

A WEB FOR PACKAGE BLANKS

5 The present invention relates to a web comprising mutually sequentially arranged package blanks (pockets) according to the preamble to the appended independent claim.

There are needs in the art for a web comprising mutually sequentially
10 disposed pockets in which the web is disposed to be moved along mechanical retainer devices which, during a part of the displacement, hold the pockets in the opened position in order to make it possible to supply contents into the pockets, whereafter the retainer devices, on continued movement of the web, hold the pockets in a position in which
15 closure of the pockets takes place.

Patent specification EP-B1 0 054 564 describes a web of the above-indicated type. The web displays two opposing walls and longitudinal first (lower) and second (upper) edges. The web comprises mutually sequentially
20 tially disposed pockets, with a bottom portion at the first edge and two connecting zones which are transverse in relation to the longitudinal direction of the web and which form side closures of the pockets. Transverse slits are provided between the connecting zones in two adjacent pockets in order to separate the pockets from one another.

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The web according to EP-B1 0 054 564 includes two substantially opposing strip portions which extend in the longitudinal direction of the web at its above-mentioned second edge. Each strip portion is provided with a continuous retainer device for cooperation with mechanical guide
30 means for holding the strip portions in spaced apart relationship from one another and thereby holding the pockets in opened position in connection with contents being supplied into the pockets. In both walls, the web is provided with slits disposed in the longitudinal direction of the web, the slits for each wall being symmetrically located on
35 either side of the transverse slits.

In purely practical terms, it has proved that the walls of the web in the web described in EP-B1 0 054 564, on movement along the mechanical retainer devices, show a tendency to undesirable displacement in relation to one another in the longitudinal direction of the web. When such mutually displaced walls are moved to positions adjacent one another for closure of the pockets, creases are readily formed in those regions where the closure is to take place. Such crease formations generally entail that an unacceptable closure is formed on fusion of the strip walls. A further drawback inherent in the prior art web is that the edges located transversely of the longitudinal direction of the web often form undesirable inward or outward bulges in the opened pockets. Such inward and outward bulges lead to problems in the supply of contents into the pockets, for which reason correction must be made of the shape of the openings using mechanical devices which are introduced down into the openings and move the edges to positions in which filling and closure of the pockets are not jeopardized.

The present invention relates to a web and an apparatus for supplying contents to package blanks included in the web, in which the above-drawbacks have been obviated. This is attained by means of the techniques disclosed in the characterizing clauses of the appended independent claims.

Expedient embodiments of the present invention are also disclosed in the appended subclaims.

The present invention will now be described in greater detail hereinbelow, with particular reference to the accompanying Drawings, in which:

- Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a portion of a web according to the present invention, with the retainer devices of the web designed as material thickened portions;
- Fig. 1a is a section taken along the line A-A in Fig. 1;
- Fig. 1b is a section taken along the line B-B in Fig. 1;

- Fig. 1c is a section taken along the line C-C in Fig. 1;
- 5 Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a portion of a web according to the present invention with the retainer devices of the web designed as tunnels;
- Fig. 2a is a section taken along the line A-A in Fig. 2;
- 10 Fig. 2b is a section taken along the line B-B in Fig. 2;
- Fig. 2c is a section taken along the line C-C in Fig. 2;
- 15 Fig. 3 is a side elevation of a portion of the web according to Fig. 1 with both walls of the web in abutment against one another;
- Figs. 3a-c are sections taken along the lines A-A, B-B and C-C, respectively, in Fig. 3;
- 20 Fig. 4 is a side elevation of a portion of the web according to Fig. 2 with both walls of the web in abutment against one another;
- 25 Figs. 4a-c are sections taken along the lines A-A, B-B and C-C, respectively, in Fig. 4;
- Fig. 5a is a section corresponding to the section B-B in Fig. 1 with an alternative design of the thickened portions of the web;
- 30 Fig. 5b is a section corresponding to the section B-B in Fig. 1, with a third retainer device disposed along the web;
- 35 Fig. 5c is a section corresponding to the section B-B in Fig. 1, with a folded-in bottom of the web;

