

PATENT SPECIFICATION

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DRAWINGS ATTACHED

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(54) CONTAINER AND CONDIMENT DISPENSER SET

(71) We, DART INDUSTRIES INC., a Corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware, United States of America, of 8480, Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, State of California, 90054, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

The invention relates to a container, and to a condiment dispenser set incorporating such a container for use in the storage and serving of foodstuff. More particularly the invention relates to a container for viscous foodstuff such as mustard and the like.

The condiment dispenser set will usually include dispensing containers for salt and pepper, a container for a viscous relish and a carrying tray upon which the three containers may be carried. The choice in the number of each type of container of course may, however, be modified in accordance with the user's needs or desires.

Known containers for viscous foodstuff although being satisfactory in many respects have been found to have several notable disadvantages. For example, the known containers are not air tight and viscous foodstuff has a tendency to dry out or become contaminated. Neither are these prior art containers transparent and therefore the amount of viscous foodstuff remaining cannot be readily ascertained. Further it has been found that it is common for the edges of the containers in the prior art to become laden with dried and/or sticky foodstuff which has been wiped on the edge of the container.

Another common deficiency in the container art relates to its inability to accommodate a serving spoon, spatula or other serving implement when closed. Such implement instead had to be removed after each use. Likewise, in those cases where a serving implement of suitable size could be left in the container, it

tended to become entirely covered with the foodstuff because no provision had been made to retain a portion of it from coming into contact with the viscous foodstuff.

The invention provides a container to fold viscous foodstuff and comprising:

(1) a vessel including connected side and bottom wall portions, the side wall portion of which terminates in an upper edge;

(2) a removable cover comprised of a top wall with an integral upwardly extending neck and an inverted groove to mate in a sealing relationship with the upper edge of said vessel; and

(3) a removable closure cap comprised of upwardly extending upper and lower side wall portions between which is formed a peripheral joggle, said peripheral joggle and lower side wall portion being adapted to mate with the extended neck of said removable cover, and a closure top wall attached to the upper side wall portion thus forming an inverted cup-like member.

As stated the invention particularly concerns an improved container for storing and serving viscous foodstuff such as mustard and the like and the combination of such improved containers with other condiment dispensing containers in an improved carrier or carrying tray. The improved viscous foodstuff container construction includes an open ended vessel having a truncated cone shape and being adapted to hold the viscous foodstuff.

A removable cover is easily placed over the open end of the vessel and forms an air-tight seal therewith. This cover further has an opening in its top wall surface which opening is surrounded by an upwardly extended neck that is an integral extension of the top wall. The shoulder formed by the connection of the extended neck and the top wall provides an ideal surface upon which to wipe excess foodstuff from a serving implement. The opening in the cover is somewhat smaller than the vessel opening and this functions to retain the handle of a container storable implement out of con-

tact with any viscous foodstuff in the vessel. The cover also incorporates a lug arrangement to which a removable closure cap is mounted.

The closure cap is formed in the shape of an inverted cup-like member having side wall portions, a top wall and rod member that attaches to the cover lugs. The side wall portions include a shoulder that mates with the upper edge of the extended neck of the cover to completely seal the vessel.

This complete viscous foodstuff container can then readily and effectively enclose a serving implement. The handle of such an implement or spatula will be, as noted, retained in the extended neck of the cover and in the cup-like closure member. In such position the handle will be retained out of contact with any viscous foodstuff in the vessel and will further be readily accessible to the user.

A specific embodiment of the invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying text and drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of several elements of a condiment dispenser set;

Figure 2 is a plan view of the condiment dispenser set;

Figure 3 is a side view of the condiment dispenser set;

Figure 4 is a plan view of a carrying tray for the condiment dispenser set with the handle removed;

Figure 5 is a 90° cross-sectional side view of the condiment dispenser set taken along line 5—5 in Figure 2;

Figure 6 is a plan view of the carrying tray for the condiment dispenser set;

Figure 7 is a perspective view of a container for viscous foodstuff;

Figure 8 is a perspective view of a removable cover and closure cap of the container for storing and serving viscous foodstuff;

Figure 9 is a plan view of the viscous foodstuff container;

Figure 10 is a cross-sectional side view along line 10—10 in Figure 9 of the upper portion of the container for viscous foodstuff;

Figure 11 is a plan view of the removable cover for the viscous foodstuff container; and

Figure 12 is an enlarged view along line 11—11 in Figure 10 showing the seal between the closure cap and the removable cover of the viscous foodstuff container.

