US 20030192897A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**

Stapleton

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2003/0192897 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 16, 2003**

(54) CONTAINER FOR HOLDING FOOD

(75) Inventor: **Marilyn Stapleton**, Spring Grove, IL (US)

Correspondence Address:
NIKOLAI & MERSEREAU, P.A.
900 SECOND AVENUE SOUTH
SUITE 820
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402 (US)

(73) Assignee: **Ivex Packaging Corporation**, Lincolnshire, IL

(21) Appl. No.: **10/122,979**

(22) Filed: **Apr. 11, 2002**

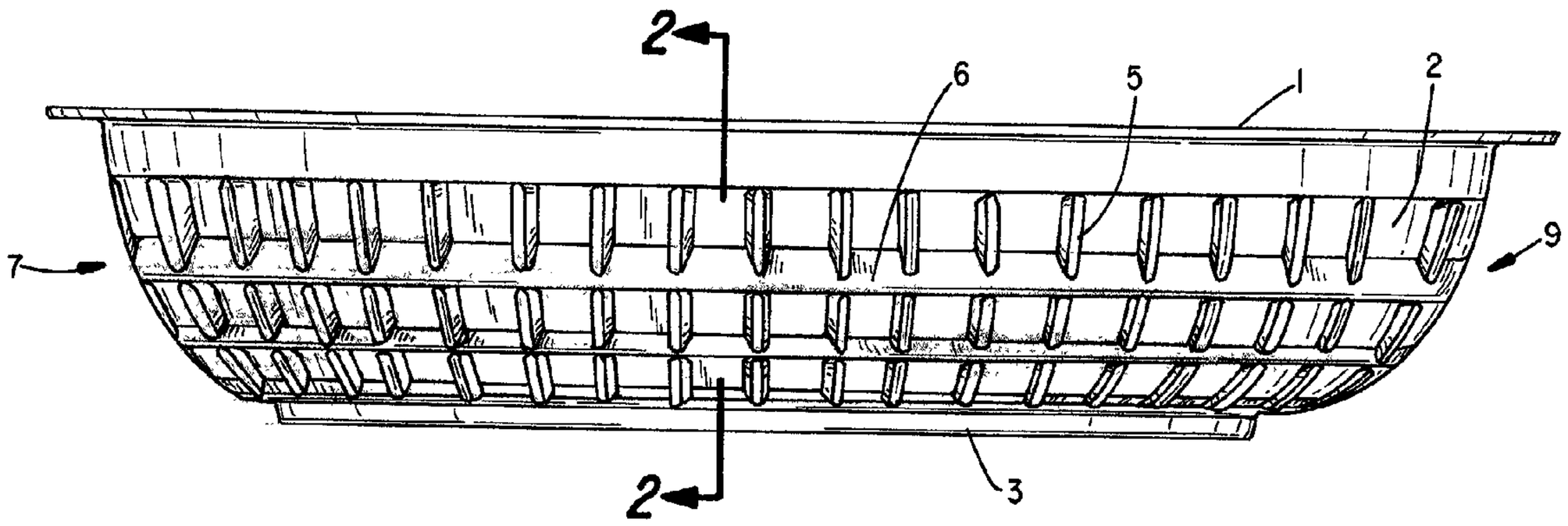
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **B65D 6/08**; B65D 6/10; B65D 6/28

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **220/674**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A container for holding food embossed with a pattern along the sidewall to simulate a woven reed pattern. The container is formed by molding high impact polystyrene, allowing for an inexpensive and lightweight disposable container. Unlike a typical woven reed container, the base and sidewalls are void of openings.



