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(54) **TAPERED METAL CUP AND METHOD OF FORMING THE SAME**

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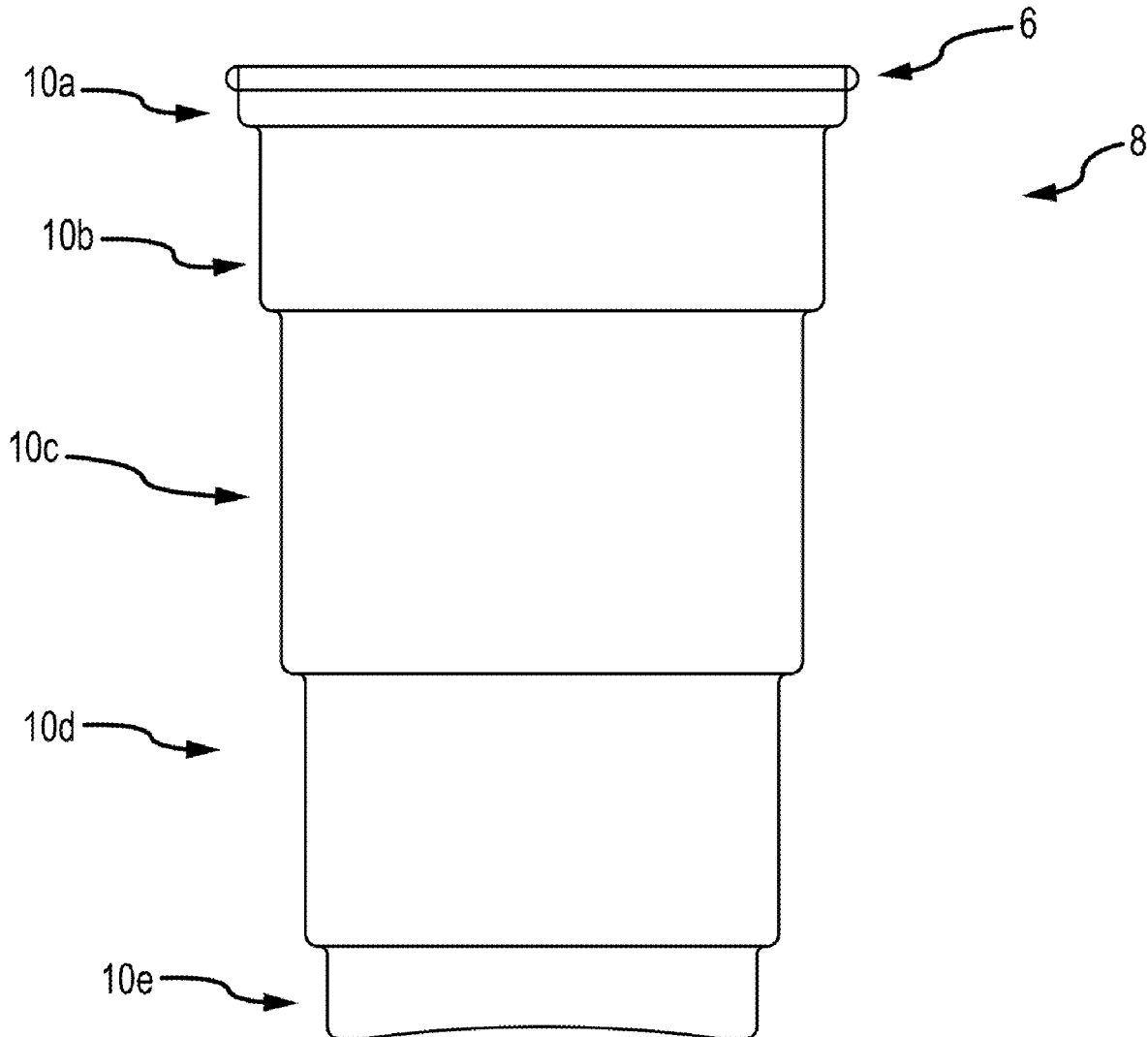
(57) **ABSTRACT**

Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 15/811,032, filed on Nov. 13, 2017.

A metal cup and method of forming the same is provided. Metal cups of the present disclosure comprise a plurality of thin, straight-walled sections and a tapered profile. A domed portion is provided in the bottom of the cup. The cup may comprise a disposable cup, a reusable cup, or a recyclable cup.

(60) Provisional application No. 62/455,697, filed on Feb. 7, 2017.



