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**United States Patent**  
**Howard**

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(54) **SURFACE PASTEURIZATION OF COOKED FOOD PRODUCTS**

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(\* ) **Notice:** Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 691 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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*A23B 4/005* (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... 426/129; 426/399; 426/401; 426/407; 426/412; 426/521; 426/524

(58) **Field of Classification Search** ..... 426/106, 426/129, 234, 240-243, 248, 645, 399, 401, 426/407, 412, 521, 524

See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of surface pasteurizing precooked food products which are contained in packages. The method preferably comprises the steps of continuously heating the packages of the precooked food product such that the outer surfaces of the products contained within the packages are taken to an effective pasteurization temperature and then continuously cooling the packages of product. The heating and cooling steps are preferably conducted in a manner such that no more than a 10° temperature increase and preferably substantially no temperature increase occurs in the internal core of the product as a result of the heating step.

12 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets

