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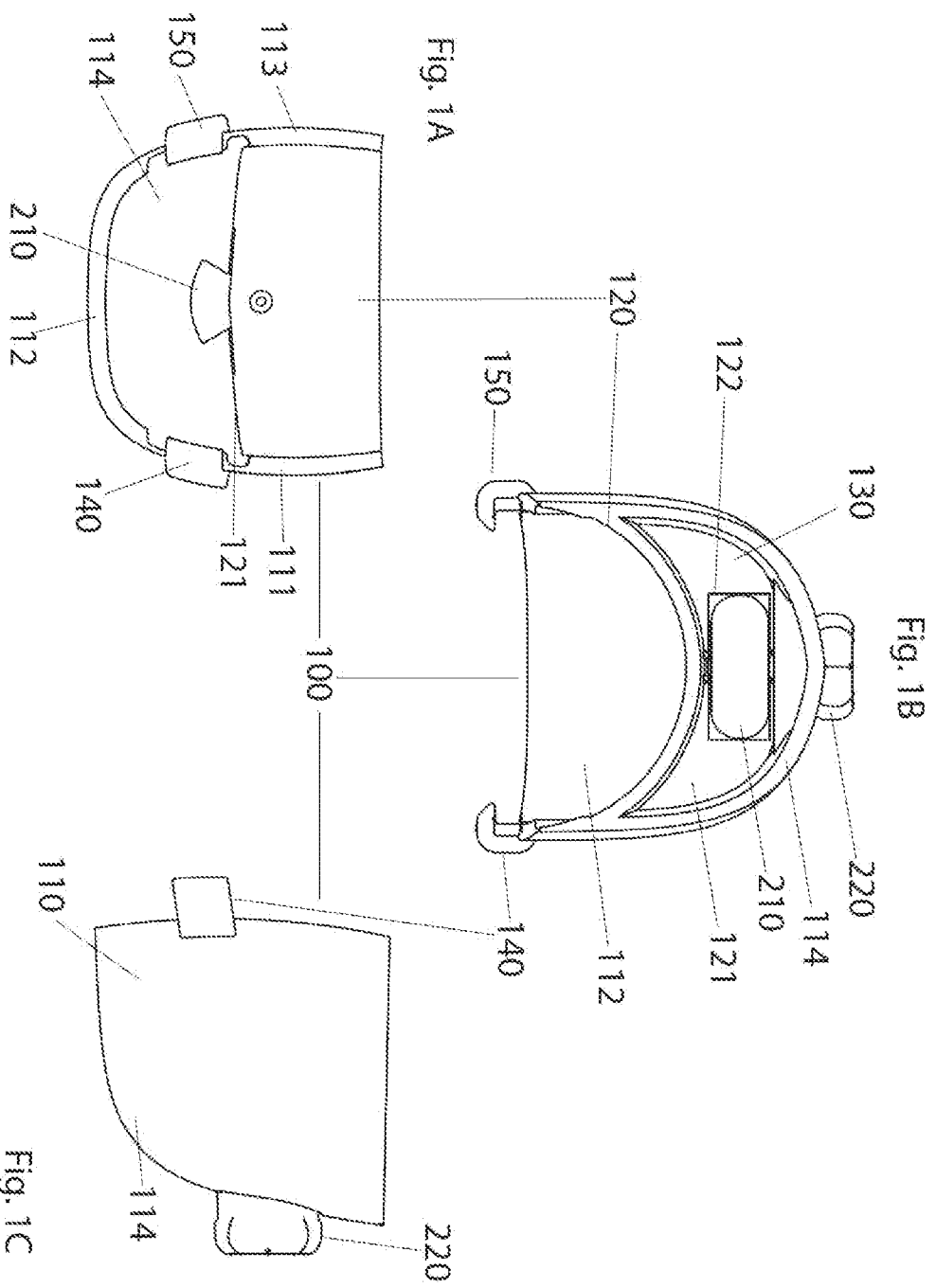