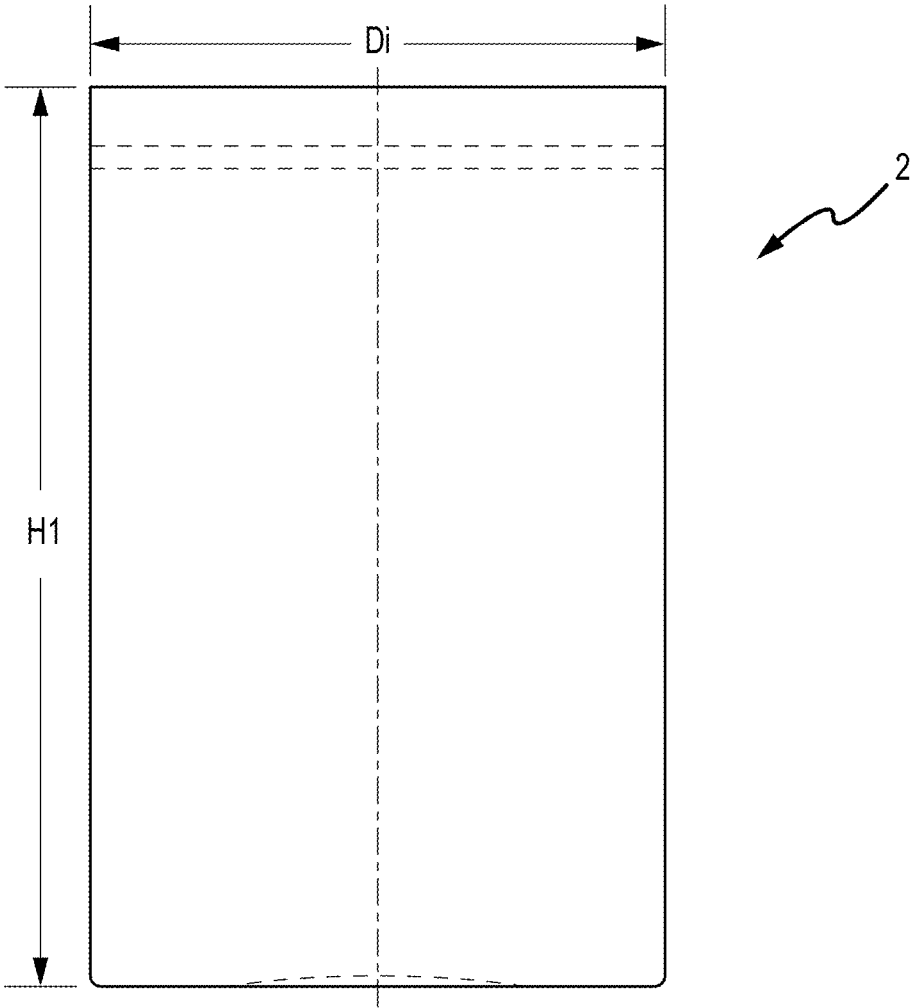


FIG.1

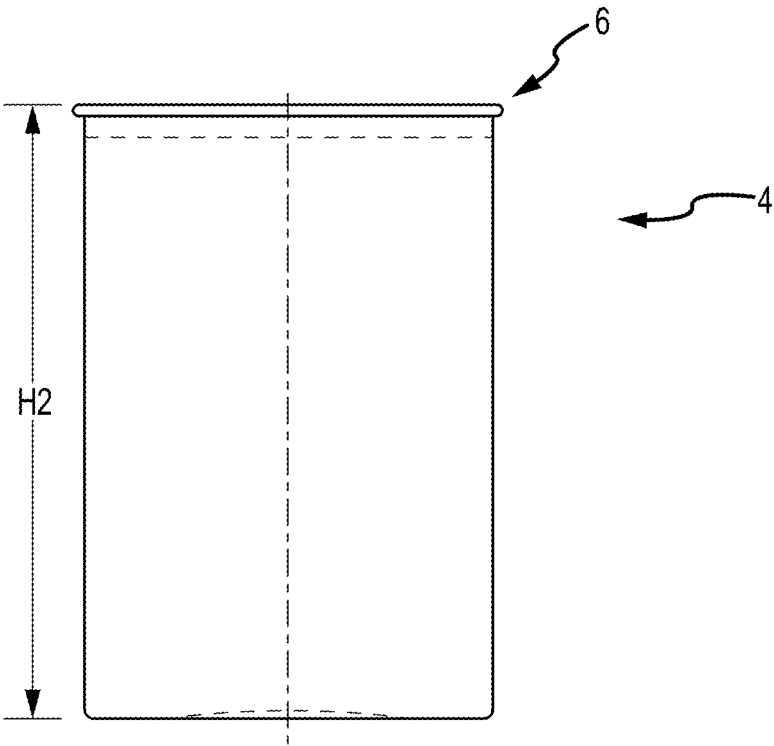


FIG.2

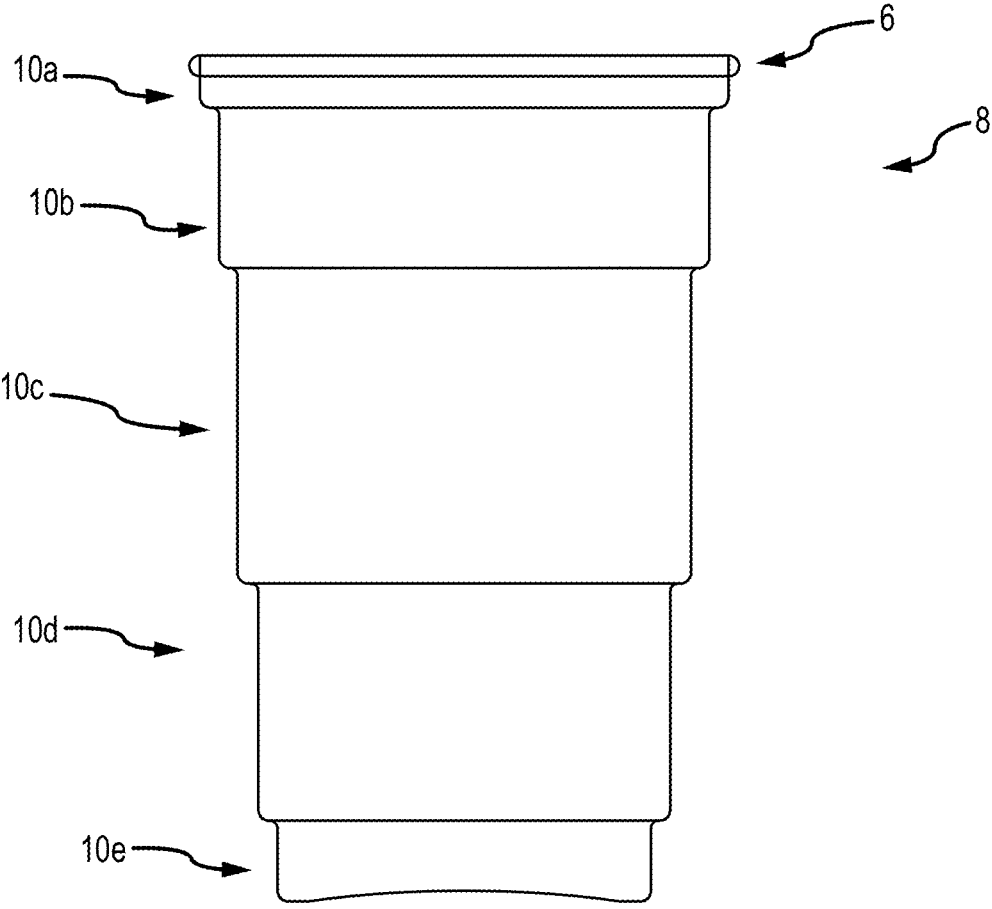


FIG.3

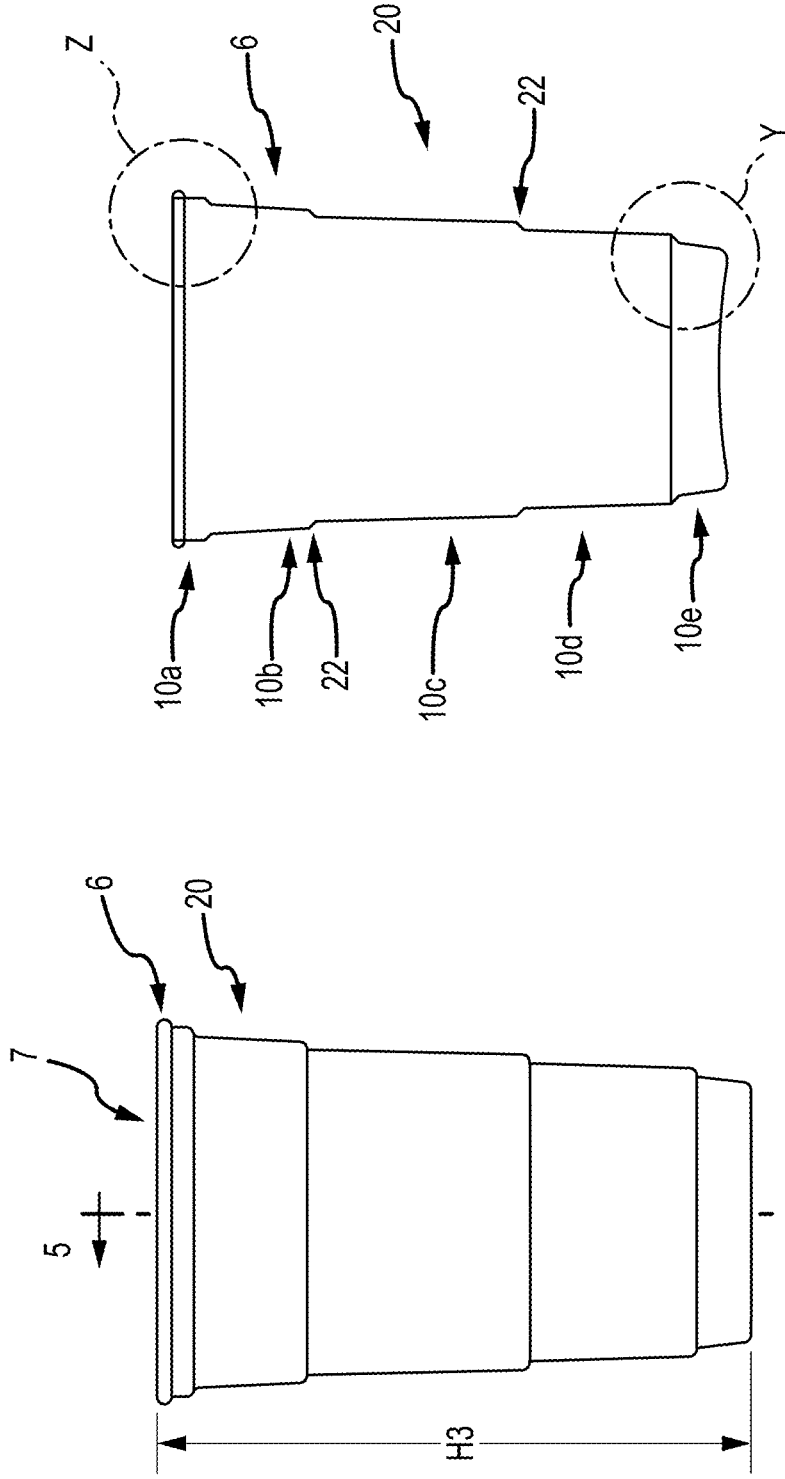


FIG.5

FIG.4

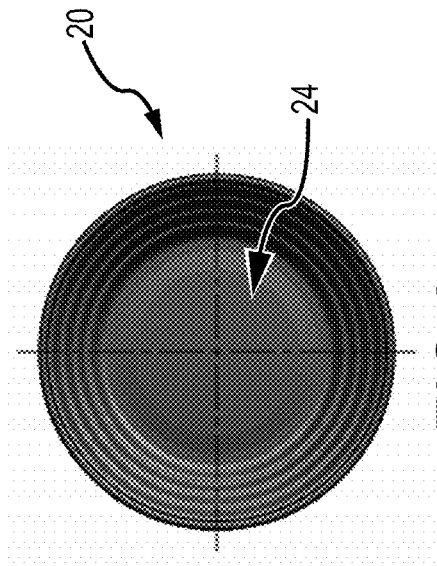


FIG. 6

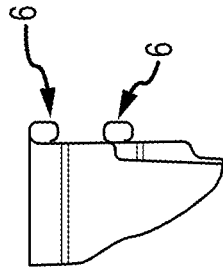


FIG. 7

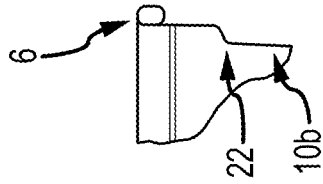


FIG. 8

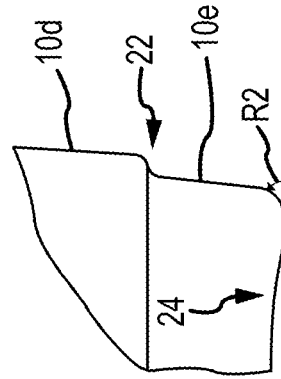


FIG. 9

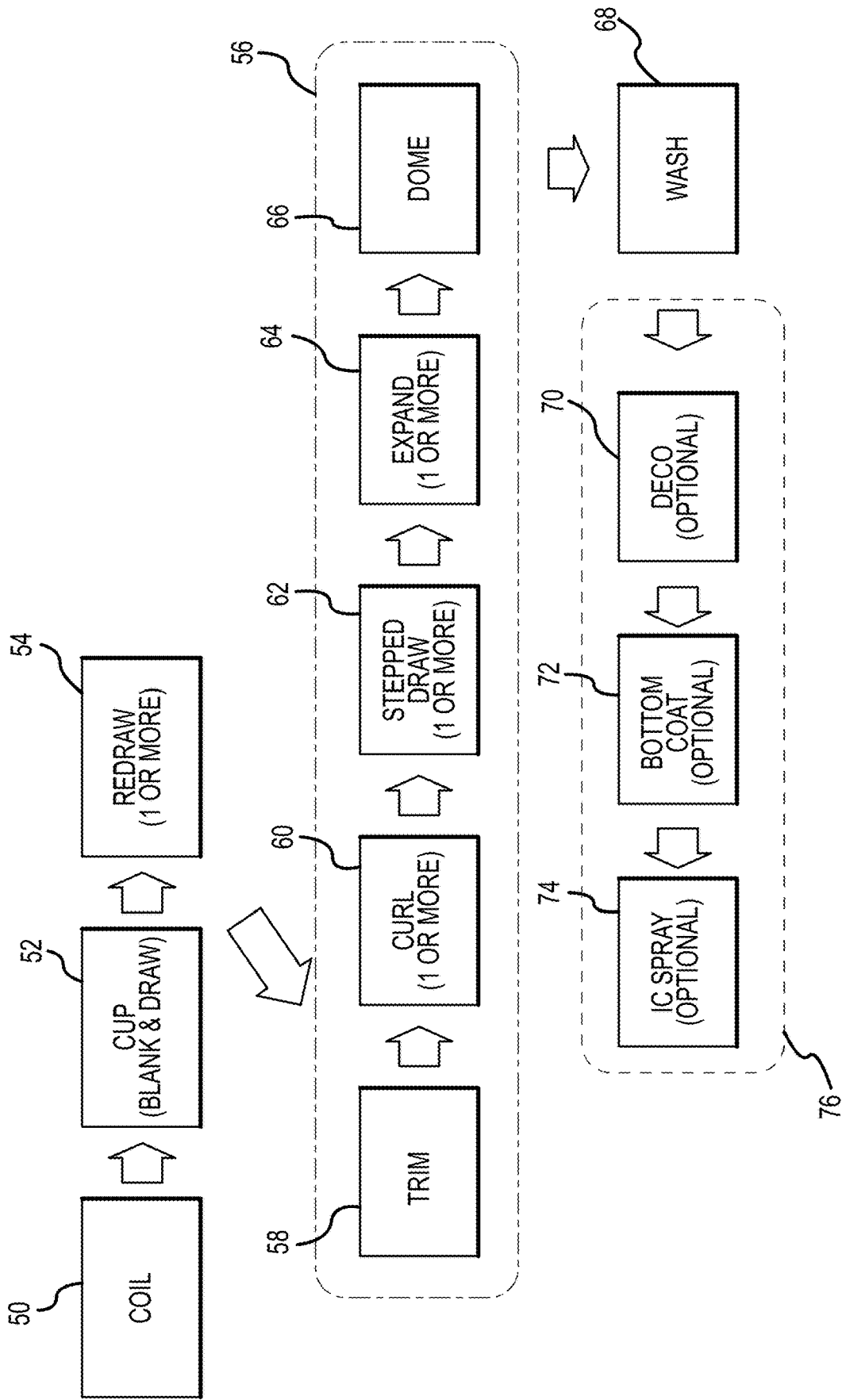


FIG.10

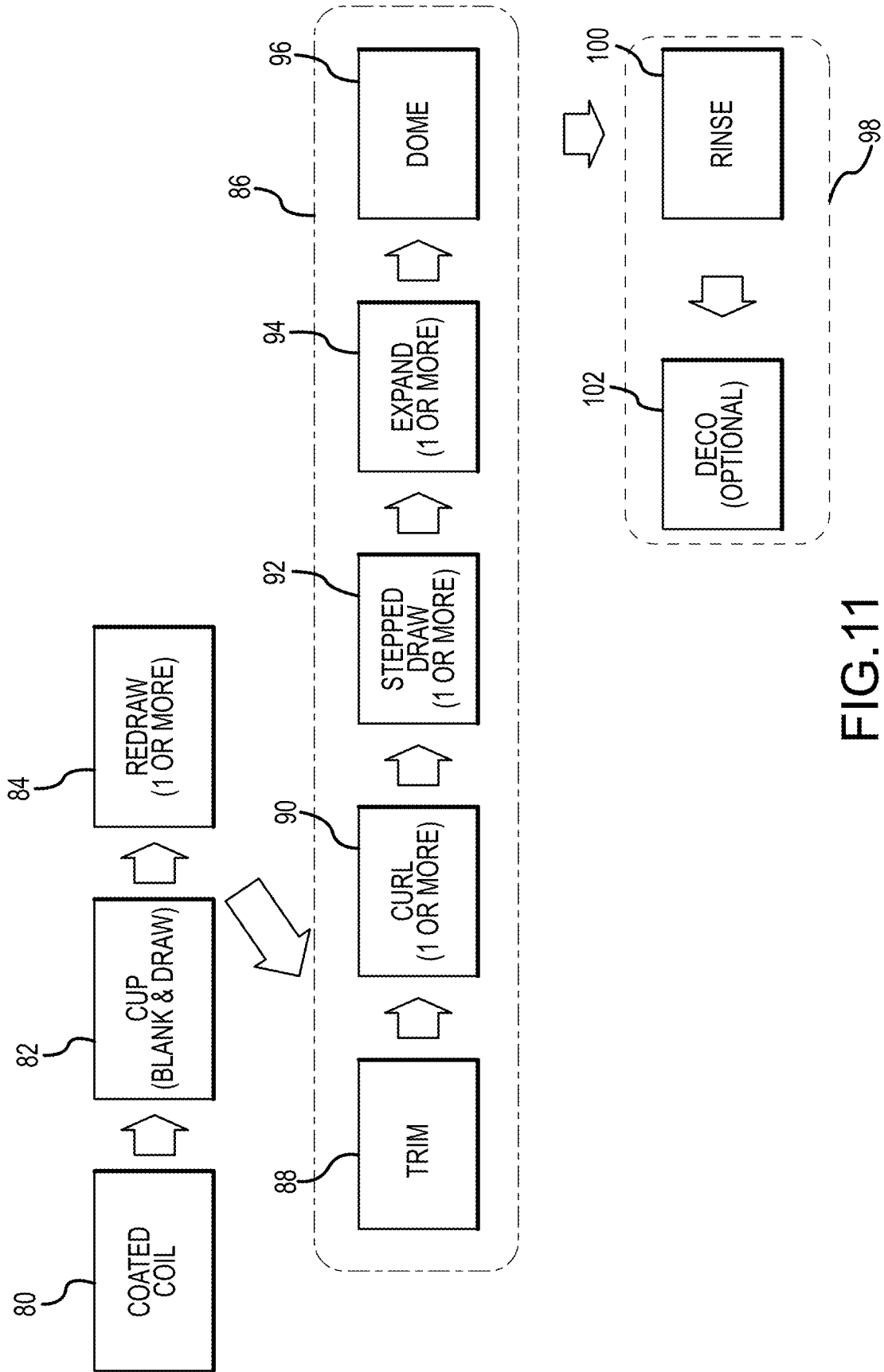


FIG.11

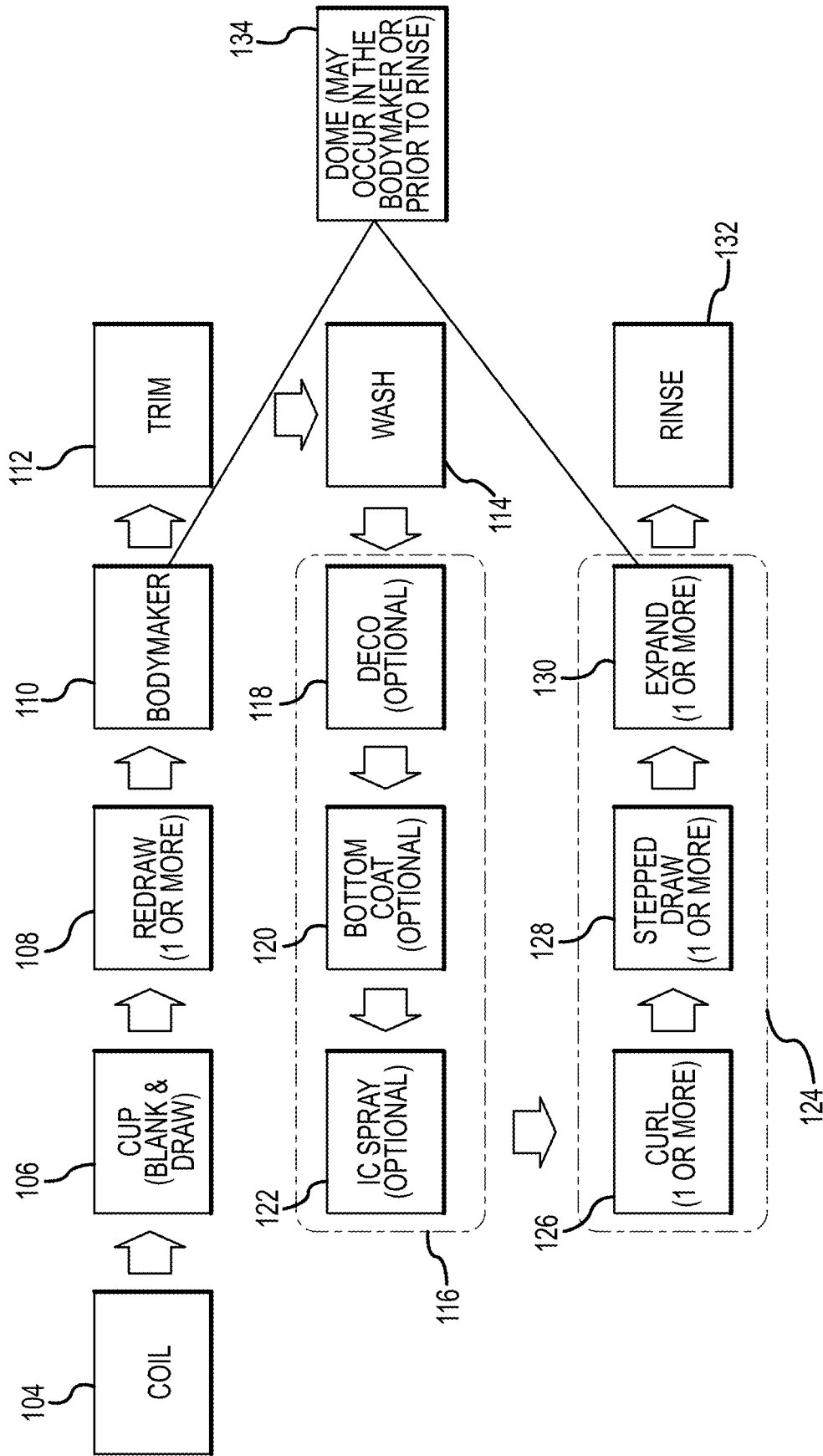


FIG.12

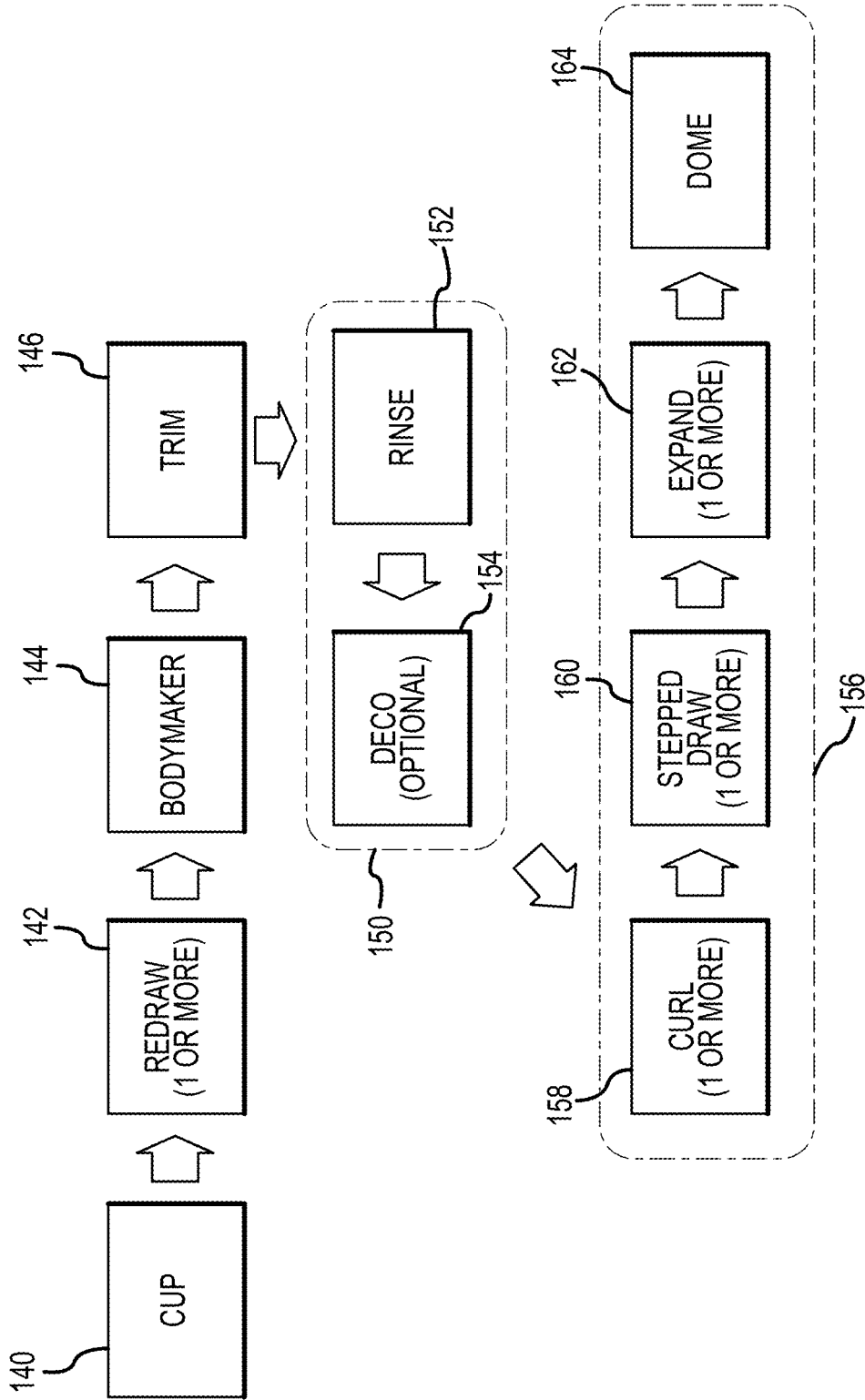


FIG.13

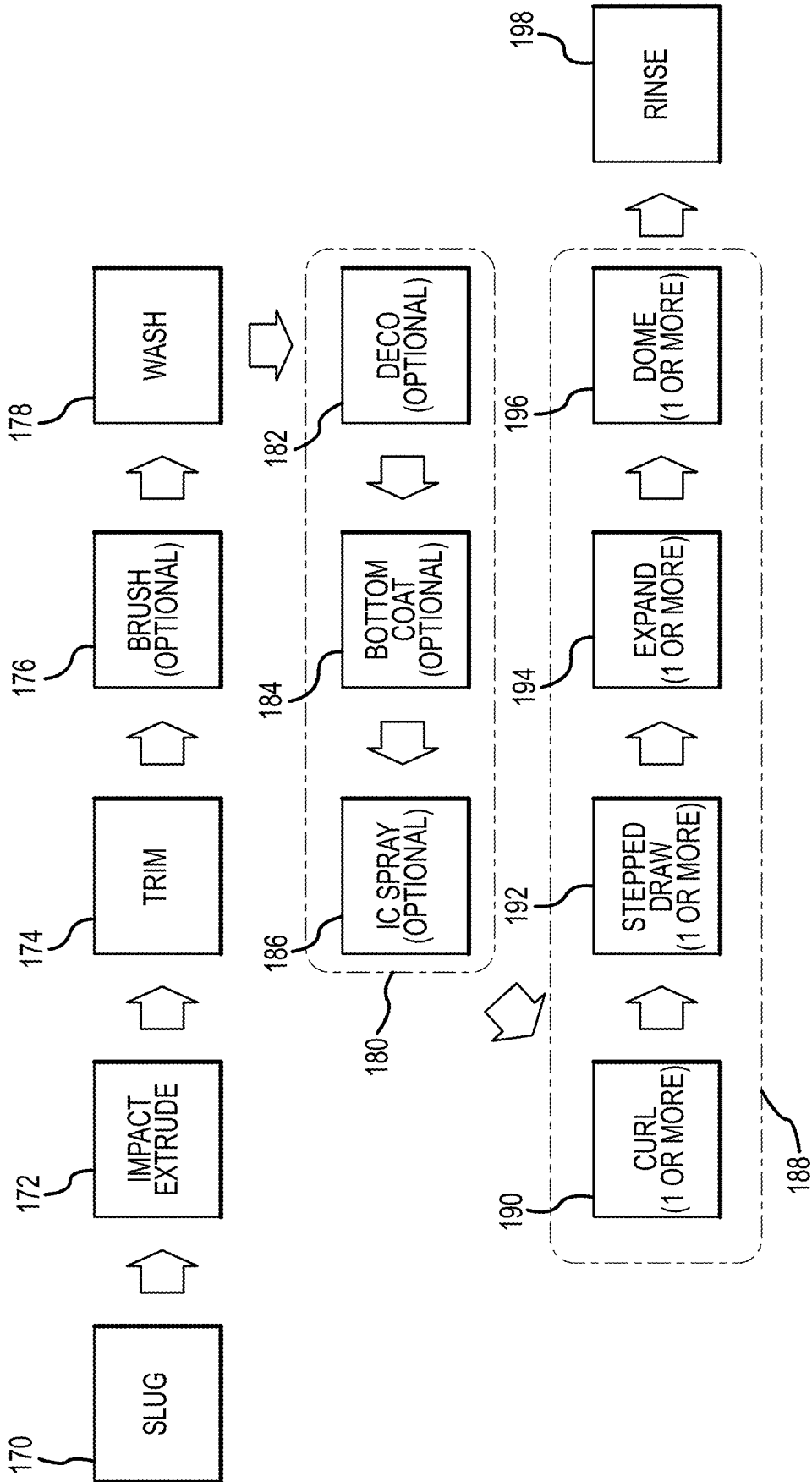


FIG.14

TAPERED METAL CUP AND METHOD OF FORMING THE SAME

[0001] This U.S. Non-Provisional Patent Application is a Divisional of and claims the benefit of priority from U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 15/811,032, filed Nov. 13, 2017 and U.S. Provisional patent application Ser. No. 62/455,697, filed Feb. 7, 2017, the entire disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference for all purposes.

FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to metal cups and methods of forming the same. More specifically, the present disclosure relates to beverage cups formed from a metal. Various embodiments of the present disclosure provide for a thin-walled beverage cup that is stackable with cups of similar construction.

[0003] BACKGROUND

[0004] Existing disposable beverage cups and drinking containers typically comprise a plastic material. Plastic cups are manufactured from injection molding or thermoforming operations, whereby many lightweight and disposable cups may be formed. Existing metallic beverage containers generally comprise drinking cans including an end closure secured to the upper end of a filled can.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 4,366,696 to Durgin et al., which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety, discloses a nestable can and method of forming the same from a blank. Durgin et al., however, fail to disclose various features of the present disclosure including, for example, a tapered or stepped geometry as shown and described herein and methods of forming the same.