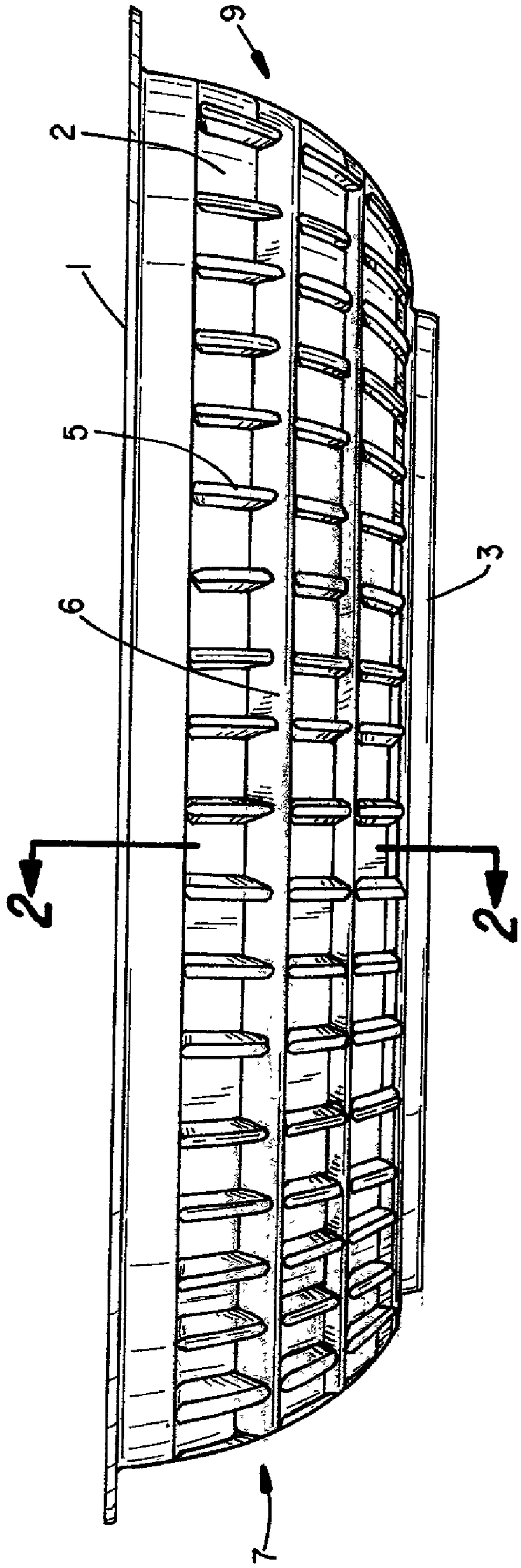


FIG. 1

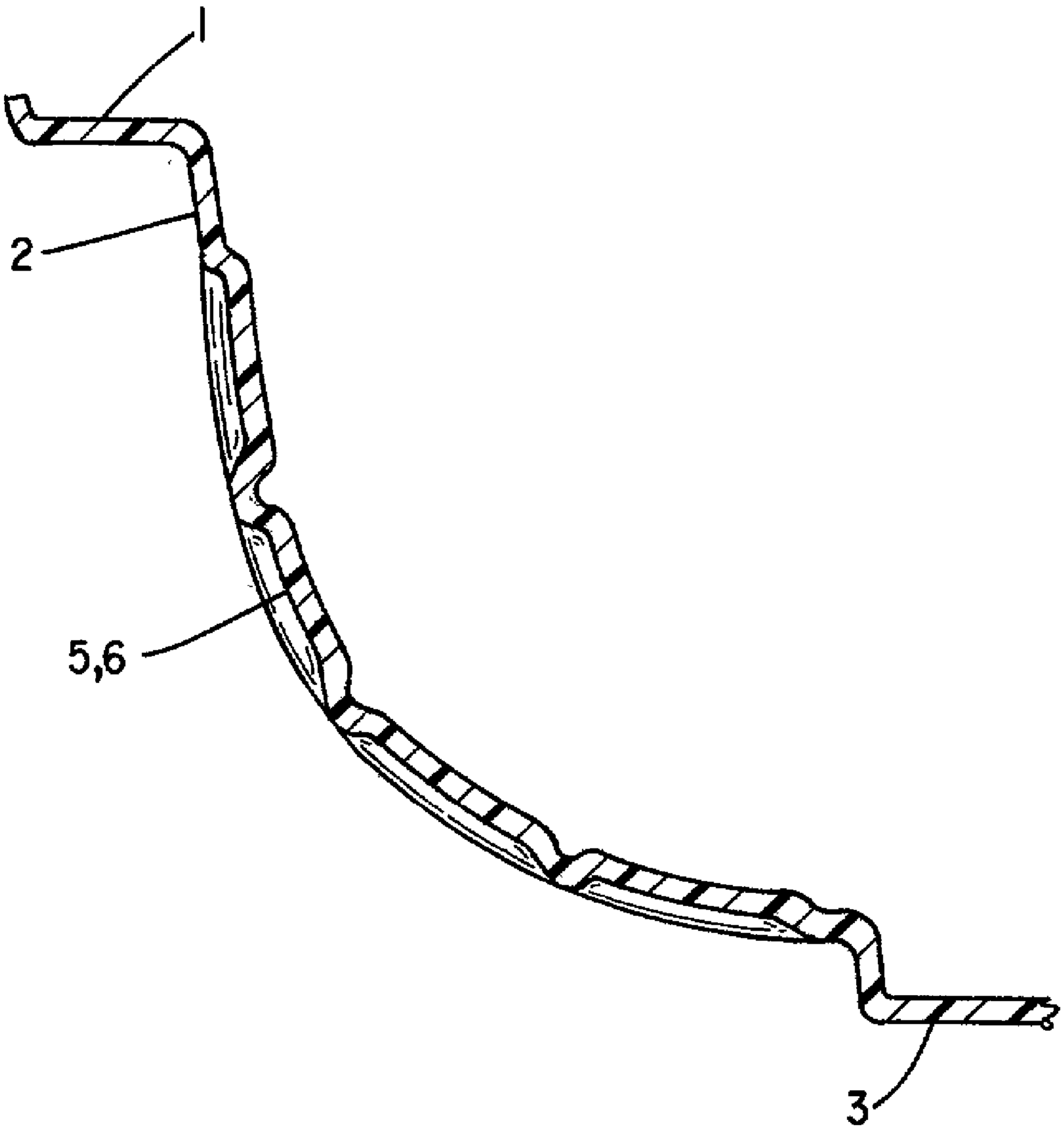


FIG. 2

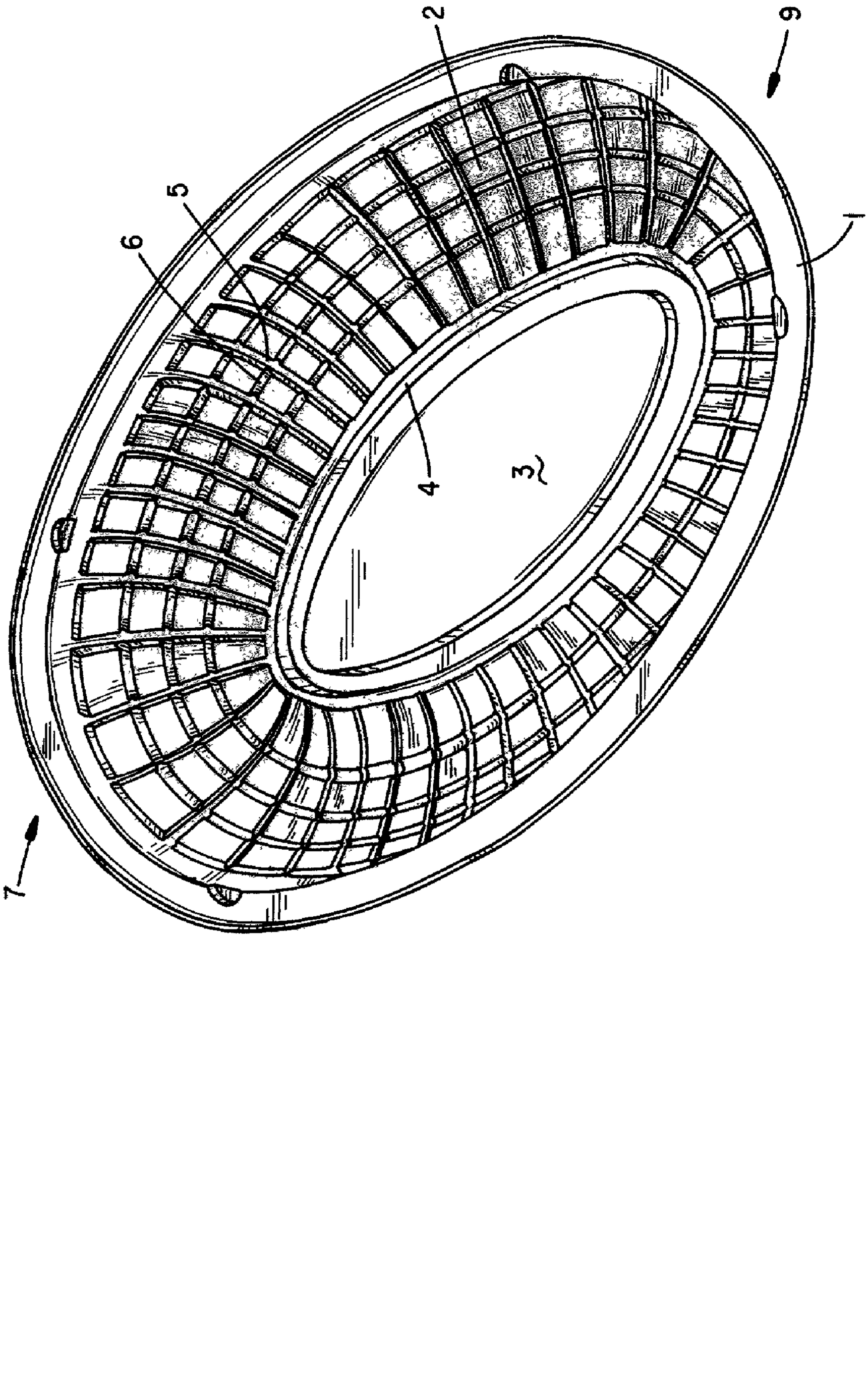


FIG. 3

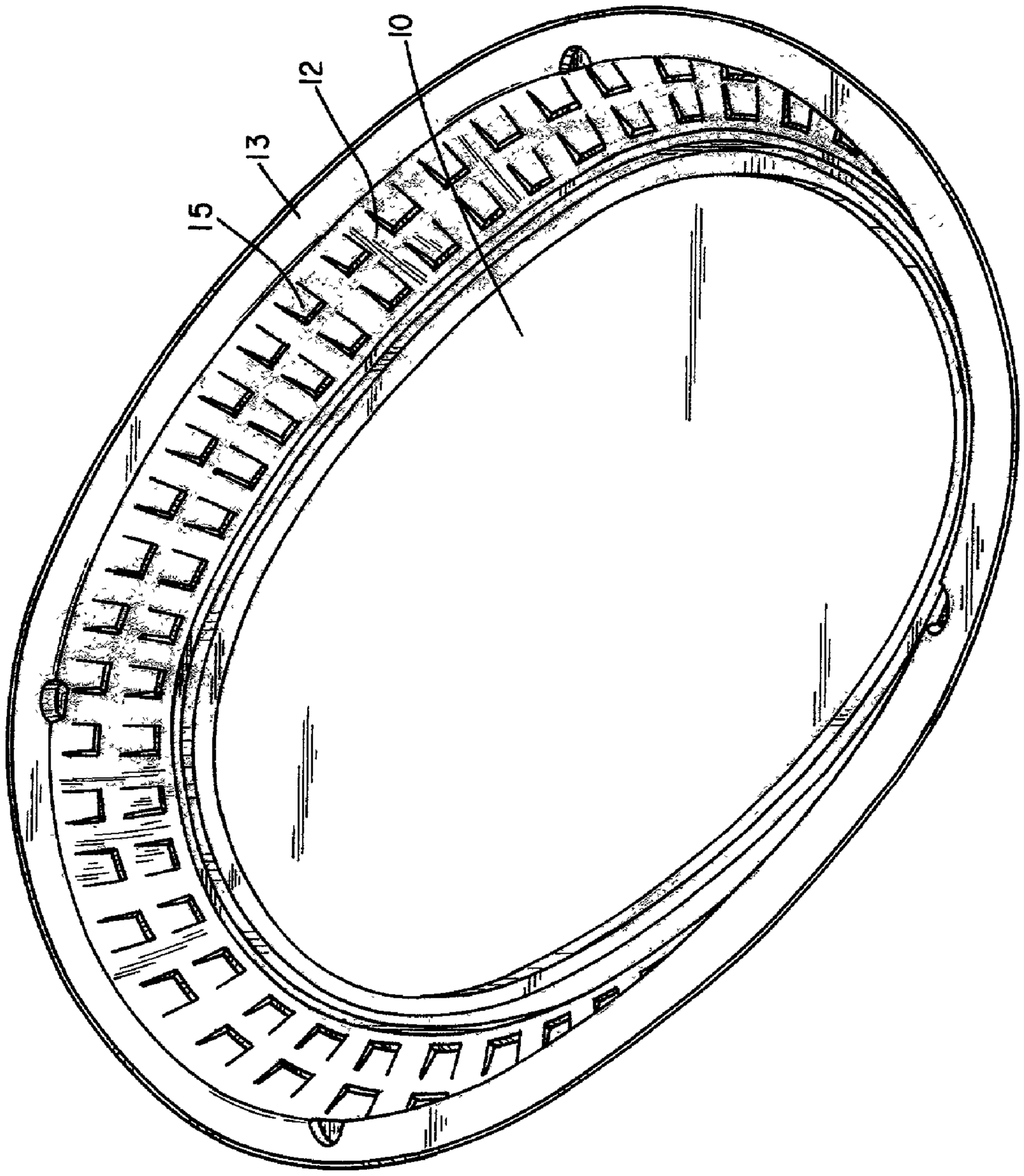


FIG. 4

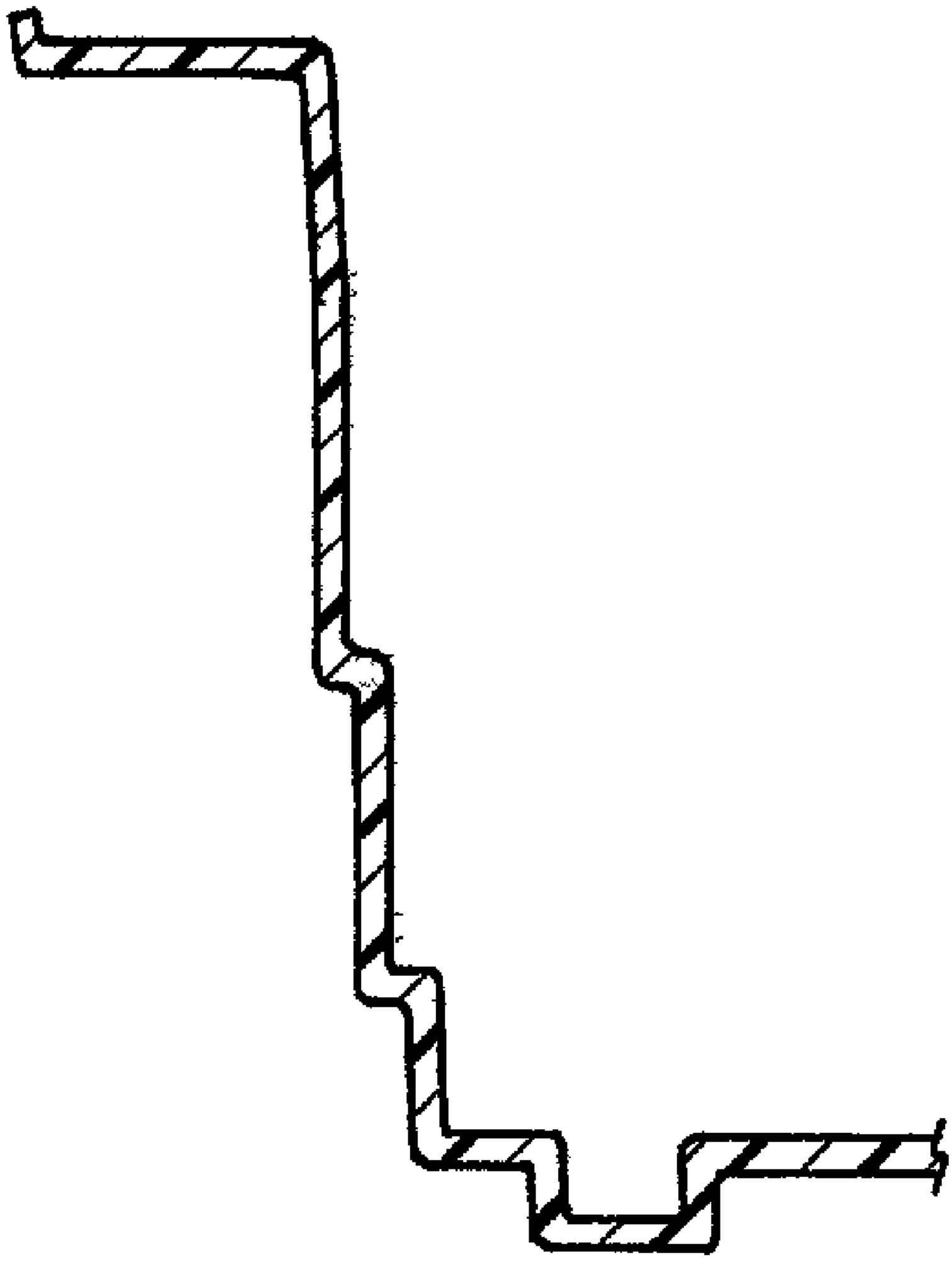


FIG. 5

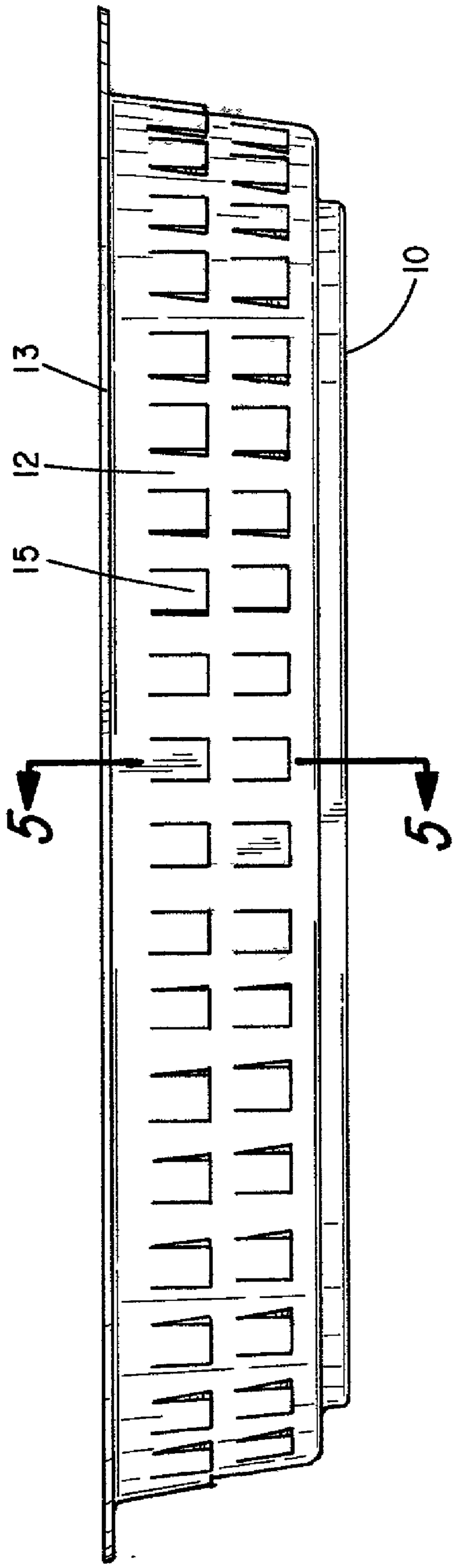


FIG. 6

CONTAINER FOR HOLDING FOOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] I. Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention relates generally to plastic dishware and more particularly to a basket shaped serving tray for holding sandwiches and the like in the food service industry.

[0003] II. Discussion of the Prior Art

