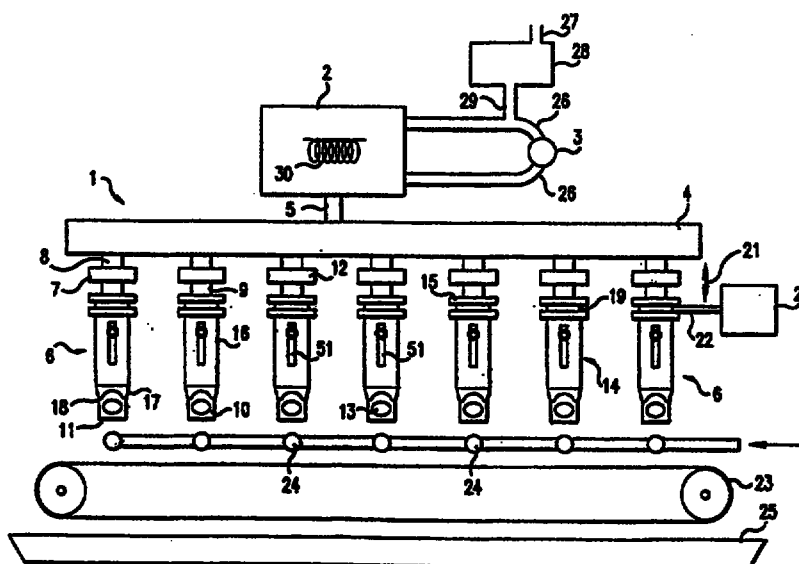


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(54) Title: EXTRUDER AND DIE ASSEMBLY FOR EXTRUDING SHAPED FOOD PIECES**(57) Abstract**

An extruder (1) is provided for producing an extruded food piece in a shape which simulates the shape of a natural food piece. The extruder (1) has a pressure vessel (2), a pressure exerting device (3) for the pressure vessel (2), a manifold (4) in fluid communication with the pressure vessel (2), and at least one die and cutter assembly (6) in fluid communication with the manifold (4). The die and cutter assembly (6) has an extrusion member (9) with an extrusion wall (10), a closed extrusion end (11), an opened feed end (12) attachable to the manifold (4), at least one extrusion die (13) formed in the extrusion wall (10) near the extrusion end (11), and a tubular cutter member (14). The tubular cutter member (14) has a driveable end (19), a cutter wall (16) and an opened cutter end (17) with at least one cutting surface (18) for cutting extrudate into the shape as the extrudate exits the die (13). The cutter member (14) is reciprocally slideable on the extrusion wall (10) by drive device (20).