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 4,914,937 to Bulso et al., which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety, discloses a method of forming a tapered container. Bulso et al. provide a straight-walled cup and a method of forming the same, but is devoid of various teachings of the present disclosure.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 6,463,776 to Enoki et al., which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety, discloses a manufacturing method for bottle-shaped cans with a neck and shoulder portion. Enoki et al. fail to disclose various features and methods of the present disclosure. For example, Enoki et al. fail to provide a cup-shaped container with tapered, straight sidewalls.

SUMMARY

[0008] Accordingly, there has been a long-felt and unmet need to provide a metal cup that is reusable and recyclable. There has also been a need to provide a tapered metal cup that is stackable to enhance shipping and storing of a plurality of cups.

[0009] In various embodiments, a tapered metal cup is provided that comprises shallow wall angles. Shallow wall angles, at least as used herein, comprise wall angles that are less than 10 degrees as measured from a vertical center line or vertical axis of the cup. The angular sides and shallow wall angles of cups as shown and described herein allow for stackability of at least two cups, which provides advantages for shipping and storage.

[0010] In various embodiments, metal cups are provided comprising thin-walled aluminum. Preferably, metal cups are provided comprising a recycled aluminum alloy. Various embodiments, including those comprising thin-walled alu-

minum provide cups that are lightweight, are formed of a recycled and/or recyclable material, and are more rigid, useful, and durable than conventional plastic cups, for example.