With continued reference to the drawings which illustrate preferred embodiments of the invention, numeral 8 indicates a condiment dispenser set. This condiment set further includes a dispensing container 10 for granulated foods, a container 42 for viscous foodstuff, and a carrier or carrying tray 20.

The construction of the carrier or carrying tray 20 will become readily apparent upon reference to Figures 1 and 5. The carrier there shown features a tray top or table 22 which has a rim 23 around its peripheral edges, and

an internally threaded post 30 protruding from the approximate centre of the tray top. The post threads 31 are adapted to mate with a threaded shank 38 of handle 34. The shank 38 is attached to the handle 34 by a stem 36. The stem has a flange 40 located near the lower extremity thereof, which flange is adapted to firmly abut the upper edge of post 30 when the handle 34 has been fully threaded into engagement with the post.

The tray top 22 further includes a plurality of recesses 24 that are shaped in such a manner to receive containers 10 and 42. As is readily illustrated in both Figures 1 and 5 each of these recesses is formed by a side wall 26 and a bottom wall 28 both of which are integral with tray top 22. In the preferred construction the carrying tray 20 is substantially triangularly shaped and has three individual recesses formed therein. Obviously the shape, size and number of recesses intended to accommodate the containers, more fully hereinafter described, may be modified to suit the user's particular desires or requirements.

It should be noted, however, that the triangular shape recess arrangement and leg construction 32 provide for a carrier stability and adaptability that is of particular significance. The legs 32 are also an integral part of the carrier, particularly the rim 23, and are located at the triangle apexes of the tray. These legs are tapered downwardly therefrom and terminate in a blunted point at a position substantially below the bottom walls 28. The carrying tray 20 therefore has three points of contact with any surface upon which it is placed for use. This thus makes its use ideal on uneven surfaces such as may be encountered on picnics or similar occasions.

As stated above the condiment dispenser set 8 is intended to include one or more dispensing containers 10 (Figures 1 and 5) for granulated foods such as salt and pepper. These containers are constructed similarly to that shown in U.S. Patent No. 2,695,732, and incorporate a receptacle 12 to which a lid 14 may be sealingly attached. The lid has a perforate top wall 16 through which granulated food may be readily dispensed. Further it is intended that there be included a hinged cap 18 that, when in place on the lid, will completely seal the receptacle 12.

It should be noted that when the cap 18 is swung to an open (i.e. out of the way position) it will remain attached to the lid 14. This feature of course, is of considerable assistance in keeping the various dispensing container parts together and thereby effectively minimizes the possibility of losing same.

Any number of dispensing containers might be employed with the condiment set described, but it is preferred that the set includes two, one for salt and one for pepper. The ultimate dispensing container contents, however, are not of importance and in no way relate to the in-

vention disclosed and claimed herein.

The container for viscous foodstuff generally shown by numeral 42 in Figures 1, 3 and 5. This container is formed of three separate elements, a vessel 44, a removable cover 54 and a removable closure cap 76. The cover 54 is adapted to make a seal with an upper edge 50 of the vessel (Figure 7) and the cap 76 seals against an extended neck 58 of the cover 54 (Figure 8).

Continued reference to Figures 5, 7 and 8 will give a better understanding of the particular viscous foodstuff container construction. For example, in Figures 5 and 7 the vessel 44 can be seen to be formed of side wall portion 46 and attached bottom wall portion 48 which together produce a hollow body capable of retaining any typical condiment. The side wall portions 46 terminate in an upper edge 50 leaving an open end 52 to the vessel interior.

The removable cover 54 as may best be seen in Figure 8 is of an integral construction that includes upstanding outer and inner walls 66 and 68, respectively that are attached by a top connecting wall 70. These together with flange 62 create a modified U-shape sealing channel that is adapted to seal with the upper edge 50 of the vessel.

A cover top wall 56 extends inwardly from and substantially perpendicular to the inner wall 68. An opening 60 is formed in the top wall and the extended neck 58 protrudes upwardly therefrom. The extended neck flares slightly toward its uppermost edge and at its connection with the cover top wall 56 there is formed a shoulder 61. This shoulder is located a substantial distance radially inward of the vessel wall 46.

