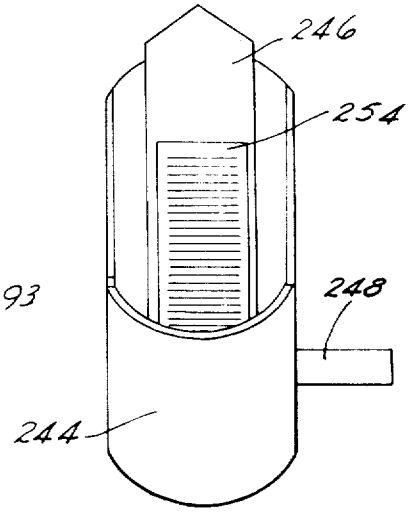


FIG. 22.

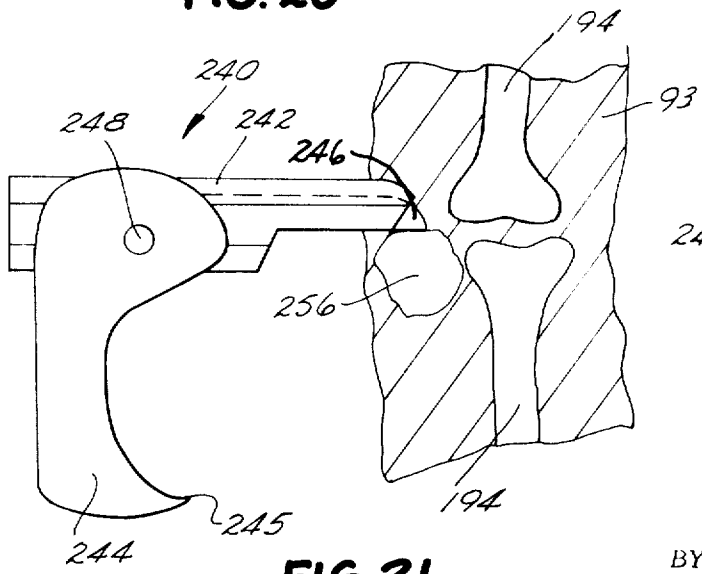


FIG. 21.

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United States Patent Office

Re. 27,873
Reissued Jan. 8, 1974

27,873

DEBONING APPARATUS

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Original No. 3,457,586, dated July 29, 1969, Ser. No. 720,052, Apr. 10, 1968. Application for reissue July 22, 1971, Ser. No. 166,324

Int. Cl. A22b *5/00;* A22c *17/00*

U.S. Cl. 17—1 G 30 Claims

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [ ] appears in the original patent but forms no part of this reissue specification; matter printed in italics indicates the additions made by reissue.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

This disclosure relates to a method and apparatus for removing meat from bones. The meat is removed by plowing the meat away from the bone by a plurality of dull plow members which rotate about the bone and are urged against the bone to force the meat away from and separate it from the bone without cutting the meat. Special tools are disclosed for holding the different ends of the bone so that the bone can be held without crushing during the deboning operation. Special tools are also disclosed for removing kneecaps and fibula bones prior to the meat stripping operation.

This invention relates to deboning of meat cuts such as animal legs, shoulders, and the like. In one of its aspects, the invention relates to removing bones from animal meat cuts by a method comprising holding an end of the bone so that the bone is restrained from longitudinal and rotational movement, rotating dull edged plowing members about the bone while simultaneously urging the dull edged plow members against the bone and effecting relative longitudinal movement between the bone and the plowing members such that the rotating plow members move away from the held end of the bone whereby the meat is plowed away from the bone intact, without cutting of the meat.

In another of its aspects, the invention relates to removing bones from animal meat cuts such as legs, shoulders, and the like with an apparatus comprising a bone holding means; a meat plowing means, including a plurality of dull edged plow members having means for urging the plow members against a bone in the holding means; means for effecting relative rotation between a bone in the bone holding means and the plowing member such as that the plow members rotate relative to a longitudinal axis of the bone, and means for effecting relative longitudinal movement of the plow members along the bone holding means as the plow members rotate relative to the longitudinal bone axis.

The desirability of deboning meat such as hams, beef, and the like has long been recognized. It is also recognized that it is highly desirable to remove the bones from meat in a mechanized operation due to the high cost and shortage of skilled labor.