[0011] In preferred embodiments, a metal cup is provided with a constant wall thickness along at least a portion of the cup. An incoming gauge of the cup is reduced to a thinner wall thickness in the sidewalls of the cup. Horizontally-extending steps or ribs preferably extend around an entire circumference of the cup, and are provided to add strength to the finished cup while maintaining a lightweight character of the cup. The steps or ribs are provided as transition points between sections of the finished cup having different diameters. Alternatively, a tapered cup is provided without ribs, where the cup comprises a relatively smooth and linear sidewall which extends from the upper end of the tapered cup to the closed lower end.

[0012] In various embodiments, a method of forming a metal cup is provided. In one embodiment, a method of forming a metal cup comprises feeding an aluminum coil into a cupping press and producing a straight-walled cup from a substantially circular blank cut from the aluminum coil. The cup preferably has a constant wall thickness that is approximately equal to the incoming gauge of the aluminum. The cup is then fed into a bodymaker where the metal is ironed. The cup is further formed by washing the cup, and decorating and/or coating an outside and an inside of the cup. In certain embodiments, at least a portion of the exterior of the cup is decorated with a color, a logo, or other visual information. Subsequent to washing and coating operations, a top edge of the cup is curled partially curled, or throttled to eliminate the sharp edge that is formed by the press. The cup is then drawn down in diameter and multiple straight wall sections are formed. Each of the straight wall sections is expanded to a larger diameter using a die with a tapered profile. Finally, a bottom dome is provided in the bottom wall of the cup wherein the dome provides enhanced structural stability to the cup. In various embodiments, a dome is provided in the bottom of a metal cup to provide enhanced strength and stackability features. It should be recognized, however, that the term "dome" is not limited to any particular geometric shape and is contemplated as including, without limitation, conical and frustoconical "dome" members. The present disclosure contemplates that a central bottom portion of the cup is positioned vertically above a standing surface of the cup.