Fig. 1A

Fig. 1B

Fig. 1C

Fig. 2B

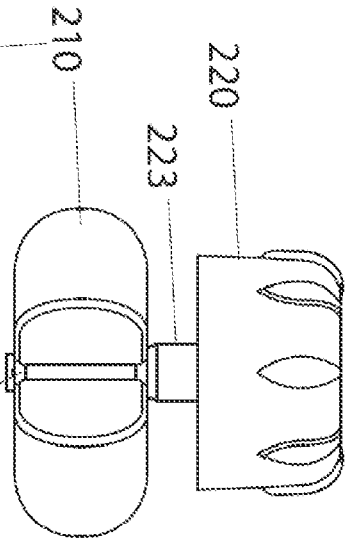


Fig. 2A

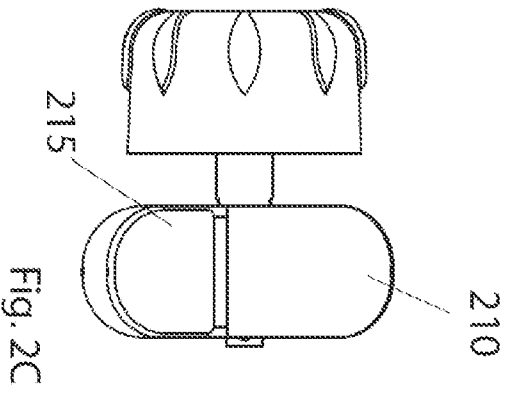
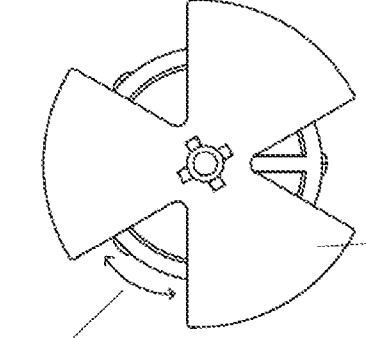


