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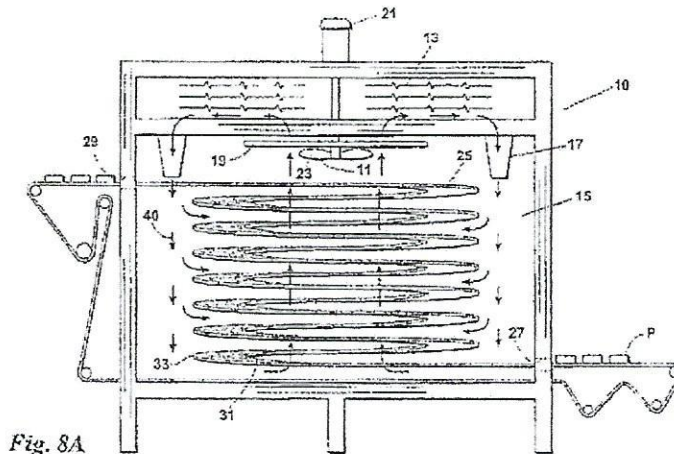


Fig. 8A

(57) Abstract: An improved spiral oven (10) and method for its use includes the step of using a forward/reversing fan (11) to produce a first airflow (40) and a second inverted airflow (50) in the cooking chamber (15). The proportion of time each airflow occurs may be unbalanced within an oven residence time or cook cycle, and either airflow may begin the cycle. The first airflow creates a flow across the cook belt (25) predominantly at the top and bottom tiers, whereas the second airflow creates this flow predominantly in the middle tiers. A braking resistor allows the fan (11) to quickly changeover between full-forward and full-reverse directions. Because of the reversing airflow pattern, the product cooks more evenly across the cook belt (25).

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