- Fig. 6 is a schematic view in perspective of a filling apparatus and a web in position in the filling apparatus;
- Fig. 6a is a section taken along the line A-A in Fig. 6;
- 5 Fig. 6b is a section taken along the line B-B in Fig. 6;
- Fig. 7 is a side elevation of the filling apparatus and the web according to Fig. 6; and
- 10 Fig. 8 is a top plan view of the filling apparatus and the web according to Fig. 6.

Figs. 1-5 show embodiments of a continuous web 20 of flexible material, generally plastic material or similar material. The expression "similar material" is taken to signify any material whatever possessing such properties that a web of the material is suitable for use in practical application of the present invention as described herein. The web displays two opposing walls 21a,b, hereinafter also referred to as the first wall 21a and second wall 21b, and first (lower) and second (upper) edges 22 and 23, respectively, located in the longitudinal direction of the web, which also includes a number of mutually sequentially disposed package blanks or pockets 26. The pockets each have a bottom portion 15 at said lower edge 22 and two connection zones or joints 25a,b which are transverse in relation to the longitudinal direction of the web and are occasionally designated transverse zones 25 or transverse joints 25, forming the side closures 25a,b of the pockets.

30 In the Figures, the web is generally shown in embodiments in which the opposing walls 21a,b directly merge into one another in that the walls are folded over in the bottom portions 15 of the pockets in order to form the bottom of the pockets. It will be obvious to a skilled reader of this specification that, in other embodiments, both walls of the pockets form (as illustrated in Fig. 5c) an inwardly folded bottom or are interconnected with one another, for example by means of a weld joint or seam which also forms the lower edge 22 of the web. Between

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the joints in two mutually adjacent pockets 26, there is a transverse slit 27 which defines the pockets from one another.

Each respective wall 21a,b includes two opposing edge portions 24a,b which extend in the longitudinal direction of the web at its above-mentioned upper edge 23. Each one of the edge portions includes continuous retainer means 13a,b;43a,b;53a,b for cooperation with mechanical devices 33a,b (cf. Figs. 6a and 6b) for guiding the edge portions 24a,b on movement of the web 20 into an apparatus 3 for filling contents into the pockets 26. In the embodiments illustrated in Figs. 1,1b,1c, 3,3a-c and 5a-c, the retainer means are designed as thickened material portions 13a,b;43a,b, while in other embodiments, as shown in Figs. 2,2b,4,4a-c, they consist of tunnels 53a,b.

Figs. 5a,b show one embodiment of the material thickened portions of the web in which the material thickening 43a of the one wall 21a is provided with a groove 72 oriented in the longitudinal direction of the web, and the material thickened portion 43b of the second wall 21b is provided with a bead 71 oriented in the longitudinal direction of the web. The bead and the groove form male and female parts which fit tightly into one another and are preferably of a configuration which forms a snap-in connection. Figs. 5a,b also show an embodiment in which the web has been provided with strip-like wall portions 14a,b above the thickened portions 43a,b.

Fig. 5b also shows an embodiment of the web in which a second retainer means 44 is provided in the region of the first edge 22 of the web. The second retainer means is intended to be used for retaining the package formed by the packaging blank in connection with emptying of the package.

Fig. 5c shows one embodiment in which the bottom portions 15 of the pockets 20 form a crease (bottom crease) 12 inwardly folded in a direction towards the openings of the pockets.

In its end region located most proximal the retainer means 13a,b; 43a,b;53a,b, the transverse slit 27 merges into a longitudinal slit 29a

in the first wall 21a directed to the right in the Figures, and a longitudinal slit 29b in the second wall 21b directed to the left. The longitudinal slits are located beneath the retainer means 13a,b;43a,b; 53a,b. The slit 29a of the first wall 21a is defined by an upper edge
5 16a and a lower edge 17a, while the slit 29b of the second wall 21b is defined by an upper edge 16b and a lower edge 17b.

Reference numerals 28a,b refer to those material portions of the web in which the opposing walls of the web are interconnected with one another
10 for closure of the filled package blanks, for example by weld seams or joints. In certain practical applications, the interconnection of the walls takes place in a region beneath the slits 29a,b, while, in other applications, the welding together takes place in the region of the slits 29a,b. On welding together in the slits, a complete and tight
15 connection will be achieved because of the fact that, at each slit, the wall which opposes the slit is unbroken (has no slit). A complete and tight welding together is effected close to the second (upper) edge of the web, whereby material consumption is reduced for each package which is filled and closed.

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Figs. 6-8 show one embodiment of a filling apparatus 3 in which a web which includes retainer means 13a,b;43a,b provided as material thickened portions, are displaced in the direction of the arrow A along the mechanical retainer devices 33a,b of the filling apparatus. It will be
25 apparent from the Figure that, on entry into the filling apparatus, the retainer means 13a,43a are guided, at the first wall of the web 21a, by mechanical guide means 35a,b to proceed a longer distance than the retainer means 13b,43b of the second wall 21b of the web. At the same time, the retainer means of the web are displaced from one another to a
30 distance at most corresponding to the length of the longitudinal slits 29a,b. Hereby, the pockets will be opened. The openings which are formed consist of rectangles, as a rule parallelograms. The angles which are formed are determined by the distance between the mechanical retainer devices of the filling apparatus. At maximum spacing between
35 the retainer means of the web, i.e. a distance substantially corresponding to the length of the longitudinal slits, the openings form right-angled rectangles.

On exit from the filling apparatus, the retainer means 13b,43b of the second wall 21b are guided by mechanical guide members 36a,b so as to proceed a longer distance than the retainer means 13a,43a of the first wall 21a of the web. The longer distance the retainer means 13a,43a,53a of the first wall 21a are moved on entry into the filling apparatus is compensated for by the shorter distance by which the retainer means of the first wall are displaced on exit. This entails that both walls 21a,b of the web after exit of the web from the filling apparatus assume the same relative positions in the longitudinal direction of the web as before entry into the filling apparatus. The desired effect will hereby be attained that the opposing walls of the pockets after exit from the filling apparatus assume positions where they are no longer moved in relation to one another in a longitudinal direction of the web. As a result, on the displacement out of the filling apparatus, the walls 21a,b of the web 20 are moved to positions adjacent one another, i.e. to positions in which a reliable and wholly acceptable closure and seaming of the pockets takes place in that the walls 21a,b are connected in the material portions 28a,b.

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It will be obvious to a person skilled in the art that the size of the openings of the package blanks may simply be adapted to current needs by suitable dimensioning of the web and of the length of the longitudinal slits in the web at the same time as the desired configuration of the openings of the package blanks on supply of contents may simply be regulated by an adjustment of the distance between the retainer devices of the filling apparatus.

A further advantage inherent in the new technique as herein disclosed is that, in the embodiment of the filling apparatus shown on the Drawings, only one of the retainer devices of the filling apparatus need be moved to a new position when adapting the distance between the retainer devices in connection with switching to a web of other dimensions than those which the filling apparatus is set to handle.

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In Figs. 6a,b, the mechanical retainer devices 33a,b of the filling apparatus are shown as suspension devices for the retainer means 13a,b;

43a,b of the web when these are formed as material thickened portions. The mechanical retainer devices 33a,b are, in the region where the pockets 26 are supplied with contents, each provided with their channel 31a,b. Each respective channel is dimensioned to accommodate the
5 material thickened portion 13a,b of one of the walls. Each one of the channels 31a,b is provided with a longitudinal gap 34a,b of a minimum extent in the transverse direction which is less than the width of the thickened portion 13a,b of each respective web wall 21a,b. As a rule, the mechanical devices are oriented such that the web depends down
10 through the gaps 34a,b of the mechanical devices 33a,b during displacement therealong. Other orientation of the mechanical devices and of the web are employed in other applications of the present invention.