[0004] In today's consumer culture, many customers do not have time to sit down for a "home cooked" meal, much less eat at a "sit-down" restaurant. Hundreds of millions of meals each year are consumed at quick service restaurants such as hot dog and burger establishments, sandwich shops, and delicatessens. The question for these establishments is how to deliver food to the customer in an inexpensive yet appealing way.

[0005] Many food service operators use natural fiber baskets or injection-molded baskets to deliver hot and cold sandwiches and other food items to their dine-in customers. These baskets are commonly lined with deli paper and re-used until they become damaged or discolored. The customer is expected to throw the paper liner in the trash and stack the basket in a designated area. The baskets are then picked up by store personnel, wiped out, and stacked for re-use.

[0006] Several problems arise from use of these baskets. First, customers do not always save the basket. In many cases, the customer will throw it, along with wrappings and left over food, into the trash. This depletes the restaurant's supply of baskets, requires the restaurant to re-order new baskets. Second, requiring the employees to collect and clean baskets contributes to an increase in the overall labor costs. Third, any time such an item is reused, hygiene and cleanliness issues arise. Fourth, presently the cost of such baskets is typically between $0.50 to $0.96 when purchased in quantity. Every basket that is damaged or lost increases operating costs. Fifth, the openings in these baskets allow leakage to occur. Sixth, use of the baskets inherently requires using of a secondary packaging item, such as a deli sheet made of either paper or plastic. This adds to cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] A primary object of this invention is to provide a low-cost, disposable container for delivery of food to restaurant customers.

[0008] A further object of this invention is to save labor costs by removing the need for workers to separate food residue from the container by allowing the customer to dispose of the container entirely.

[0009] Another object of this invention is to provide a liquid-proof container which will avoid the risk of food spilling or leaking, or limit the foods for which they can be used.

[0010] Still another object of this invention is to provide a disposable container which can be used for customers who order carryout items.

[0011] An additional object of this invention is to provide a disposable container for holding food that visually resembles a typical reusable container.

[0012] These and other objects are achieved by providing a low-cost, attractive, one-piece container that is intended for a single use. The container is preferably made of high impact polystyrene (HIPS) having an embossed pattern on its sidewall simulating that of a woven container. The sidewall pattern in these containers replicates the holes in the reusable container, but is still a solid part for use of food-grade material.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] **FIG. 1** is a side elevation view of a first invention.

[0014] **FIG. 2** is a cross-sectional view taken along line **2-2** in **FIG. 1**.