Fig. 2C

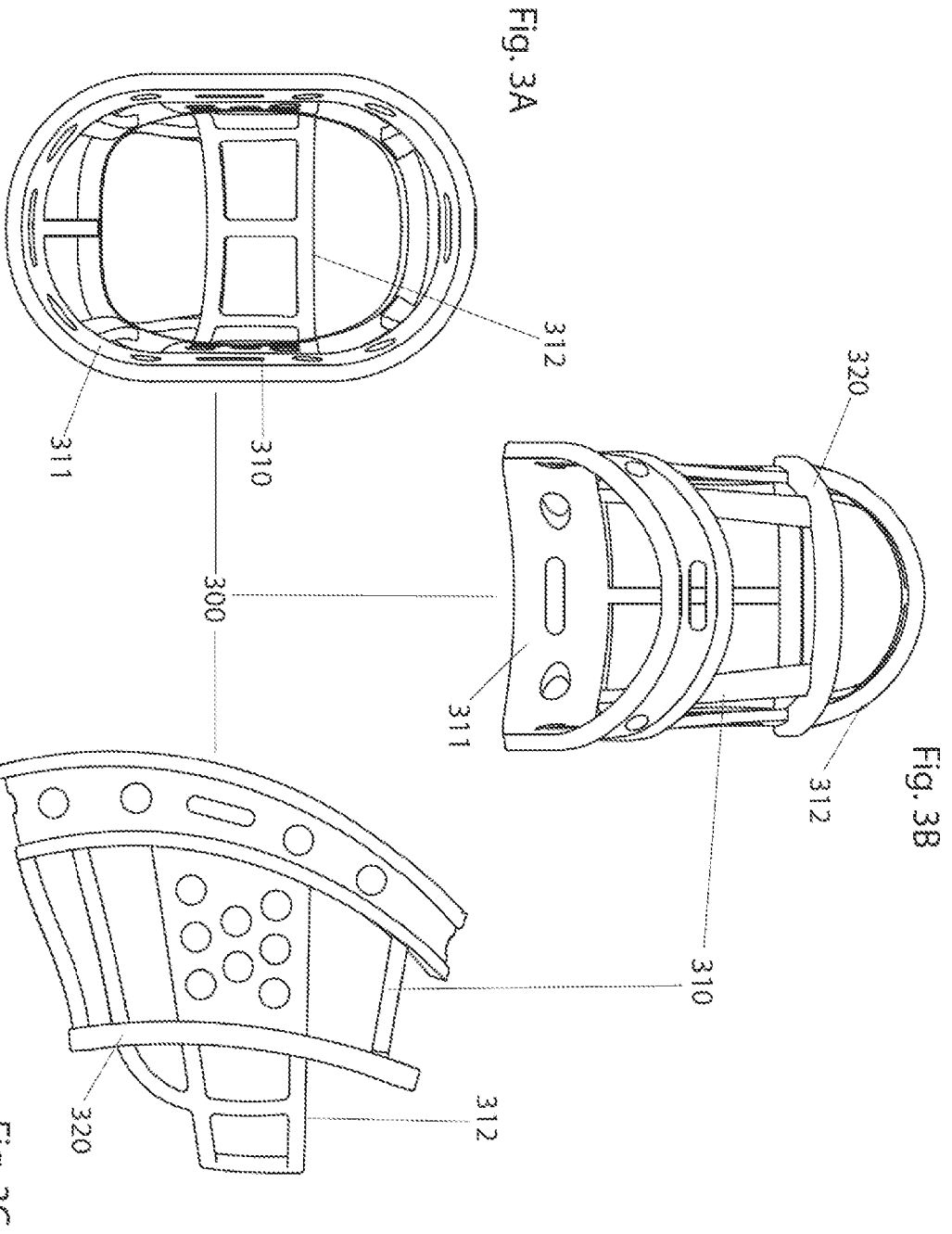


Fig. 3A

Fig. 3B

Fig. 3C

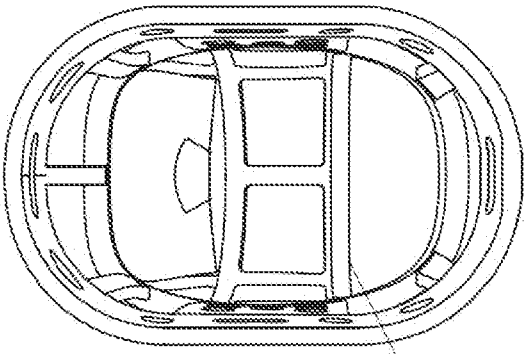


Fig. 4A

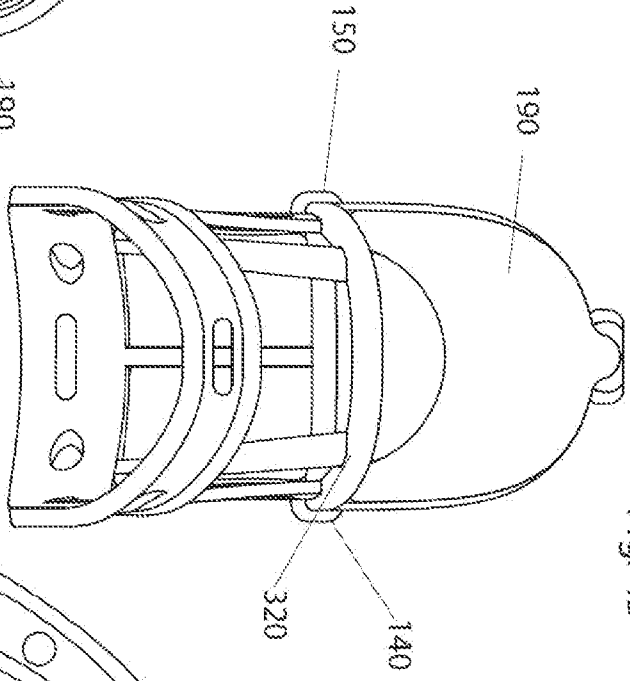


Fig. 4B

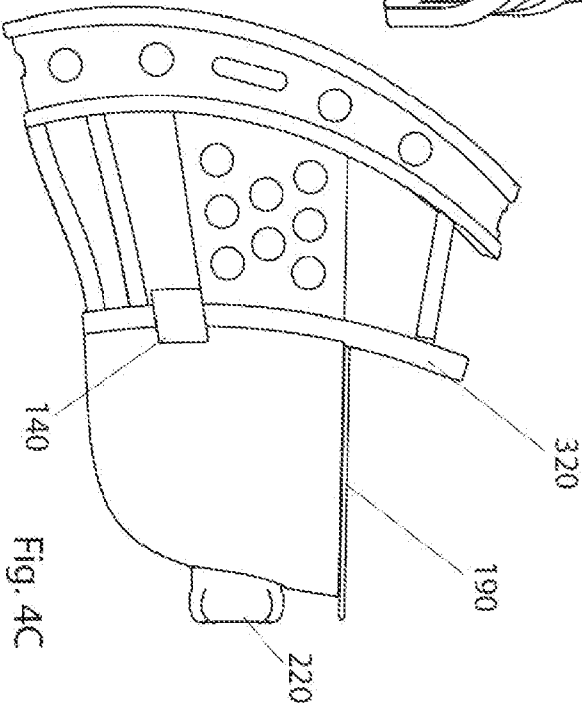


Fig. 4C

Treat Dispensing Muzzle

[001] The present invention relates to muzzles for training. Particularly the present invention relates to muzzles for training animals. More particularly the present invention relates to muzzles for training animals with a treat dispenser. Even more particularly the present invention relates to a muzzle for training animals with a treat dispenser releasably attachable to the front of the muzzle such that the muzzle does not need to be removed to give the animal a treat.

10 Background of the Invention

[002] Animal training and domestication is a fundamental part of human society. And from the earliest beginnings of human society, domestication and training of animals has been done with positive reinforcement. Particularly the providing of food, or “treats” in response to the animal behaving in the fashion desired by the individual training the animal.

[003] A later, but still early and well-known development of animal training was the muzzle. Encasing the maw of the animal, stopping or at least hindering them from being able to bite others or scavenge and eat things lying around that they’re not supposed to, along with a myriad of other benefits.

[004] Dogs in particular, wear muzzles for many different reasons. In some countries, dogs need to legally wear a muzzle on public transport. Registered banned breeds need to be muzzled and on lead in public areas. Other reasons dogs wear muzzles are prey drive, bite prevention, scavenging prevention and safety.