Many machines have been devised for removing bones from meat cuts. The problems inherent in the bone removing operation are caused by the varying sizes and irregular shapes of the bones. One requirement for the deboning process is that substantially all of the meat is removed from the bone while the meat remains substantially intact.

One approach to the problem has been proposed by Terranova in his U.S. Patents 2,785,434 and 3,210,801. The principle applied by Terranova is to force a plurality of rotating sharpened blades axially along a bone of the meat cut, whereby the bone is enveloped by the rotating

blades on a programmed profile and the meat is cut away from the bone. This operation, while being substantially automated, leaves substantial amounts of meat on the bone or tends to gouge out pices of bone due to the irregular shape of the bone and the inability of the programming to follow the true profile.

Another machine has been proposed by Massengill in his U.S. Patents 2,857,619, 2,893,051 and 2,932,060. The principle employed by Massengill is to literally pull the bone out of the meat while holding the meat against a restricted variable opening which scrapes the meat from the bone. Due to the inability of the variable opening to conform to all irregularities of the bone, considerable amount of meat is left on the bone, requiring at least a semi-skilled operator to strip the rest of the meat from the bone during the scraping operation. Further, problems occasionally arise due to the fact that the bones are crushed during the pulling operation.

We have now discovered a completely automated process and apparatus for substantially completely removing meat from bones such as hams, beef shoulders and legs, and the like, by plowing meat away from the bone with a plurality of dull edged rotating plow members as the plow members traverse the bone. In this manner, the meat is separated from the bone without tearing or cutting apart of the meat.

By various aspects of this invention one or more of the following, or other objects can be obtained.

It is an object of this invention to provide a completely automated process and apparatus for removing bones from meat while leaving substantially no meat on the bones.

It is a further object of this invention to provide an improved bone holding chuck for an end of a tibia bone for a deboning apparatus which exerts longitudinal force on the bones, wherein the bone is held without crushing.

It is a further object of this invention to provide an improved bone holding chuck for bones in which the bones are easily inserted and removed and which hold the bone from longitudinal and rotational motion without a crushing force.

It is a further object of this invention to provide an improved machine for deboning animal meat cuts such as legs, shoulders, and the like wherein operator injury from sharp cutting blades is avoided.

It is yet another object of this invention to provide an improved meat deboning apparatus wherein an improved chuck holds femur bones against longitudinal and rotational motion during a deboning operation wherein the bones are easily loaded into and unloaded from the chuck.

Other aspects, objects, and the several advantages of this invention are apparent to one skilled in the art from a study of this disclosure, the drawings, and the appended claims.

According to the invention, there is provided an improved method for removing bones from animal meat cuts such as legs, shoulders, and the like. The method includes the steps of holding an end of the bone so that the bone is restrained from longitudinal and rotational movement, urging rotating dull edged plow members against the bone while effecting relative longitudinal movement between the bone and the plowing members such that the rotating members move away from the held end of the bone. In this manner, the meat is plowed away from the bone intact without cutting or tearing of the meat. Additionally, by this method, the force of the plowing members plowing the meat away from the bone enhances the ability of the meat to stay intact while pulling the meat away from the bones.

Preferably, the bone is hung pendulously so that the bone can automatically center itself within the rotating

plow members as the plow members move downwardly relative to the bone.

In one embodiment of this invention, a leg bone is removed from the meat surrounding the bone by first removing the fibula bone before the plowing operation.

In another embodiment of this invention, a leg bone is removed from the meat surrounding the same by first removing a kneecap from the bone before the plowing operation.

Preferably, the bone is held at an enlarged and exposed end portion without clamping of the bone so that the bone is prevented from rotation about its longitudinal axis. In removing leg bones from the meat surrounding the same, the tibia or the femur bone can be held.

In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the tendons within the meat are pulled away from the bone during the plowing operation as the plow members rotate about the bone.

Also according to the invention, there is provided an apparatus for removing bones from meat cuts such as legs, shoulders, and the like. The apparatus comprises a bone holding means, a meat stripping means including a plurality of dull edged plow blades resiliently urged against a bone in the bone holding means, and means to move the rotating plow blades along the bone away from the bone holding means to plow the meat away from the bone.

The invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view of a machine embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is a plan view, partly in section, taken along lines II—II of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the stripping cone seen along lines III—III of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the plow assembly seen along lines IV—IV of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a view similar to FIG. 4 showing the plow assembly in open position;

FIG. 6 is a sectional view of a plow blade showing the method of removing the meat from a bone as seen along lines VI—VI of FIG. 3;

FIG. 7 is an elevational view taken along lines VII—VII of FIG. 2;

FIG. 8 is a side elevational view of the cone supporting arm taken along lines VIII—VIII of FIG. 2;

FIG. 9 is a schematic illustration of the plow head in the starting position with the shank end of an animal leg hanging from the bone supporting arms;

FIG. 10 is a view similar to FIG. 9 showing the plow moved downwardly and illustrating the operation of removing the meat from the bone;

FIG. 11 is a perspective view illustrating a means for hanging the bone from the bone supporting chuck;

FIG. 12 is a plan view of an alternate embodiment of a chuck which can be employed according to the invention;

FIG. 13 is a side elevational view of the chuck shown in FIG. 12;

FIG. 14 is an end view of the chuck shown in FIGS. 12 and 13;

FIG. 15 is a plan view of a third embodiment of a chuck, which can be employed according to the invention;

FIG. 16 is a side elevational view of the chuck shown in FIG. 15;

FIG. 17 is an end view of the chuck shown in FIGS. 15 and 16;

FIG. 18 is a plan view of a fibula bone stripper/remover which can be employed according to the invention;

FIG. 19 is an end view of the fibula bone stripper/remover shown in FIG. 18;

FIG. 20 is a schematic illustration of the operation of the fibula bone stripper/remover;

FIG. 21 is a plan view of a kneecap remover as initially positioned for removing a kneecap from an animal leg;

FIG. 22 is a side elevational view of the kneecap remover shown in FIG. 21;

FIG. 23 is an end view of the kneecap remover shown in FIGS. 21 and 22; and

FIG. 24 is a plan view, similar to FIG. 21, showing the removal of the kneecap by the kneecap remover.

Referring now to the drawings, and to FIG. 1 in particular, a meat deboning machine contains a bone supporting arm **50** rigidly supported by a shaft support **52** on a base housing **54**. A meat stripping cone assembly **56** is provided operably suspended from a stripping cone supporting arm **58**. A pair of vertical supporting rods **60** and **62** (FIG. 2) are rigidly attached to the stripping cone supporting arm **58** and are slidably engaged within block **101** of base **54**. The stripping cone supporting arm **58** is moved upwardly and downwardly relative to base housing **54** by a threaded rod **70** secured by a pin **165** to block **166**. Nut **71** is supported by bearings (not shown) within the block **101**. A motor **98** drives the nut **71** through sleeve **71a**, pulley wheel **96**, pulley belt **97**, and pulley wheel **95**. The motor **98** can be provided with controls (not shown) for reversing the direction of drive to thereby change the direction of rotation of nut **71**. The manner of driving the nut **71** is shown schematically and forms no part of this invention. Many other ways of driving the nut will be suggested to those skilled in the art. The stripping cone assembly **56** is driven rotatably by a plow driving motor **64** and a cam follower driving motor **66** in a manner which will be described hereinafter.

Referring now to FIGS. 2 through 5, the meat stripping cone **56** comprises a cam follower cone **107** (so named because its rotary movement is responsive to the contour of a bone, which acts as a cam) and a plow cone **108** mounted concentrically for rotation within the stripping cone support arm **58**. A plurality of plow blades **74** are rotatably mounted at one end through bolts **78** to plow cone **108**. The other end of the plow blades **74** are rotatably attached by pin **79** to a link or cam follower **76** (so named because its action is responsive to the contoured surface of a bone). For simplicity, only one set of a plow blade and a cam follower member has been shown in FIG. 3. The cam follower cone **107** rotatably supports the cam follower members **76** at their other ends through bolts **80**.

Plow cone **108** is driven rotatably by key ring **114** engaging the plow cone **108** through a key **114a**. The key ring **114** is in turn driven by a pulley wheel **109** which is fixed to the key ring **114** through plow mounting ring **111**. The pulley wheel **109** is in turn driven through pulley belt **158** by pulley wheel **118**, which is connected to motor **64** by shaft **116a** (FIG. 7).

