

"Dredge head for dredging sludge by a trailing or
pushing motion"

This invention relates to a dredge head for dredging sludge by a trailing and pushing motion from a stationary dredger equipped with a ladder which can be
5 displaced to and fro, both to the left and to the right with respect to the longitudinal direction of the dredger.

The object of the invention is to achieve a
10 dredge head which permits to remove well determined layer thicknesses of dredgings, more particularly sludge, in an ecological way.

With the notion "ecological" is meant that the sludge is removed without creating turbidity or at least
15 under circumstances which reduce this turbidity to a strict minimum. The invention is also indented to design a dredge head which permits to keep the amount of water in the dredged material at a low level which has an advantageous influence on the volume of material
20 which has to be processed afterwards.

The invention has further also very concrete objectives which can be summarized as follows :

- a) to dredge well determined and controlled thicknesses ;
- 25 b) to dredge in small water depths with a minimum of about 2 m ;
- c) to take measures for minimizing and keeping the water suction under control ;
- d) to dredge accurately both in the horizontal plane and
30 in the depth.

In order to achieve these objectives in accordance with the invention, the dredge head according to the invention consists of a space, the longitudinal axis of which extends in the trailing or pushing direction, which space shows on one extremity dimensions which permit to connect the dredge head to a suction tube whilst the other extremity shows an elongated opening extending transversely with respect to said longitudinal axis and each of the longitudinal edges of which, directed towards one another, are equipped with scrapers, which are directed towards one another, and the cutting edges of which are parallel to the longitudinal axis of said elongated opening, the first of said scrapers being fixed with respect to the dredge head itself while the second scraper is adjustable in height, together with a visor, with respect to the first scraper.

Still according to the invention, said visor is formed by a rotatable cylindrically bent plate, the radius of which is somewhat smaller than the radius of a fixed cylindrically bent plate the visor cooperates with and which is a constituent part of the dredge head itself, which visor, to which said second scraper is connected, is provided with side plates to make from this portion of the suction head a space closed off laterally and at the top, and characterized further in that means are provided for rotating the visor and the second scraper connected thereto around a horizontal axis to modify the height of the second scraper with respect to the first scraper.

In order to move the second scraper always in its horizontal position, said visor is moved, together with the second scraper connected thereto, by a hydraulic jack, which is mounted on the dredge head, through the intermediary of a with respect to the dredge head hingedly supported rotatable arm, the up and downwards

movable extremity of which is connected to a plate or to a set of two plates connecting this extremity to said second scraper in such a manner that the different hinge points formed or defined by the following components,
5 said horizontal axis, the two hinge points of said rotatable arm and a hinge point between the visor and the second scraper coincide with the four corners of a deformable parallelogram.

Other details and advantages of the invention
10 will become apparent from the following description of a dredge head according to the invention. This description is given by way of example and does not limit the invention. The reference numerals relate to the figures annexed hereto.

15 Figures 1 and 2 are schematic side elevational views of the dredge head according to the invention, the direction of dredging being indicated each time with an arrow.

20 Figures 3 to 8 show also schematically and on a reduced scale each time three possible adjustable depths of the scrapers and this for three different depths, the direction of dredging being indicated each time with an arrow.

25 Figure 9 is a schematic top view of the dredge head according to the invention.

Figure 10 is a schematic front view of the dredge head according to the invention, on the side of the suction tube.

30 Figure 11 is a schematic side view of the dredge head according to the invention.

The dredge head shown in these figures is designed to be fitted on the extremity of a ladder with suction tube so that during each swinging motion of the ladder, one of the scrapers of the dredge head is operative.

35 The dredge head shows moreover a new and very original structure which offers the possibility to

dredge well determined sludge layers which can be determined from the dredger.

5 The dredge head according to the invention consists of a space having its largest width at the level of the materials to be dredged, which space shows a conical shape to allow for connection to a suction tube 1.

10 The intended space thus consists of the hereinabove mentioned conically shaped component 2 and the component which is to be considered as the actual space 3, the volume of which is determined, at the bottom, by two scrapers which will be called hereinafter the first scraper 4 and the second scraper 5 and, at the top, by a cylindrically bent plate 6 and a rotatable visor 7 cooperating therewith.

Both scrapers 4 and 5 are extended at the bottom by levelling plates 4' and 5'.

20 Laterally, the actual space 3 of the dredge head is each time confined, on the one hand, by a plate 8 which is connected to and which is a constituent part of the conically shaped component 2 and, on the other hand, by a side plate 9 which is rigidly connected to the visor 7.

25 The visor 7 is in the first place rotatably mounted on a horizontal shaft 10. This shaft 10 is beared with a possibility to rotate on a frame component 11 of the suction head to which the first scraper 4 and levelling plate 4' are fixed. The visor 7 is further hingedly connected to a second frame component 12 of the dredge head to which the second scraper 5 is fixedly mounted. The hinge connection between the visor 7 and the second frame component 12 is situated in 10'.

35 The second frame component with the second scraper 5 with levelling plate 5' is extended upwards by a set of two plates 14 which are hingedly connected at the top in 15 to a rotatable arm 16 which is itself

hingedly connected in 17 with respect to a third frame component 18 pertaining to the dredge head.

Up and downward movements of the rotatable arm 16 are controlled by a hydraulic jack 19. This hydraulic jack has two hinge points, i.e. a first 20 with respect to a knee plate 21 to which the rotatable arm 16 is fixed and a second 22 with respect to the hereinabove mentioned third frame component 18.

As the second frame component 12 can finally slightly rotate with respect to a horizontal axis 10', together with the visor 7 which is hingedly connected thereto, a structure with hinge points 10, 10', 15, 17, in the shape of a deformable parallelogram is achieved.