[0013] In another embodiment, a method is provided wherein a bodymaker step is eliminated in favor of multiple redraw steps after the cupper. In this case the cup maintains a constant wall thickness through the entirety of the container.

[0014] In one embodiment, a method of forming a tapered metallic cup is provided, the method comprising the steps of providing a stock metal material; forming at least one cup using a blank and draw operation; performing a redrawing operation on the cup to provide the cup with a predetermined height and a wall thickness; subsequent to the redrawing operation, trimming the cup to a second height; curling the top edge of the trimmed cup to form a lip; forming one or more straight wall sections in the cup by drawing the cup; expanding each of the one or more straight wall sections using one or more dies with a tapered profile; and forming a dome in the bottom of the cup.

[0015] In another embodiment, a method of forming a tapered metallic cup is provided, the method comprising the steps of providing a stock metal material; forming at least one cylindrical preform from the stock material; trimming the cylindrical preform to a second height; curling a top edge of the trimmed cylindrical preform to form a lip; forming a cup by providing one or more straight wall sections in the cylindrical preform by drawing the preform; expanding each of the one or more straight wall sections to a larger diameter using one or more dies with a tapered profile; and forming a dome in the bottom of the cup.

[0016] In one embodiment, a tapered metallic cup is provided. The tapered metallic cup comprises an upper end and a lower end, and a height extending between the upper end and the lower end. The upper end comprises a curled, partially curled, or throttled lip and an opening. A plurality of tapered sections are provided between the upper end and the lower end, with a step provided between each of the tapered sections. Each of the tapered sections comprises a substantially constant wall thickness and a tapered profile. Adjacent tapered sections of the plurality of tapered sections comprise successively smaller diameters, and the step provided between each of the tapered sections comprises a transition in diameter.