[005] With dog ownership on the rise, especially in highly populated areas, muzzles are becoming more necessary. The stigma surrounding them is also starting to subside.

5 [006] Delivering a treat to a dog while wearing a muzzle has always been challenging, companies have tried to tackle this by making treat holes, widening bars and using softer material. However, this often compromises the safety. One of the top reasons people are put off using muzzles is because it's hard to deliver a treat to their dogs. This aim is to remove the
10 battle and make giving the dog a treat just as easy as if they weren't wearing a muzzle.

[007] It is an object of the current invention that the treat dispensing muzzle allows a treat to be easily delivered to the dog by handler, without having to
15 manoeuvre through the muzzle bars. This will make training sessions and walks easier and more enjoyable for dogs and owners that use a muzzle. Additionally, it will also help during the process of associating the dog to the muzzle.

20 **Statement of the Invention**

[008] According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided a muzzle for an animal comprising: a muzzle portion for fitting over the snout or mouth of an animal; A treat dispensing portion, attached to the muzzle portion, comprising a first section and a second section, wherein the first section is
25 for holding treats such that, in use, they are inaccessible to an animal wearing the muzzle, and a second section is for presenting, in use, one or more treats to the mouth of an animal wearing the muzzle; and a user-

controlled mechanism for moving treats from the first section to the second section.