The drive mechanism for the cam follower cone **107** is similar. A key ring **114'** engages the cam follower cone **107** through a key **114a'**. The key ring **114'** is driven by pulley wheel **109'** through cam follower mounting ring **110**. A pulley wheel **117** drives pulley wheel **109'** through pulley belt **162**. The major difference between the drive mechanism for cones **107** and **108** is that pulley wheel **117** is driven by motor **66** (FIG. 7) through a slip clutch **152** having a part **154** connected to shaft **116** and a part **155** connected to shaft **156**. Clutch **152** is so arranged and adjusted that slippage is permitted at a predetermined torque exerted on shaft **116**. This, as will be explained in more detail hereinafter, causes cones **107** and **108** to rotate at the same speed when plow blades **74** engage a bone.

Referring to FIG. 7, the manner of supporting the cam follower pulley wheel **117** and the plow pulley wheel **118** is shown. The cam follower pulley wheel **117** and the plow pulley wheel **118** are pinned to pulley coupling shafts **116** and **116a**, respectively. Each pulley coupling shaft has a collar **116b** and **116c**, respectively, which rides on bearings. Flanges **115** support the bearings and are suitably fixed to the base plate **105**. A pair of motor **64** and **66**, supported by base plate **105**, are connected to

and drive the coupling shafts **116**. Since pulley wheel **117** is larger than pulley wheel **118**, belt **162** will be driven faster than belt **158** if motors **64** and **66** are turning at the same speed. In this manner, a constant torque can be applied to urge the plow blades against the bone during the stripping operation. A torque controller **73** is provided for the slip clutch **152** to control the torque applied by cam follower cone **107**, or to open the plow blades. When the clutch is disconnected by the controller, the system functional forces will cause the shaft **116** to slow down so that the blades will open.

The entire meat stripping cone assembly **56** is supported by a head base plate **105** through a plurality of mounting studs **133**, and bearing housing rings **112**. A pair of bearings **113**a are spaced by bearing separator **113** and permit independent rotation of the key rings **114** and **114'**.

A bone-gripping device and bone are shown in phantom lines in FIG. 3 to show the relationship between the plow cone and the bone supporting mechanism. The bone-gripping chuck (as seen also in FIG. 11) has a ball joint hanging body **82** with a strap **84** which cooperates with a closed end **86** to secure a ball joint end of a bone **94**. The strap **84** is rotatably [pinner] *pinned* at pin **88** to the shank hanging body **82** to facilitate insertion of the bone into the body **82**. The bone supporting device prevents the bone **94** from rotating about a vertical axis, but permits lateral movement of the bone within the meat stripping cone **56** to permit the bone to center itself within the meat stripping cone **56** during the meat stripping operation. The member **92** can be mounted to arm **50** (FIG. 11) by a universal joint so as to permit the chuck to move in any lateral direction, but to prevent rotation about a vertical axis.

The operation and structure of the plow blades **74** is more clearly seen in FIGS. 4 through 6. Each plow blade **76** is arc shaped with the inner portion forming a dull edge **75** for plowing the meat away from the bone. As seen in FIG. 6, the outer surfaces of the plow blade **74** slopes downwardly and inwardly so as to force the meat in an upward and outward direction during the meat stripping operation. Each plow blade **74** has slot **77** cut angularly outwardly from the dull edge **75**. The slot **77** will catch meat tendons and tear them away from the bone as the plow blades move in counterclockwise direction as seen in FIGS. 4 and 5. As seen in FIG. 6, the meat is pulled away from the bone as the plow blades rotate and move downwardly relative to the bone.

During the meat stripping operation, the stripping cone support arm **58** moves downwardly relative to the bone supporting arm **50** and both plow cone **108** and the cam follower cone **107** rotate about a central vertical axis. As the meat stripping cone assembly **56** rotates, both cones **107** and **108** rotate. However, cone **107**, absent any restraint, rotates at a slightly higher speed creating relative, rotary movement between cones **107** and **108**. Consequently, absent any restrain, cam follower cone **107** rotates in a counterclockwise direction (as seen in FIG. 4) relative to the plow cone **108**. This relative rotation causes links **76** to draw the plow blades **74** to the central portion of the cone, thus forcing the plow blades against a bone, such as bone **94** (FIGS. 3 and 10), located in the cones **107** and **108**. When the plow blades **74** are in contact with the bone **94** and therefore cannot move inwardly any further, the clutch **152** permits relative rotation between shafts **116** and **116**a (FIG. 7) so that follower cone **107** will rotate at the same speed as the plow cone **108**. However, there will be a torque on the cam follower cone **107** to urge the plow blades **74** against the bone **94**. The action of all four plow blades tends to center the bone within the annular space provided between the four plow blades. Because the bone is free to move laterally the bone will automatically tend to center itself during the meat stripping operation.

