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REPLACED

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a method and apparatus for monitoring the progress of a plurality of batches of semiconductor wafer or memory disks through a multiplicity of processing operations at various locations within a plant facility and maintaining information regarding the progress of each batch at the respective batch. The method includes the step of inserting each of the batches of wafers or memory disks in a carrier constructed and arranged for supporting the wafers or disks in parallel, axially arranged, spaced arrays. A transponder is embedded in a planar wall portion within each carrier by way of a recess extending inwardly from a lower edge of the wall portion. The transponder has a code to identify the carrier and a batch of wafers or disks contained therein and to further identify the various processing operations to which the batch has been subjected. The proximity of each carrier to various locations within the processing facility is detected by limited range read units each of which is positioned at one of the various locations and is constructed and arranged for determining the unique identification of any carrier within its detection range. Write units at various locations alter a status code in transponder to designate that a batch has been through a particular processing stage. Carrier identification information from the reader units also is stored and updated remotely to monitor the progress of batches through processing operations.

(Figure 1)