5 [009] An embodiment of the first aspect wherein the treat dispensing portion and the muzzle portion are releasably attached to one another via complimentary attachment means.

[010] An embodiment of the first aspect wherein the complimentary attachment means comprise snap fit clips and a protruding ledge.

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[011] An embodiment of the first aspect wherein the user-controlled mechanism comprises a rotating component located between the first and second sections, the component can only hold a limited number of treats at a time, as the component rotates it moves said limited number of treats from the first section to the second section. The rotating component may be connected to and actuated by a knob positioned on an outside of the treat dispensing portion.

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[012] An embodiment of the first aspect wherein the muzzle substantially comprises rubber.

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[013] An embodiment of the first aspect wherein the muzzle is for a canine.

Brief description of the Drawings

25 [014] The invention will be described in more detail, by way of example, with reference to the following drawings:

[015] Figures 1A-C depict an embodiment of the treat dispenser portion of the present invention;

[016] Figures 2A-C depict an embodiment of the treat dispensing mechanism
5 within the treat dispenser portion of the present invention;

[017] Figures 3A-C depict an embodiment of the muzzle portion of an embodiment of the invention;

10 [018] Figures 4A-C depict an embodiment of the invention with the muzzle portion and treat dispensing portion attached to one another.

Detailed Description

[019] With reference to the figures a preferred embodiment of the invention will
15 now be described.

[020] As can be seen in figures 1 A-C there is a treat dispensing portion 100 of the present invention. The outer shell of the dispensing portion 100 comprises side walls 111 and 113, these are connected by bottom wall 112 and front wall 114 leaving the back and top open. Within the cavity defined by side walls 111,113, front wall 114 and bottom wall 112 there is a partition floor 121 positioned approximately half way up front wall 114, extending to both
20 sidewalls 111 and 113 and extending from the front wall 114 between $1/3$ and $1/2$ the length of bottom wall 112. From the edge of partition floor 121 distal to front wall 114 extending upwards there is wall 120, this is also
25 connected to side walls 111 and 113 and stops at substantially the same height of the side walls. Partition floor 121, wall 120, side walls 111 and 113 along with front wall 114 define a cavity for storing treats. On the partition

floor 121 proximal front wall 114 is a cut out aperture 122 which allows treats to move from the storage cavity to the main body of the cavity, where in use the treats will be accessible by the animal wearing the muzzle. To control the dispensing of treats from the storage cavity to the main cavity there is treat dispensing mechanism 200 which will be discussed in more detail below.

[021] On the edges of side walls 111 and 113 distal to the front wall 114 there are attachment means 140 and 150, these can be in the form of clips or any other suitable attachment means known to the skilled person. Attachment means 150 and 140 releasably secure treat dispensing portion 100 to the main muzzle of the invention. as can be seen in figures 1A-C the shapes of the walls etc defined above are curved and have a generally ergonomic shape. The specific shape of the walls etc can vary depending on the type and size of the animal that the muzzle is to be used on, and the variations required to fit the present invention to various animals would be known to the person skilled in the art.

[022] As can be seen in figures 2A-C there is a treat dispensing mechanism 200, which comprises two main sections, dispensing wheel 210, and knob 220, which are connected together via axle 225. As a user rotates the knob 220, dispensing wheel 210 also rotates.