As the stripping cone **56** moves downwardly, relative to the bone **94**, the plow blades **74**, using dull edges **75**, merely plow the meat away or separate the meat from the bone as illustrated more clearly in FIGS. 9 and 10. Thus, there is no cutting of the meat during the meat removal operation. The meat is forced away from the bone and kept intact. In this manner, the bone is virtually stripped clean of all meat.

The stripping cone support arm **58** is raised and lowered by a mechanism shown in FIGS. 2 and 8. The threaded rod **70** is pinned in a block **166** which is fixed to base plate **105**.

In operation, the nut **71** is rotated in one direction by motor **98** to lower the arm **58** and in the opposite direction to raise the arm **58**.

The stripping cone support arm **58** is braced through support rods **60** and **62**. The support rods are clamped at the top end to base plate **105** through conventional clamps (not shown). The support rods are slidably retained in block **101** by conventional bearings (not shown).

Referring now to FIG. 11, the bone supporting member **92** supports body **82** through pins **92**a. The body **82** has two slots, each of which form a hook **83** which engages pins **92**a. The member **92** is in turn supported by a universal joint so that it is laterally swingable to permit the bone to be centered within the rotating plow blades (as shown schematically in FIGS. 9 and 10). The bone hanging body **82** has a closed end **86** which is bent laterally for engaging the femur bone ball end. The closed end slopes downwardly and inwardly to wedge the trochanter of a femur bone illustrated in FIG. 11. The round head of the femur bone engages a strap **84** which is pinned by **88** to the shank hanging body **82**. In this manner, the femur bone, supported by the ball joint, is held firmly vertically, restricted from rotational movement, and permitted to move horizontally to center itself within the supporting cone **56**.

The universal joint comprises a cylinder **46** which supports member **92** through pin **47**, and pipe **48** which supports cylinder **46** through pin **49**. Pipe **48** is fixed to the end of bone supporting arm **50**.

The femur bone is easily inserted into the chuck shown in FIGS. 3 and 11 by rotating the strap upwardly, inserting the round head of the bone into the strap and rotating the bone downwardly to seat the trochanter of the bone against closed end **86**. The bone can be easily removed by pushing the bone upwardly into the chuck and following the reverse procedure.

Referring now to FIGS. 12, 13 and 14, a tibia bone holding chuck has a cylindrical shaft **182** which is cut away in part to form the holding means. A longitudinal base member **191** has a first upstanding side wall **184** and a second upstanding side wall **186**. The first side wall **184** is helically shaped and has a helical edge **188** which ends in a sharpened tip **190**. The second side wall **186** extends upwardly and inwardly from the cut away rear portions forming shoulder **192**. A tibia bone **194** is shown in phantom lines positioned within the chuck. The first side wall is oval shaped as seen in FIG. 14 to prevent twisting of the bone in a counterclockwise direction as seen in FIG. 14. As can be seen from the drawing, the forwardly and inwardly shaped side walls wedge the end of the bone so as to prevent axial movement of the bone. The oval shape formed by the side walls restrict rotational movement of the bone in a counterclockwise direction around the longitudinal axis of the bone. The bone can be inserted into the chuck by tilting it so that the narrow portion of the bone is inserted between shoulder **192** and helical edge **188**. The bone is then pushed into the central open portion and turned so that it is in the position as seen in FIGS. 12, 13 and 14. The chuck is primarily designed for operation of the machine shown in the drawings wherein the plow blades rotate in a direction opposite to the direction of helical arm **184**. For a device in which the plow blades rotated in an opposite direction the helical arm would be shaped in the opposite direction. In other

words, the direction of the helical arm will oppose the rotational direction of the plow blades.

Referring now to FIGS. 15, 16 and 17, a second tibia bone holding chuck is shown. The chuck **200** has a cylindrical shaft **202** having a central opening **204** and holding flanges **206** and **208**. The holding flanges are bent inwardly at the top portion thereof and are tapered inwardly at the forward end **213**. In order to prevent rotation of the bone within the chuck, the forward end **213** is U-shaped. Holding flange **206** has an expanded rear portion **207** and a sharpened edge **210**. Holding flange **206** has an expanded edge **209** and a sharpened forward edge **212**. The bottom of the chuck is depressed at **211** to conform with the expanded end of the tibia bone. The bone **194** (shown in phantom lines) fits within the chuck between holding flanges **206** and **208**. The sharpened edges **210** and **212** aid in removing the meat from the bone as the bone is inserted into the chuck. The tapered flanges **206** and **208** are so shaped as to hold the bone from longitudinal movement away from the chuck and the U-shaped cross section prevents rotational movement of the bone within the chuck about its longitudinal axis.

