

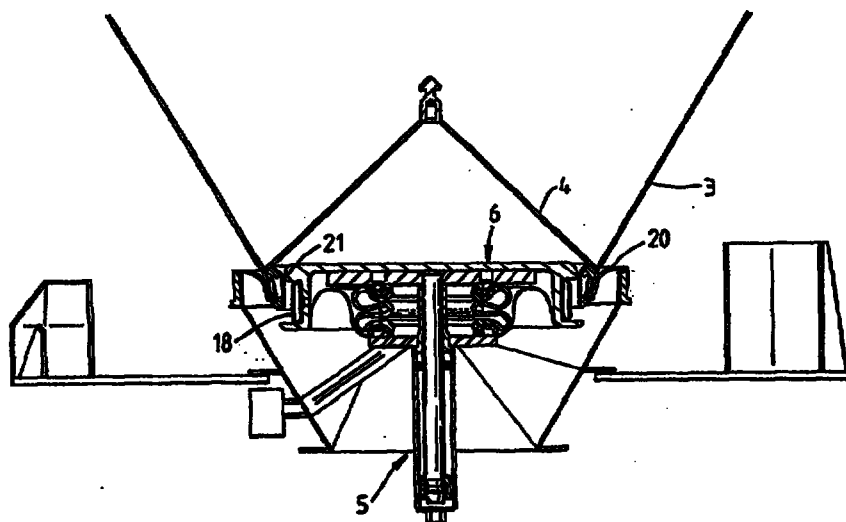


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9818536.6 **25 August 1998 (25.08.98)** **GB**(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **MATCON (R & D) LIMITED [GB/GB]; Matcon House, London Road, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos GL56 0HJ (GB).**

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(57) Abstract

Material handling apparatus for gravity discharge of flowable particulate material through an outlet (2) of a container (3) (shown dashed) for such material which outlet (2) is normally obturated by a hollow cone valve member (4), the apparatus (1) comprising actuator means (5) having a flat surface (6) and being adapted to engage the cone valve member (2) adjacent the base (7) thereof for raising and lowering same whereby to provide that the interior volume of the cone valve member (4) remains substantially empty. In the embodiment, the apparatus (1) is a component of a materials handling system in the form of a discharge station "D", which is fixed for example in the floor of a facility for transferring flowable material from a (transportable) IBC (3) to a process "P" such as mixing, blending, tableting or the like which is below the discharge station D.