In the foregoing description, use has occasionally been made of the
15 designations upper, lower, right, left, etc. These designations have been employed merely to facilitate presentation of the invention. It will, however, be obvious to a person skilled in the art that the technique described above generally permits any optional orientation of the web in space.

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The above-detailed description has referred to but a limited number of embodiments of the present invention, but a person skilled in the art will readily perceive that the present invention accommodates a large number of embodiments without departing from the spirit and scope of
25 the appended claims.

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CLAIMS

1. A continuous, flexible web (20) which displays a first wall (21a),
a second wall (21b) facing counter to the first wall and longitudinal
5 first and second edges (22,23), wherein the web comprises mutually
sequentially disposed package blanks (26) each one with a bottom
portion (15) at said first edge (22) and with two connection
zones (25a,b) which are transversely directed in relation to the
longitudinal direction of the web and which form the package
10 blank's first and second side closures (25a,b), wherein the web includes
transverse slits (27) disposed between the connection zones
(25a,b) in two mutually adjacent package blanks (26), wherein each
respective wall (21a,b) comprises two opposing edge portions
(24a,b) which extend in the longitudinal direction of the web at
15 its said second edge (23), each one including continuous retainer
means (13a,b;43a,b;53a,b) for cooperation with mechanical devices
(33a,b) for guiding the edge portions (24a,b) on displacement of
the web into an apparatus (3) for supplying contents to the package
blanks (26), and wherein longitudinal slits (29a,b) are provided on
20 either side of said transverse slits (27) and between the package
blanks (26) and retainer means (43a,b), characterized
in that in association with each package blank (26) each one of
said first wall (21a) and said second wall (21b) are provided with
but one longitudinal slit (29a,29b, respectively); that the slit
25 (29a) of the first wall (21a) is located adjacent the one side closure
(25a) of the package blank; and that the slit (29b) of the
second wall (21b) is located adjacent the second side closure (25b)
of the package blank.
- 30 2. The web as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that
the retainer means consist of tunnels (53a,b).
3. The web as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that
the retainer means consist of thickened material portions (13a,b;
35 43a,b).



4. The web as claimed in Claim 3, characterized in that one of the thickened portions (43b) is provided with a bead (71) facing towards the other thickened portion (43a); that the second thickened portion (43a) is provided with a groove (72) facing to-
5 wards the bead; and that the bead and the groove are dimensioned, on insertion of the bead into the groove, to form a snap-in function for interconnection of both of the thickened portions.
5. The web as claimed in any of Claims 1-4, characterized
10 in that each package blank (26) is, in the region of the first edge (22) of the web, provided with a second retainer means (44) designed for cooperation with a mechanical device for at least temporary fixing of the retainer means, for example on emptying of a container formed by the package blank.
6. An apparatus (3) comprising mechanical retainer devices (33a,b), wherein the mechanical retainer devices (33a,b) are disposed, on displacement of the web along said mechanical devices, to hold the package blanks (26) open by guiding the retainer means (13a,b;
20 43a,b;53a,b) of the web, wherein the mechanical retainer devices (33a,b) are disposed in spaced apart relationship from one another in that part of the apparatus where the package blanks are displaced open, and wherein the apparatus includes mechanical guide means (35a,b;36a,b) which guide opposing edge portions (24a,b) of
25 the web (20) on their displacement to that part of the apparatus where the package blanks (26) are displaced open, characterized in that said guide means (35a,b;36a,b) are disposed to position the edge portions (24a,b) of the web (20) offset in relation to one another in the longitudinal direction of the web in
30 said portion where the package blanks are displaced open; and that said guide means (36a,b) are disposed, on movement of the edge portions (24a,b) to positions adjacent one another, to eliminate said offset displacement.

