Novelty Report

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THE IDEA

A small plastic stand that sits in the middle of a pizza so the delivery box lid does not sag and touch the cheese

ASSESSMENT

This space is fully occupied. United States patent 4498586, the 1985 'package saver', claims the central plastic tripod so precisely that the idea as written adds nothing to it; that patent is the one that matters, and every later filing in the pool is an attempt to add a second function on top of it. The good news is that 4498586 expired long ago, so making and selling a plain stand is not a patent problem - it is a differentiation problem. If a patent is the goal, look at material, integration with the box blank, or a genuinely new second function, and check the later combination patents (7191902, 5480031) before committing to any of them.

CLOSEST PRIOR ART

4498586 92% overlap

Covers: Claim 1 covers the combination of a package with a flexible cover, a food article inside it, and a unitary moulded-plastic 'saving device' with three or more spaced legs whose flat ends rest on the food while the opposite ends join a cover portion that holds the package lid up.

Overlap with the idea: Every element of the idea as described - a small plastic piece, legs resting on the pizza, a top that keeps the lid off the cheese - is recited in this 1985 claim. The patent itself expired long ago, but it is the reference an examiner would cite first.

CLAIM ELEMENTS VS. THE IDEA

Package with a flexible cover (the pizza box)	IN THE IDEA
Food article inside the package	IN THE IDEA
Unitary moulded plastic saving device	IN THE IDEA
Three or more spaced legs, flat ends engaging the food	IN THE IDEA
Cover portion joining the legs, supporting the package cover	IN THE IDEA

7191902 70% overlap

Covers: Claims a lid support that doubles as a serving aid: a tapered support platform with a serrated leg at its narrow front edge and two opposed rear legs, shaped so the pieces can be stacked and used to lift a slice.

Overlap with the idea: Shares the lid-support function and the multi-leg plastic form. The idea does not describe a tapered platform, a serrated cutting edge, or stackable serving use, so the narrower elements of this claim are not present.

CLAIM ELEMENTS VS. THE IDEA

Support platform holding the lid off the pizza	IN THE IDEA
Platform tapered from a wide rear to a narrow front	NOT IN THE IDEA

Serrated leg at the narrow front edge for cutting/lifting	NOT IN THE IDEA
Two opposed rear legs	ARGUABLY
Supports nest for stacking	NOT IN THE IDEA

5480031 48% overlap

Covers: A lid support combined with a pizza cutter: a disc with a cutting peripheral edge, a transverse shaft that engages the pizza, and a handle, so the support becomes the cutting wheel after delivery.

Overlap with the idea: Overlaps only in keeping the lid up. The idea has no cutting edge, shaft, or handle; this patent matters mainly as evidence that combination devices are where the later inventors went to find room.

CLAIM ELEMENTS VS. THE IDEA

Disc with a cutting peripheral edge	NOT IN THE IDEA
Transverse shaft engaging the pizza surface	ARGUABLY
Handle for use as a cutter	NOT IN THE IDEA
Assembly supports the box lid	IN THE IDEA

20070241175 40% overlap

Covers: A published application (not a granted patent) for a flexible sheet formed into a cylinder that surrounds the pizza's edge, acting as both a topping barrier and a lid support.

Overlap with the idea: Same problem, different mechanism: a perimeter wall rather than a central stand. It reaches the idea only at the level of 'something inside the box keeps the lid up'.

6851603 18% overlap

Covers: A pizza box itself, with an angled surface bearing an aperture that holds a cup; the lid-support role is incidental to the box structure.

Overlap with the idea: Reaches the idea only through the shared goal of a box whose lid stays off the food. No separate stand is claimed.

APPARENT WHITE SPACE

As described, the idea has no apparent white space: the plain three-legged central stand is exactly what 4498586 claims, and the combination variants (cutter, serving aid, perimeter barrier) are already staked out. Because 4498586 expired in the early 2000s, the basic stand is free to make and sell - the question is not whether it is novel but whether anything about it could be. Room appears only in features none of these claims recite: material (compostable or edible stands), integration with the box itself, or a stand that performs a second job the existing combinations do not.

POSSIBLE DIFFERENTIATORS

- Make the stand from an edible or certified-compostable material and claim the composition with the structure
- Form the stand from the box blank itself (a die-cut tab that folds up), so there is no separate part to add
- Add a function none of the combination patents claim - a built-in temperature indicator or a portion divider that snaps apart into serving pieces
- Design a stand that is adjustable in height for deep-dish versus thin crust and claim the adjustment mechanism

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