[0017] The Summary of the Invention is neither intended nor should it be construed as being representative of the full extent and scope of the present disclosure. The present disclosure is set forth in various levels of detail in the Summary as well as in the attached drawings and the Detailed Description and no limitation as to the scope of the present disclosure is intended by either the inclusion or non-inclusion of elements, components, etc. in this Summary. Additional aspects of the present disclosure will become more readily apparent from the Detailed Description, particularly when taken together with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] Those of skill in the art will recognize that the following description is merely illustrative of the principles of the disclosure, which may be applied in various ways to provide many different alternative embodiments. This description is made for illustrating the general principles of the teachings of this disclosure and is not meant to limit the inventive concepts disclosed herein.

[0019] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of the specification, illustrate embodiments of the disclosure and together with the general description of the disclosure given above and the detailed description of the drawings given below, serve to explain the principles of the disclosure. It should be understood that the drawings are not necessarily to scale. In certain instances, details that are not necessary for an understanding of the disclosure or that render other details difficult to perceive may have been omitted. It should be understood, of course, that the disclosure is not necessarily limited to the particular embodiments illustrated herein.

[0020] FIG. 1 is a front elevation view of a container body in one stage of formation and according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0021] FIG. 2 is a front elevation view of a container body in one stage of formation and according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0022] FIG. 3 is a front elevation view of a metal container according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0023] FIG. 4 is a front elevation view of a stackable metal container according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0024] FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional elevation view of the container according to the embodiment of FIG. 4 and taken at section A-A.

[0025] FIG. 6 is a top plan view of the container according to the embodiment of FIG. 4.

[0026] FIG. 7 is a detailed elevation view of a portion of multiple containers stacked according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0027] FIG. 8 is a detailed elevation view of a portion of a container according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0028] FIG. 9 is a detailed elevation view of a portion of a container in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. 4.

[0029] FIG. 10 is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0030] FIG. 11 is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0031] FIG. 12 is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0032] FIG. 13 is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0033] FIG. 14 is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0034] FIG. 1 is a front elevation view of a straight-walled preform 2. The preform 2 represents an initial forming stage of a metal cup according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. The straight-walled preform 2 is preferably formed by feeding a quantity of metal (e.g. aluminum) into a cupping press and forming a preliminary drawn cup from a blank sheet cut from a coil of metal material. The resulting straight-walled drawn cup preferably comprises a constant wall thickness that is approximately equal to the incoming gauge of the metal fed into the cupping press. The preliminary drawn cup is then fed into a bodymaker wherein the metal is ironed. The resultant straight-walled preform 2 comprises a sidewall where the base comprises a thickness approximately equal to an incoming gauge of metal, and the sidewall comprises a thin-wall portion and a thick-wall portion. The straight-walled preform 2 comprises an initial diameter D_i that generally corresponds to and is approximately equal to the diameter of the punch that forms the cup. In various embodiments, the initial diameter D_i is between approximately 2.0 inches and 6.0 inches. In preferred embodiments, the initial diameter D_i is between approximately 3.0 and 4.0 inches, and more preferably is of approximately 3.290 inches.

[0035] The straight-walled preform 2 comprises a height H_1 of between approximately 3.0 and 10.0 inches. In preferred embodiments, the preform 2 comprises a height H_1 of between approximately 3.5 and 5.5 inches, and more preferably of approximately 4.463 inches. A bottom portion of the preform comprises a radius of curvature resulting from the shape and contact of the punch used to form the cup. In various embodiments, this radius R is between

approximately 0.025 inches and 0.250 inches, and preferably of approximately 0.059 inches.

[0036] FIG. 2 is a front elevation view of a curled preform cup 4 in a further phase of the formation. The curled preform 4 of FIG. 2 comprises the thin-walled preform 2 of FIG. 1, and wherein a curl 6 is provided on the upper edge or lip of the cup. The curl 6 is provided to eliminate a sharp edge, provide added rigidity, and provide a means for removal from draw tooling. As shown in FIG. 2, the curled preform cup 4 comprises a reduced height as compared to the preform 2 of FIG. 1. Specifically, the curled preform cup 4 of FIG. 2 comprises a height H2 of between approximately 4.5 and 5.5 inches, and preferably of approximately 4.947 inches.

[0037] Prior to or subsequent to the forming of the curl 6, the preform 4 may be washed, coated, and/or decorated. It is contemplated that at least one of the inside and the outside of the preform is coated with epoxy resin and/or other materials that will be recognized by one of ordinary skill in the art. The cup is coated to protect the aluminum from oxidization and to prevent leaching of aluminum into cup contents. It is further contemplated that an inside and/or outside of the cup is provided with paint or other ornamental treatment.

[0038] FIG. 3 is a front elevation view of a straight drawn cup 8 according to one embodiment of the present disclosure and formed from the curled preform cup 4 of FIG. 2. As shown, the straight drawn cup 8 comprises a curl 6 at an upper end or lip of the cup.

[0039] The straight drawn cup 8 further comprises a plurality of sections 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e wherein the sections each comprise straight-wall sections of successively smaller diameter and varying height, as shown in FIG. 3. FIG. 3, as well other Figures of the present disclosure, are provided with dimensions. These dimensions are provided by way of example only and illustrate cups and features according to certain embodiments. It will be expressly recognized that devices, inventions and features of the present disclosure are not limited to the dimensions provided in the drawings, and various modifications and proportions are contemplated. The straight drawn cup 8 of FIG. 3 comprises an intermediate phase of the forming process of a cup of the present disclosure.

[0040] As shown in FIG. 3, the straight drawn cup 8 comprises a plurality of sections 10, wherein each of the sections 10 comprise a successively smaller diameter from an upper end to a lower end of the straight drawn cup 8, wherein the uppermost section 10a comprises the largest diameter, and the lowermost section 10e comprises the smallest diameter. The sections comprise varying heights, wherein the relative heights can be characterized as: 10c>10d>10b>10e>10a. As shown in FIG. 3, the straight drawn cup 8 comprises five sections and four ribs. The number of sections and ribs may vary depending on consumer requirements. The section heights may also vary depending on consumer requirements.

[0041] FIGS. 4-5 illustrate a finished tapered metallic tapered cup 20 according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. The tapered cup 20 is preferably formed from the straight drawn cup 8 of FIG. 3 by expanding each of the straight walled sections 10 to a larger diameter (as compared to that shown in FIG. 3) using a die (not shown) with a tapered profile.

[0042] As further shown in FIG. 4, the finished tapered cup 20 is expanded to a final height H3 that is greater than H2. Specifically, the finished tapered cup 20 comprises a height H3 that is between approximately 4.5 and 6.50 inches, and preferably of approximately 5.330 inches. The final height H3 is produced by an expansion die during a final forming process. An opening 7 is provided at the upper end of the tapered cup 20, wherein the opening is devoid of a closure, a seal, etc. The opening is at least partially defined by the circumference of the curled portion 6, and wherein the curled portion 6 comprises at least a portion of a user-interface wherein a user's mouth is intended to contact the curled portion 6 during drinking.

[0043] FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional elevation view of the tapered metallic tapered cup 20 as shown in FIG. 4, and wherein the cross-section is taken at line A-A of FIG. 4. As shown in

[0044] FIG. 5, the tapered cup 20 comprises a tapered profile comprising multiple stepped sections 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e, wherein each successive section comprises a smaller diameter by way of a step 22. Additionally, each section comprises an angled or tapered sidewall formed by a tapered expansion die.

[0045] Various internal diameters of a plurality of sections 10 are provided. In preferred embodiments, a finished tapered cup 20 comprises a plurality of sections 10 comprising relative diameters characterized as: 10a>10b>10c>10d>10e. Specific diameters are provided and illustrated as being measured from an upper portion of each respective section 10. The plurality of sections 10 comprise varying heights, wherein the relative heights can be characterized as: 10c>10d>10b>10e>10a. An internal diameter of a curled section 6, which also comprises a drinking interface, comprises a diameter of between approximately 2.0 and 5.0 inches, and preferably of approximately 3.290 inches. Details Y and Z are indicated on FIG. 5, and are shown in detail in FIGS. 9 and 8, respectively. Various expansion angles are illustrated in FIG. 5, wherein each section 10 expands outwardly along a height of the section 10. As shown, each section 10 comprises a different expansion angle (expressed as a percentage of the diameter over the height of the section). In alternative embodiments, however, it is contemplated that each section 10 comprises the same expansion angle. In the depicted embodiment, the relative expansion angles can be expressed as: 10e>10b>10d>10c. The uppermost section 10a provided in FIG. 5 comprises a straight-walled section that is devoid of an expansion angle.