Both of the alternate chucks shown in FIGS. 12 through 17 are supported by the bone supporting arm **50**. Both of these chucks can be supported by a universal joint which will hold the chuck in a fixed vertical position and fixed so that it cannot rotate about a vertical axis, but permitting lateral movement of the bottom portion of the chuck so that the bone can center itself within the meat stripping cone **56**. Such a joint is schematically illustrated in FIGS. 9 through 11.

All of the bone holding chucks make use of bone contour to hold the bone for the stripping operation. Each of the chucks is designed so that the force of the stripping cone, plowing the meat away from the bone will be transmitted along the length of the bone. Thus the holding means for the bone will not crush the bone because it is not dependent on the compressive force applied to the bone. It is also apparent that the bone chucks advantageously use bone geometry to prevent relative rotation between the chuck and the bone so that compressive forces on the bone are eliminated.

In stripping meat from animal legs, the fibula bone of the animal is preferably removed before removing the meat from the bone according to the invention. A device for removing the fibula bone is shown in FIGS. 18, 19 and 20. It is to be understood, however, that the novel process and novel apparatus for stripping meat from the bone can be employed to strip the meat from the bone without first removing the fibula bone.

Referring now to FIGS. 18 through 20, the fibula bone remover **220** comprises an longitudinal bar **222** having an oval hollow front portion **224** with a tapered end **226** having an indented sharpened chisel **228**, and a front edge **230**. As seen in FIG. 20, the fibula bone remover **220** is inserted at the lower joint of the fibula bone and the tibia bone **194**. The sharpened chisel **228** breaks the fibula bone **196** from the tibia bone **194**. As the fibula bone remover **220** is pushed toward the other end of the bone, the fibula bone is pushed out through hollow portion **224**. When the chisel **228** reaches the knee joint, the chisel again breaks the joint between the tibia bone **194** and the fibula bone **196**. After the tibia bone is broken away from the fibula bone, the fibula bone **196** can be pulled out of the meat **93**.

Referring now to FIGS. 21 through 24, a method and means for removing the kneecap from an animal leg is shown. The kneecap is also preferably removed from the animal leg prior to the meat stripping operation. It is to be emphasized that the removal of the kneecap is a preferred embodiment rather than an essential step in carrying out the inventive process and in using the inventive apparatus.

The kneecap remover **240** has a blade holder **242** which slidably engages a pointed blade **246**. The blade **246** is positioned adjacent the kneecap **256** of the animal. The blade is sharpened at the edges so that it can penetrate the flesh adjacent to the kneecap as shown in FIG. 21. An exciser **244** having a sharpened edge **245** is supported for rotation relative to blade holder **242** on a pin **248**. A gear **252** is attached to pin **248** and engages a rack **254** on blade **246**. As the exciser **244** rotates relative to holder **242** to remove the kneecap **256**, as seen in FIG. 24, the blade **246** retracts within **242** so that the exciser **244** can cut behind the kneecap **256** and shear off the tendons supporting it between exciser **244** and blade holder **242**.

Whereas the invention has been described with relation to a particular apparatus for carrying out the process, it is obvious that other mechanical arrangements can be employed without departing from the spirit of the invention. For example, other means could be devised for rotating the concentric rings which drive the plow blades and the cam followers. The alternate driving means could employ a single motor having dual power take-off means and a clutch to control the speed of one of the power take-off means. Similarly, other methods of raising and lowering the stripping cone support arms could be devised.

Whereas the invention has been described with reference to the meat stripping cone moving downwardly relative to a stationary bone, it is within the scope of the invention to move the bone upwardly relative to a vertically stationary rotating stripping cone.