[023] Dispensing wheel 210 when in use sits in aperture 122. Wheel 210 has a thickness slightly less than aperture 122 and a diameter slightly less than the length of aperture 122 such that wheel 210 can rotate freely within aperture 122. Dispensing wheel 210 takes the form of a hollow plastic wheel with three wedges 215 equ-distally cut out therefrom, each giving access to the hollow cavity within the wheel. In use the storage cavity of the muzzle will

be filled with treats, these treats will be prevented from falling into the main cavity through hole 122 by dispensing wheel 210. When a user turns knob 220, this turns dispensing wheel 210 and agitates the treats in the storage cavity, a small number of which will fall into the hollow body of the dispensing wheel 210 through one of cut out wedges 215. With continued turning the treats will then fall out of wheel 210 through another of cut out wedges 215 and into the main cavity of the muzzle where the treat will be accessible to the animal wearing the muzzle. Dispensing wheel 210 is mounted through front wall 114 of the treat dispensing portion 100 of the muzzle. Section 223 of knob 220 sitting rotatably within front wall 114. A preferred embodiment of the treat dispensing mechanism has been described, it is essentially like a gumball dispensing machine and therefore any suitable similar controlled dispensing mechanism known to the skilled person could be used instead for the present invention.

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[024] Figures 3A-C disclose muzzle portion 300 of the present invention. muzzle portion 300 can take any known form for a muzzle, general size and shape of the muzzle 300 being determined by the size and shape of the animal to be buzzled. In general, though muzzle portion 300 will have a body 310 which goes around the snout/mouth of the wearing animal. Body 310 having an open back end 311 through which the animal's snout/mouth is inserted, and a grill 312 on the front, which stops the animal from being able to bite or forage, but still allows access to water etc. The shape of grill 312 is complimentary to the shape of the storage and main cavity of treat dispensing portion 100, such that the outer shape of grill 312 matches the shape of wall 120 distal to front wall 114. Another distinguishing feature of muzzle portion 300 is the attachment means 320 located between main body 310 and grill 312. Attachment means 320 is compatible with attachment means 140 and 150 of treat dispensing portion 100.

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[025] As can be seen in figures 4A-C the treat dispensing portion 100 attaches to the front of muzzle portion 300 via attachment means 140, 150 and compatible attachment means 320. Preferably attachment means 140 and 150 are snap fit clips which attach to a protruding rim 320 of the muzzle portion, but any suitable releasable attachment means known to the skilled person could be used. Also shown in figures 4A-C is lid 190, which releasably closes the top of the treat storage cavity of treat dispensing portion 100 so that in use the movement of the animal's head etc doesn't cause treats to fall out the top of the treat storage cavity.

[026] The muzzle and treat dispensing portions can be made out of any suitable material known to the skilled person. Preferably the muzzle portion 300 and treat dispensing portion 100 are made from strong rubber or rubber like material, which provides the muzzle with additional flexibility and improved durability.

[027] The invention has been described with reference to a preferred embodiment. The description is intended to enable a skilled person to make the invention, not to limit the scope of the invention. The scope of the invention is determined by the claims.

Claims

1. A muzzle for an animal comprising:
a muzzle portion for fitting over the snout or mouth of an animal;
a treat dispensing portion, attached to the muzzle portion, and comprising a
5 first section and a second section, wherein the first section is for holding
treats such that, in use, they are inaccessible to an animal wearing the
muzzle, and the second section is for presenting, in use, one or more treats
to the mouth of an animal wearing the muzzle; and
a user-controlled mechanism for moving treats from the first section to the
10 second section.
2. A muzzle for an animal according to claim 1 wherein the treat dispensing
portion and the muzzle portion are releasably attached to one another via
complimentary attachment means.
15
3. A muzzle according to claim 2 wherein the complimentary attachment
means comprise snap fit clips and a protruding ledge.
4. A muzzle according to any preceding claim wherein the user-controlled
20 mechanism comprises a rotating component located between the first and
second sections, the component can only hold a limited number of treats at
a time, as the component rotates it moves said limited number of treats
from the first section to the second section.
- 25 5. A muzzle according to claim 4 wherein the rotating component is connected
to and actuated by a knob positioned on an outside of the treat dispensing
portion.

6. A muzzle according to any preceding claim wherein the muzzle substantially comprises rubber.

7. A muzzle according to any preceding claim, wherein the muzzle is for a canine.

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