[0046] The straight wall sections of FIG. 5 are contemplated as being formed by drawing the cup and providing an expansion or increased diameter to each of the sections. In some embodiments, it is contemplated that each of the sections is formed using a draw and, subsequent to the initial formation of each of the drawn sections, one or more expansion dies are provided to expand each of the sections. In other embodiments, it is contemplated that the drawing and expanding of the straight wall sections are performed in an alternating manner wherein a first section is drawn and then expanded, a second section is then drawn and expanded, etc. It is also contemplated that the number of draw and expansion operations need not be equal. For example, multiple expansion steps may be provided on a

portion formed from a single draw operation. Additionally, a section may be drawn and not provided with a corresponding expansion operation.

[0047] FIG. 6 is a top plan view of a finished tapered cup 20 according to the embodiment of FIG. 4. Multiple stepped sections 10 are shown in plan view, and a bottom of the tapered cup 20 comprises a dome 24 in some embodiments.

[0048] FIG. 7 is a detailed view of two finished tapered cups 20 provided in a stacked arrangement, and wherein respective curled portions 6 of each tapered cup 20 are provided with a separation or stand-off height. A stand-off height is provided that comprises a height or distance between successive upper ends of the curled portions 6. In the depicted embodiment, the stand-off height is between approximately 0.00 inches and approximately 1.0 inches. Preferably, the stand-off height is approximately 0.28 inches. The stand-off height provides a user with the ability to grasp and separate stacked cups, for example. Although various embodiments contemplate a stand-off height, such a stand-off feature is not required and alternative embodiments contemplate that such a stand-off is not provided.

[0049] FIG. 8 is a detailed cross-sectional elevation view of a finished tapered cup 20 showing the upper portion of the cup including the curl 6. FIG. 8 is a detailed view of detail Z of FIG. 5. As shown in FIG. 8, a curled portion 6 of the cup comprises a radius of curvature of between approximately 0.010 inches and 0.250 inches. In the depicted embodiment, a preferred radius of curvature comprises a curvature of approximately 0.040 inches. FIG. 8 also provides a step 22 between adjacent sections 10a, 10b of a tapered cup 20. As shown, the step comprises a first radius of curvature of approximately 0.040 inches and a second radius of approximately 0.040 inches, wherein the two radii of curvature each comprise a transition or departure from an adjacent sidewall of the sections 10a, 10b. Although only one step 22 is depicted in FIG. 8, it is contemplated that each step 22 of the tapered cup 20 is provided comprising the same dimensions as the step 22 shown in FIG. 8. The step 22 can be of any dimension or combination of one or more radii.

[0050] FIG. 9 is a detailed cross-sectional elevation view of a finished tapered cup 20 showing the bottom portion of the tapered cup 20 comprising a dome 24. FIG. 9 is a detailed view of detail Y of FIG. 5. FIG. 9 includes various dimensions and details of a tapered cup 20 according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown, the tapered cup 20 comprises a dome 24 in a lower portion of the preform 20. A bottom portion 10e of the cup comprises an outer diameter of between approximately 1.50 and 3.50 inches, and preferably of about 2.349 inches. A radius of curvature R2 is provided as a transition between the bottom section 10e and the dome, wherein the radius of curvature R2 comprises a radius of between approximately 0.010 inches and approximately 0.250 inches. Preferably, the radius of curvature is approximately 0.10 inches. A flat standing surface 30 is provided between the radius R2 and the dome 24, wherein the flat surface 30 comprises a resting or supporting for the finished preform 20. The flat surface 30 generally comprises an annular surface with a width of between approximately 0.0010 inches and 0.125 inches, and preferably of approximately 0.084 inches. The flat surface 30 extends into a domed section 24 comprising multiple radii of curvature. A central portion of the domed feature 24 comprises a radius of approximately 15.0 inches, and the

domed portion 24 transitions to a flat surface 30 as shown. The domed portion 24 and the dimensions thereof may vary in dimensions. In further embodiments, a flat standing surface is not provided.

[0051] As shown in FIG. 9, a bottom section 10e of the cup comprises a gauge or wall thickness of approximately 0.0090 inches, and an adjacent section 10d, comprises a gauge or wall thickness of approximately 0.0040 inches. The bottom section 10e comprises a section of enhances gauge and therefore comprises enhanced durability as the bottom section 10e is intended to contact another surface, such as when the cup is placed on a surface, dropped, etc. In certain embodiments, the cup comprises a single metal thickness. FIG. 10 is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown, the method of FIG. 10 comprises a first step 50 of providing a coil of metal material from which a cup is to be formed. Preferably, the coil provided in step 50 comprises a coil of aluminum stock material. A second step 52 is provided wherein at least one cup is formed from a blank cut from the coil. The cup is preferably formed using a blank and draw operation. Subsequently, a redraw step 54 is provided wherein the cup is subjected to at least one redraw operation. Method steps 50, 52 and 54 provide an initial cup that is ready for further processing according to methods of the methods of the present disclosure.

[0052] The cup provided from the redraw step 54 is further subjected to forming and finishing steps as shown and described herein. In the depicted embodiment of FIG. 10, the cup is subjected to a trimming operation wherein an upper, open end of the cup is cut or trimmed to remove material at step 58. Subsequently, at step 60, the upper trimmed end of the cup is provided with at least one curl (see 6 of FIG. 2, for example). Subsequently, and referring now to step 62, at least one stepped draw operation is performed wherein multiple straight-wall sections are formed in the cup (see FIG. 3, for example). The cup is then expanded via at least one expansion operation in step 64. In some embodiments, the expansion step 64 comprises expanding each of the straight wall sections to a larger diameter using one or more dies with a tapered profile. A doming operation 66 is then performed to provide a dome in a bottom portion of the cup. The dome is probably provided to enhance the structural integrity and stability of the cup. The series of steps described herein and referenced as sequence 56 comprise steps that are contemplated as being re-ordered or eliminated depending on design, customer requirement, and/or machine technology. While at least one embodiment contemplates performing the steps as illustrated in FIG. 10, it is also contemplated that one or more of the steps indicated by 56 may be eliminated or re-sequenced.

[0053] Subsequent to the sequence illustrated as 56 in FIG. 10, the cup is then subjected to a washing step 68. After washing, the cup is decorated at step 70, provided with a bottom coat at step 72, and/or an internal coating ("IC") spray step 74. The plurality of method steps indicated by 76 in FIG. 10 are contemplated as being re-ordered or eliminated depending on design, customer requirement, and/or machine technology. For example, depending on customer needs and requirement, the method may terminate after a decoration step 70.

[0054] FIG. 11 is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to another embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown, an initial step 80 is provided

wherein a coated coil is provided in the form of stock material. Preferably, the coil in step **80** comprises coated aluminum. However, various embodiments of the present disclosure provide and contemplate a “coated” coil that comprises an epoxy, film, polymer or other “paint” cured, laminated or extruded to a surface of the metal using various methods. At least one cup is formed from the coil at step **82**, the cup being formed from a blank sheet of material cut from the coil and a draw die. The initial cup formed in step **82** is then subjected to at least one redraw operation in step **84**. Having formed an initial cup, the process advances to step **88** where an upper, open portion of the cup is trimmed in step **88**, subsequently provided with a curl at step **90**, subjected to a stepped redraw operation at step **92** to form at least one straight-walled portion, expanded in diameter at step **94**, and provided with a bottom dome through a doming operation at step **96**. Steps **88-96** of FIG. **11** are collectively referred to as sequence **86**. The steps of this sequence **86** are contemplated as being re-ordered or eliminated depending on design, customer requirements, and/or machinery.

[**0055**] Subsequent to the method steps of the depicted sequence **86**, the cup is then subjected to a rinsing or washing operation **100** and a decorating step **102**. In FIG. **11**, washing and decorating are depicted as a final sequence **98** in which the cup is finished. It is also contemplated, however, that the sequence **98** can be provided subsequent to the redraw step **84** and prior to sequence **86**.

[**0056**] FIG. **12** is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to another embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown in FIG. **12**, a plurality of initial cup forming steps are provided wherein a coil **104** is provided. At least one cup is formed from the coil material at step **106**, preferably by a blank and draw operation. A redraw step **108** is provided to further form the cup, which is then provided within a bodymaker at step **110** to form the final cup height. An upper portion of the cup is then trimmed at step **112**.