Other variations and modifications will be suggested, to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of this invention.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An apparatus for removing bones from animal meat cuts such as legs, shoulders, and the like, said apparatus comprising:

bone holding means;

meat plowing means, including a plurality of plow members having dull edges adapted to contact a bone in said bone holding means and surfaces in contact with meat as it leaves the bone inclined upwardly away from said bone;

means for urging said ploy members against said bone;

means for effecting relative rotation between said bone in said bone holding means and said plow members such that said plow members rotate relative to a longitudinal axis of said bone; and

means for effecting relative longitudinal movement between said bone holding means and said meat plowing means as said plow members rotate relative to said longitudinal axis of said bone whereby meat on said bone is plowed away from said bone without cutting of said meat.

2. An apparatus according to claim **1** wherein said plow members have tendon engaging means whereby as said meat is plowed away from said bones, tendons in said meat are engaged by said tendon engaging means and pulled away from said bone.

3. An apparatus according to claim **2** wherein said tendon engaging means comprises a narrow slot in said plow blades extending from said dull edge outwardly away from said bone at an angle to said dull edge.

4. An apparatus according to claim **1** wherein said plow members slope outwardly from said dull edge and away from said direction of movement of said plow members relative to said bone holding means such that meat, as it is plowed, is cammed away from said bone.

5. An apparatus according to claim **1** wherein said bone holding means is so shaped as to wedge an expanded end of said bone within said holding means such that said bone cannot be dislodged from said bone holding means by pulling said bone in a longitudinal direction away from

said bone holding means, and such that said bone cannot be rotated about a longitudinal axis relative to said bone holding means, at least while pulling in said longitudinal direction.

6. An apparatus according to claim 5 wherein said bone holding means is adapted to engage the upper end portion of the femur bone, said bone holding means having a strap to engage the rounded edge of said femur bone and an opposed inwardly and downwardly sloping wall to position and hold the trochanter of said femur bone when said bone is pulled longitudinally away from said holding means.

7. An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said strap is rotatably attached to said holding means so that said bone can be easily positioned within and removed from said bone holding means.

8. An apparatus according to claim 5 wherein said bone holding means has a longitudinal base member, a first arm extending out of a side of said base member, and having a helical edge, a second arm extending out of another side of said base member and spaced from said first arm, said second arm having a forward edge parallel to a portion of said helical edge forming a slot between said forward edge and said portion of said helical edge, said slot being at an oblique angle to said base member whereby a tibia bone can be inserted through said oblique slot and centered between said first and second arms with the longitudinal axis of said bone aligned with the longitudinal axis of said base member and oblique to said slot.

9. An apparatus according to claim 5 wheerin said bone holding means comprises: a longitudinal base member; a pair of arms extending upwardly from said base member gradually tapering inwardly at a forward end, said arms being bent inwardly at a rear top portion thereof, said base and upstanding arms forming a U-shape at said forward end, whereby a tibia bone can be inserted into said holding means with a narrow portion within said U-shaped forward end and with the expanded end portion of said tibia bone being restrained against longitudinal movement by said rear portion of said arms restrained from rotational motion about its longitudinal axis by said upstanding arms.

10. An apparatus according to claim 9 wherein the forard upper edges of said arms are sharpened for cutting meat away from the bone as the bone is positioned between said arms.

11. An apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said meat plowing means further comprises:

a pair of concentric rings supported for independent rotation about a central axis;

means for driving said concentric rings at different relative speeds independent of each other;

said plow members are rotatably attached to one of said rings;

said urging means comprises a link member which is rotatably attached to an inner end portion of said plow member and rotatably attached to the other of said concentric rings;

whereby the movement of said plow members toward and away from said bone, and against said bone, can be controlled by varying the relative speeds of said concentric rings.

12. An apparatus according to claim 11 wherein said driving means comprises means for varying the speeds of at least one of said concentric rings so that the outer ring can be driven faster or slower than the inner ring.

13. An apparatus for removing bones from meat cuts and the like comprising:

an outer support member;

an inner member having a bone receiving aperture and being rotatably mounted within said outer member so that said inner member is rotatable about a central axis;

plow blade means having dull inner edges rotatably supported by said inner member movable toward and away from said central axis of said inner member;

means yieldingly urging said plow blade means radially inwardly toward said axis, said plow means being yieldable radially outwardly of said axis in response to said edges encountering enlarged sections of said bones; and

means to drive said inner member whereby meat on animal bones can be removed therefrom by causing said bone to move through the rotating plow blades while the plow blades are yieldingly urged against the bone.

14. An apparatus according to claim 13 wherein said dull inner edge of said plow blade means terminates in a rounded inner which contacts said bone.