Several distinct advantages are afforded by the extended neck 58 of the removable cover 54. Figure 5 illustrates these in its depiction of a serving implement or spatula 88 resting in the container 42. The particular spatula construction includes a handle 90 connected to a paddle or blade 94 by a shaft 92. Because the handle 90 of the spatula is retained in a restricted area by the extended neck 58, and because filling of the container should normally not extend above the cover top wall 56, no foodstuff will generally become deposited on the handle surface of spatula 88.

Additionally, as is apparent from the illustration, upon removal of the closure cap 76, the handle 90 will be sufficiently exposed so that a user can easily grasp it. Further, when using the serving implement one may use the shoulder 61 as a wiping surface upon which to remove excess or unwanted foodstuff prior to removing the implement from the container's interior. Thus, spillage from or residual foodstuff on the implement after its removal from the container may be reduced to a minimum.

In addition to the construction features dis-

cussed above the removable cover also has a pair of lugs 72 integrally moulded therewith. These lugs are suitably slotted, as at 74, to accommodate a rod member or hinge attachment 78 that is integral with the removable closure cap 76. This enables the cap to be swung into an out of the way position (Figure 8) when the container is in use and yet remain attached thereto. Thus, similar advantages to those discussed in conjunction with the dispensing container also result with this construction.

The removable closure cap 76 is formed as an inverted cup-like member which is adapted to provide a space therein for the handle 90 of spatula 88 thus making the spatula even more accessible to the user. The integral cap construction includes upwardly projecting side wall portions 82 that are stepped to produce a shoulder 84 and are attached to the closure top wall 86. These wall portions terminate in a lip 81 having a finger tab 80 as an extended part thereof. Referring to Figures 10 and 12 one will appreciate that when the removable cap is firmly attached over the extended neck 58 of removable cover 54 the viscous foodstuff container 42 will be completely and tightly sealed.

It should be apparent that the elements of the condiment dispenser set may be manufactured from any suitable material. In the preferred embodiment, however, polyethylene or polypropylene are employed. These permit the production of transparent containers which, of course, enable visual ascertainment of the amount of condiment remaining therein without opening the container. In addition these preferred materials result in a product that is virtually unbreakable.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A container to hold viscous foodstuff and comprising:

(1) a vessel including connected side and bottom wall portions, the side wall portion of which terminates in an upper edge;

(2) a removable cover comprised of a top wall with an integral upwardly extending neck and an inverted groove to mate in a sealing relationship with the upper edge of said vessel; and

(3) a removable closure cap comprised of upwardly extending upper and lower side wall portions between which is formed a peripheral joggle, said peripheral joggle and lower, side wall portion being adapted to mate with the extended neck of said removable cover, and a closure top wall attached to the upper side wall portion thus forming an inverted cup-like member.

2. A container according to claim 1 wherein a pair of lugs are integral with said removable cover and said removable closure cap includes an integral rod member to engage said lugs in such a manner as to provide a hinged at-



vention disclosed and claimed herein.

The container for viscous foodstuff generally shown by numeral 42 in Figures 1, 3 and 5. This container is formed of three separate elements, a vessel 44, a removable cover 54 and a removable closure cap 76. The cover 54 is adapted to make a seal with an upper edge 50 of the vessel (Figure 7) and the cap 76 seals against an extended neck 58 of the cover 54 (Figure 8).

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(3) a removable closure cap comprised of upwardly extending upper and lower side wall portions between which is formed a peripheral joggle, said peripheral joggle and lower, side wall portion being adapted to mate with the extended neck of said removable cover, and a closure top wall attached to the upper side wall portion thus forming an inverted cup-like member.

2. A container according to claim 1 wherein a pair of lugs are integral with said removable cover and said removable closure cap includes an integral rod member to engage said lugs in such a manner as to provide a hinged at-



tachment of said closure cap to said removable cover.

5 3. A container substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

4. A condiment dispenser set including a container according to any one of claims 1 to 3.

5. A condiment dispenser set including a

container according to any one of claims 1 to 10 3, and substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as shown in Figures 1 to 6 of the accompanying drawings.

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