[**0057**] The trimmed cup is then preferably subjected to a washing operation **114**. A decorating and/or coating sequence **116** is provided subsequent to washing, the decorating sequence comprising the steps of decorating the cup at step **118**, providing a bottom coat **120**, and/or providing an internal coating to the cup at step **122**. One or more of the steps of the coating sequence **116** may be reordered, eliminated, and/or moved after a rinsing step **132**.

[**0058**] Preferably subsequent to the coating sequence **116**, final forming steps **124** are provided. The final forming steps preferably comprise at least one of providing a curl to the trimmed portion of the cup at step **126**, performing at least one stepped draw operation **128** to form one or more straight walled section in the cup, and performing an expansion step **130** to expand the diameter of the straight walled section(s). The final forming steps **124** are contemplated as being reordered or eliminated depending on user requirements. A rinsing step **132** is provided as a finishing step. However, as previously noted, one or more steps of the coating sequence **116** may be re-ordered such that they occur subsequent to the rinsing step **132**. The embodiment of FIG. **12** contemplates providing a dome in a bottom portion of the cup. A doming operation **134** is provided and is contemplated as occurring during the bodymaker operation **110** or prior to rinsing as a final, separate operation.

[**0059**] FIG. **13** is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to another embodiment of the

present disclosure. As shown in FIG. **13**, a cup is provided at step **140** and is preferably formed from a coil of blank aluminum. The cup is then redrawn at step **142**, wherein the cup is subjected to one or more redraw operations. The cup is then fed to a bodymaker at step **144** to form a final cup height and diameter. Subsequently, the cup is trimmed at step **146** wherein an excess cup height created from the redrawing and/or bodymaker operation is trimmed. A cleaning and decorating sequence **150** is provided wherein the cup is subjected to at least one of a rinsing step at **152** and a decorating step **154**. The steps of the cleaning and decorating sequence **150** may be moved after the expansion **162** or doming step **164** provided in FIG. **13**.

[**0060**] The cup is then advanced to finishing sequence **156**, wherein the finishing sequence comprises providing a curl to the trimmed portion of the cup at step **158**, providing a stepped redraw operation **160**, providing an expansion operation **162** and providing a dome in a bottom portion of the cup at step **164**. although the doming step **164** is contemplated as occurring a final step in the embodiment of FIG. **13**, it is also contemplated that the doming step may occur within the bodymaker at step **144**, making the expansion operation **162** the final step of the embodiment of FIG. **13**. The steps of the finishing sequence **156** of FIG. **13** may be re-ordered or eliminated depending on design, customer requirement, and/or machine technology.

[**0061**] FIG. **14** is a flow chart depicting a method of forming a metal cup according to another embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown in FIG. **14**, a cup is provided from a slug of blank material. As shown, an initial step **170** comprising providing a slug of material (e.g. aluminum). The slug is impact extruded at step **172** to form a cup. An upper end of the cup is trimmed to a preferred height at step **174** and subsequently brushed and washed at step **176** and **178**, respectively. In some embodiments, a step of ironing the impact-extruded cup is provided after impact extrusion (step **172**) and prior to trimming (step **174**). A washed cup **178** is then provided and subjected to a coating and decorating sequence **180** as shown. The coating and decorating sequence **180** of FIG. **14** comprises the steps of decorating the cup **182**, providing a bottom coat to the cup **184** and providing an internal coating (e.g. sprayed coating) to the cup **186**. The steps of the coating and decorating sequence **180** may be reordered and/or may be provided subsequent to the rinsing step **198**.

[**0062**] After the coating and decorating sequence **180**, the method of FIG. **14** proceeds to a finishing sequence **188** that comprises the steps of curling an upper, trimmed portion of the cup at step **190**, performing a stepped draw operation **192**, providing an expansion operation using one or more expansion dies **194** and forming a dome **196** in a bottom portion of the cup. The steps of the finishing sequence may be re-ordered or eliminated depending on user preference, design, customer requirements, and/or available machine technology. Subsequent to the finishing sequence **188**, the cup is washed and/or rinsed at step **198**.

[**0063**] Various features and embodiments of a metal cup have been provided herein. It will be recognized, however, that various features are not necessarily specific to certain embodiments and may be provided on any one or more embodiments. The present disclosure and embodiments provided herein are not mutually exclusive and may be combined, substituted, and omitted. The scope of the invention

(s) provided herein is thus not limited to any particular embodiment, drawing, or particular arrangement of features. **[0064]** While various embodiments of the present disclosure have been described in detail, it is apparent that modifications and alterations of those embodiments will occur to those skilled in the art. However, it is to be expressly understood that such modifications and alterations are within the scope and spirit of the present disclosure. Further, the invention(s) described herein are capable of other embodiments and of being practiced or of being carried out in various ways. In addition, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology used herein is for the purposes of description and should not be regarded as limiting. The use of “including,” “comprising,” or “adding” and variations thereof herein are meant to encompass the items listed thereafter and equivalents thereof, as well as, additional items.

What is claimed is:

1. A tapered metallic cup comprising: an upper end and a lower end, and a height extending between the upper end and the lower end; the upper end comprising a curled, partially curled, or throttled lip and an opening; a plurality of tapered sections provided between the upper end and the lower end, with a step provided between each of the tapered sections; and wherein each of the tapered sections comprises a substantially constant wall thickness and a tapered profile; and wherein adjacent tapered sections of the plurality of tapered sections comprise successively smaller diameters, and wherein the step provided between each of the tapered sections comprises a transition in diameter.
2. The tapered metallic cup of claim 1, wherein the lower end comprises a domed portion.
3. The tapered metallic cup of claim 1, wherein the height is between approximately 4.0 inches and approximately 7.0 inches.
4. The tapered metallic cup of claim 1, wherein the cup comprises at least three tapered sections.
5. The tapered metallic cup of claim 1, wherein a maximum inner diameter of the cup comprises a diameter of at least approximately 3.0 inches.
6. The tapered metallic cup of claim 1, wherein a minimum inner diameter of the cup comprises a diameter of not more than approximately 2.50 inches.
7. The tapered metallic cup of claim 1, wherein a minimum wall thickness of the plurality of tapered sections comprises a thickness of less than approximately 0.0070 inches.
8. The tapered metallic cup of claim 7, wherein the lower end of the cup comprises an annular standing surface, and wherein the domed portion is provided within the annular standing surface.
9. A tapered metallic cup comprising: an upper end and a lower end, and a height extending between the upper end and the lower end; the upper end comprising a curled portion; an opening at least partially defined by a circumference of the curled portion;

a plurality of tapered sections provided between the upper end and the lower end, with a step provided between each of the tapered sections; and

wherein each of the tapered sections comprises a substantially constant wall thickness and a tapered profile; and wherein adjacent tapered sections of the plurality of tapered sections comprise successively smaller diameters, and wherein the step provided between each of the tapered sections comprises a transition in diameter.

10. The tapered metallic cup of claim 9, wherein the lower end comprises a domed portion.

11. The tapered metallic cup of claim 9, wherein the height is between approximately 4.0 inches and approximately 7.0 inches.

12. The tapered metallic cup of claim 9, wherein the cup comprises at least three tapered sections.

13. The tapered metallic cup of claim 9, wherein a maximum inner diameter of the cup comprises a diameter of at least approximately 3.0 inches.

14. The tapered metallic cup of claim 9, wherein a minimum inner diameter of the cup comprises a diameter of not more than approximately 2.50 inches.

15. The tapered metallic cup of claim 9, wherein a minimum wall thickness of the plurality of tapered sections comprises a thickness of less than approximately 0.0070 inches.

16. The tapered metallic cup of claim 15, wherein the lower end of the cup comprises an annular standing surface, and wherein the domed portion is provided within the annular standing surface.

17. A tapered metallic cup comprising:

an upper end, a lower end and a height; the upper end comprising a curled portion; an opening provided at the upper end;

a plurality of tapered sections provided between the upper end and the lower end, with a step provided between each of the tapered sections; and

wherein each of the tapered sections comprises a substantially constant wall thickness and a tapered profile;

wherein adjacent tapered sections of the plurality of tapered sections comprise successively smaller diameters, and wherein the step provided between each of the tapered sections comprises a transition in diameter;

wherein the lower end comprises a bottom portion with an outer diameter of between approximately 1.50 and 3.50 inches; and

wherein the bottom portion comprises a flat standing surface and a domed section.

18. The tapered metallic cup of claim 17, wherein the bottom portion comprises a wall thickness of approximately 0.0090 inches.

19. The tapered metallic cup of claim 17, wherein a minimum wall thickness of the plurality of tapered sections comprises a thickness of less than approximately 0.0070 inches.

20. The tapered metallic cup of claim 17, wherein the height is between approximately 4.0 inches and approximately 7.0 inches.

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