15. An apparatus according to claim 14 wherein said plow blade means have a tendon engaging means comprising a narrow slot extending from said dull edge near said rounded end outwardly and away from said bone and said dull edge.

16. An apparatus according to claim 15 wherein said plow blade means are tapered outwardly and upwardly so that meat on said bones will be cammed away from said bones as said bones are pulled upwardly through said rotating plow blade means.

17. An apparatus for removing bones from meat cuts and the like comprising:

a bone holder;

a first member;

a second member;

means rotatably supporting said first and second members so that each of said first and second members can rotate about a central axis independently of each other;

blade means rotatably supported by one of said first and second members, said blade means having meat removing edges movable toward and away from said central axis of rotation;

means to control the movement of said blade means relative to said central axis in response to the relative rotation of said first and second members causing said meat removing edges to move radially inwardly and outwardly depending upon the direction of said relative rotation; and

means to cause rotation of said first and second members whereby meat on animal bones can be removed therefrom by causing a bone in said bone holder to move through the rotating meat removing edges while the blades are yieldingly urged against said bone.

18. The apparatus of claim 17 in which the means for causing rotation of said members is a differential speed means which causes a differential in the rotational speed of said first and second members until the meat removing edges of said blade means encounters the surface of said bone.

19. The apparatus of claim 17 in which said first member and said second member are concentric rings.

20. The apparatus of claim 17 in which the meat removing edges are dull whereby they plow through the meat and separate it from the bone.

21. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said dull inner edge of said blade means terminates in a rounded inner end which contacts said bone.

22. The apparatus of claim 21 wherein said blade means have a tendon engaging means to catch tendons as said blade means rotates about said bone and pulls said tendons away from said bone.

23. The apparatus of claim 22 wherein said blade means are tapered outwardly and upwardly so that meat on said bones will be cammed away from said bones as said bones are pulled upwardly through said rotating blade means.

24. Apparatus for removing bones from animal meat cuts and the like comprising:

bone holding means;

meat-removing means having a plurality of meat-removing members each having a meat-removing surface thereon with an edge thereof adapted to contact a bone held by said holding means, said holding means, said surface extending from said edge away from said bone and in an outwardly direction inclined toward said bone holding means to provide a plowing surface, each of said plurality of members being pivotally mounted about its pivotal axis which is parallel to the longitudinal axis of said bone;

means for pivoting each of said plurality of said members about its pivotal axis for movement of said meat-removing surface toward and away from said bone;

means for effecting relative rotation between said bone holding means and said members such that said members rotate around said bone axis;

means biasing each of said members about its pivotal axis toward said bone axis simultaneously with the rotation of said members around said bone axis; and

means for effecting relative longitudinal movement between said bone holding means and said meat-removing means as said members rotate around said bone axis and simultaneously therewith are biased toward said axis against said bone whereby meat on said bone is removed from said bone by said meat-removing surfaces of said meat-removing members.

25. An apparatus as defined in claim 24 wherein said members have tendon-engaging means thereon whereby as said meat is removed from said bone, tendons in said meat are engaged by said tendon-engaging means and pulled away from said bone.

26. An apparatus as defined in claim 25 wherein said tendon-engaging means comprises a narrow slot in said members extending outwardly away from said bone at an angle to a bone-contacting edge thereof.

27. An apparatus as defined in claim 24 wherein said edge of said meat-removing surface of said members each include a dull-edge portion adapted to contact a bone in said bone-holding means.

28. An apparatus as defined in claim 27 wherein said members slope outwardly from said dull edge portions and away from said direction of movement of said members relative to said bone-holding means such that the meat, as it is removed, is cammed away from said bone.

29. An apparatus as defined in claim 24 wherein said meat removing means further comprises:

a pair of concentric rings supported for independent rotation about the longitudinal axis of said bone;

means for driving said concentric rings at different relative speeds independent of each other;

said members are pivotally attached to one of said rings;

said pivoting means comprises a link member which is rotatably attached to an inner end portion of said member and rotatably attached to the other of said concentric rings;

whereby the movement of said members toward and away from said bone and against said bone can be controlled by varying the relative speeds of said concentric rings.

30. An apparatus as defined in claim 29 wherein said driving means comprises means for varying the speeds of at least one of said concentric rings so that one of said rings can be driven faster or slower than the other of said rings.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

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