[0015] **FIG. 3** is a bottom view of the embodiment of the present invention shown in **FIGS. 1 and 2**.

[0016] **FIG. 4** is a top view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

[0017] **FIG. 5** is a cross-sectional view, of an alternative embodiment, taken along **5-5** in **FIG. 6**.

[0018] **FIG. 6** is a side-view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0019] The preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises a disposable container for holding sandwiches and the like. As shown **FIG. 1**, the container, which can be oval-shaped, includes a lip **1**, a sidewall **2**, and a base **3**. The container is preferably made by thermoforming a sheet of high impact polystyrene. Of course, other materials or molding processes could be used without deviating from the invention.

[0020] The base **3** is generally planar and is placed at the bottom of the container. Preferably there are no openings through the base **3**. The base **3** includes a downwardly extending annular projection **4** surrounding the parameter of the base. This projection defines the planar foot surface. The arcuate sidewall **2** extends upwardly and outwardly. It is integrally formed with the base **3**. The sidewall is embossed with projections in the form of intersecting, vertical ribs **5** and horizontal ribs **6**. The pattern of the ribs **5** and **6** embossed on the sidewall **2** of the container simulates a woven reed pattern of a container. However, unlike in a typical woven reed pattern, here the sidewall **2** has no openings through it. The top of the sidewall defines the open upper edge of the container. Surrounding the upper edge is a laterally extending lip **1**. As shown, the two ends **7** and **9** the container are rounded to provide the oval shape to the container when viewed from either the top or the bottom.

[0021] FIGS. **4-6** show an alternative embodiment of the present invention. Like the first embodiment, the alternative embodiment has a base **10**, a sidewall **12**, and a laterally extending lip **13** surrounding the open upper edge. However, in the alternative embodiment, the sidewall **12** is embossed with outwardly projecting dimples **15** as opposed to ribs **5**. The dimples **15** are geometrically positioned and shaped to simulate a woven basket pattern.

[0022] This invention has been described herein in considerable detail in order to comply with the Patent Statutes

and to provide those skilled in the art with the information needed to apply the novel principles and to construct and use such specialized components as are required. However, it is to be understood that the invention can be carried out by specifically different equipment and devices, and that various modifications, both as to the equipment details and operating procedures, can be accomplished without departing from the scope of the invention itself.

What is claimed is:

1. A disposable container comprising:

a) a base forming a bottom of said container;

b) an upwardly and outwardly extending sidewall integrally formed with said base, wherein the base and sidewall are free of openings therethrough and the sidewall is embossed with projections to simulate a woven basket appearance;

2. The container of claim 1 wherein the bottom and sidewall are made of thermoformed high impact polystyrene.

3. The container of claim 1 wherein said container has a generally oval shape when viewed from the top or the bottom.

4. The container of claim 1 wherein said container has a pair of ends, each of which is rounded.

5. The container in claim 1 wherein the base includes a downwardly extending annular projection about a perimeter thereof defining a planar foot surface.

6. The container of claim 1 wherein said projections are dimples geometrically positioned to simulate a woven basket appearance.

7. The container of claim 1 wherein said projections are intersecting vertical and horizontal ribs which simulate a woven reed pattern.

8. A disposable container comprising:

a) a base of said container; and

b) an upwardly and outwardly extending sidewall integrally formed with said base, the base and sidewall being substantially free of any openings therethrough, and said sidewall being embossed with projections comprising intersecting vertical and horizontal ribs to simulate a woven reed pattern.

9. A disposable container, comprising:

a) a base;

b) an upwardly and outwardly extending sidewall integrally formed with the base, said base and sidewall being substantially free from any openings therethrough and being embossed with a plurality of rows of dimples, said dimples being shaped and geometrically positioned to simulate a basket pattern.

10. A container comprising:

a) an integrally formed base and sidewall substantially free from any openings therethrough;

b) a top opening; and

c) means on said sidewall for simulating a basket appearance.

* * * * *