When retracting the hydraulic jack 19 completely, the second scraper 5 is going to position itself in its highest position as shown in figure 5. Figures 1, 3 and 4 relate to three different positions wherein the second scraper is each time situated above the first scraper and this more particularly on different levels, so that the direction wherein the dredge head is moved is always indicated by the arrow shown in each of the intended figures.

Figures 2, 6, 7 and 8 show on the other hand the hydraulic jack 19 in its entirely "extended position". The direction of dredging, still according to these figures, is indicated in each figure by an arrow. The second scraper 5 is always situated below the first scraper 4, but this each time at a different depth.

It has to be noted that for each dredge position, the second scraper 5 positions itself horizontally with respect to the first scraper 4 which is not movable. The thickness of the sludge layer to be dredged can always be determined accurately.

The horizontal position of the dredge head, and therefore of the scrapers, can be ensured at every moment by making use of a second jack 23 which is fitted

with one extremity onto the ladder 24 and with its other extremity it is hingedly connected to the actual dredge head. Figures 1 and 2, but especially figures 9 and 10, show clearly how this second jack 23 is positioned.

5 Thanks to the structure of the dredge head according to the invention, well determined sludge thicknesses can be dredged therefore continuously without having to be afraid of a not acceptable stirring up of diluted sludge in the water.

10 When dredging in both dredging directions shown in the figures, the sludge layer will arrive in the dredge head without being broken up first. The sludge material will only be broken up in this head.

15 With respect to the aimed objective of the invention, namely dredging sludge in an ecological way, the following points have still to be underlined.

20 By keeping the width of the dredge head restricted, the transport of the dredged materials to the suction tube is simplified and an even flow rate distribution can be expected over the entire width of the dredge head.

25 By the swinging movements of the suction head according to the invention, the sludge is urged into the opening of the dredge head whilst out of the suction opening the sludge remains motionless and is not stirred. The important aspect of concentration control in the suction head is solved thanks to the following measures :

- 30 a) The suction head is sealed on all sides by the just described closed construction ;
- b) The water supply, via the overlap next to the cut and transported dredged material, remains reduced since the material is pushed up in the dredge head in the direction of the suction tube. By overlap has to be understood the zone which has already been dredged
- 35 when cutting a new slice ;

- 5 c) An additional water supply is possible, at an adjustable flow rate, through nozzles at the bottom of the conical component. This water supply permits to control the amount of water in the dredge head. The water is pumped by an external pump to the nozzles. These nozzles are placed in such a manner that more rigid pieces of material, which may possibly be present, are broken up ; These nozzles are situated in the bottom plate of the conical space.
- 10 d) The flat plates behind the non-scraping scraper are positioned to cover the material to be dredged. In this way, the water supply to the head is reduced. By adjusting the height of this flat plate behind the non-scraping scraper, the water supply to the head
- 15 becomes also adjustable here ;
- e) By controlling the suction pump on the suction tube and the swinging speed, only the pushed up sludge is pumped and this with a minimum of water, which is in all respects advantageous for the collecting and
- 20 dumping problems downstream the dredger.

The invention is not limited to the hereinabove described embodiment and modifications could be applied thereto in as far as they fall within the scope of the claims annexed hereto.



CLAIMS

1. A dredge head for dredging sludge by a trailing and pushing motion from a stationary dredger equipped with a ladder which can be displaced to and fro, both to the left and to the right with respect to the longitudinal direction of the dredger, characterized in that it consists of a space, the longitudinal axis of which extends in the trailing or pushing direction, which space shows on one extremity dimensions which permit to connect the dredge head to a suction tube whilst the other extremity shows an elongated opening extending transversely with respect to said longitudinal axis and each of the longitudinal edges of which, directed towards one another, are equipped with scrapers, which are directed towards one another, and the cutting edges of which are parallel to the longitudinal axis of said elongated opening, the first of said scrapers being fixed with respect to the dredge head itself while the second scraper is adjustable in height, together with a visor, with respect to the first scraper.

2. A dredge head according to claim 1, characterized in that said visor is formed by a rotatable cylindrically bent plate, the radius of which is somewhat smaller than the radius of a fixed cylindrically bent plate the visor cooperates with and which is a constituent part of the dredge head itself, which visor, to which said second scraper is connected, is provided with side plates to make from this portion of the suction head a space closed off laterally and at the top, and characterized further in that means are provided for rotating the visor and the second scraper connected thereto around a horizontal axis to modify the height of the second scraper with respect to the first scraper.



3. A dredge head according to claim 2, characterized in that said visor is moved, together with the second scraper connected thereto, by a hydraulic jack, which is mounted on the dredge head, through the intermediary of a with respect to the dredge head hingedly supported rotatable arm, the up and downwards movable extremity of which is connected to a plate or to a set of two plates connecting this extremity to said second scraper in such a manner that the different hinge points formed or defined by the following components, said horizontal axis, the two hinge points of said rotatable arm and a hinge point between the visor and the second scraper coincide with the four corners of a deformable parallelogram.

4. A dredge head according to claim 3, characterized in that the stroke of said hydraulic jack is of such a length that said rotatable arm can be rotated between two extreme positions corresponding to an extreme position of the second scraper above the first scraper and an extreme position of this second scraper below the first scraper in such a manner that layers of different thicknesses can be dredged, between said positions, by a stepless adjustment of the scrapers.

5. A dredge head according to any one of the claims 1 to 4, characterized in that a second hydraulic jack is provided having a hinge point on said suction tube and a second hinge point on the dredge head itself such that said scrapers can always be kept horizontally.

6. A dredge head according to any one of the claims 1-5, characterized in that nozzles are provided at the bottom of the conical space for injecting water in this space.