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(54) HYGIENIC PRODUCE BAGS AND BAGS OF VARIED SIZES FOR VARIED USES

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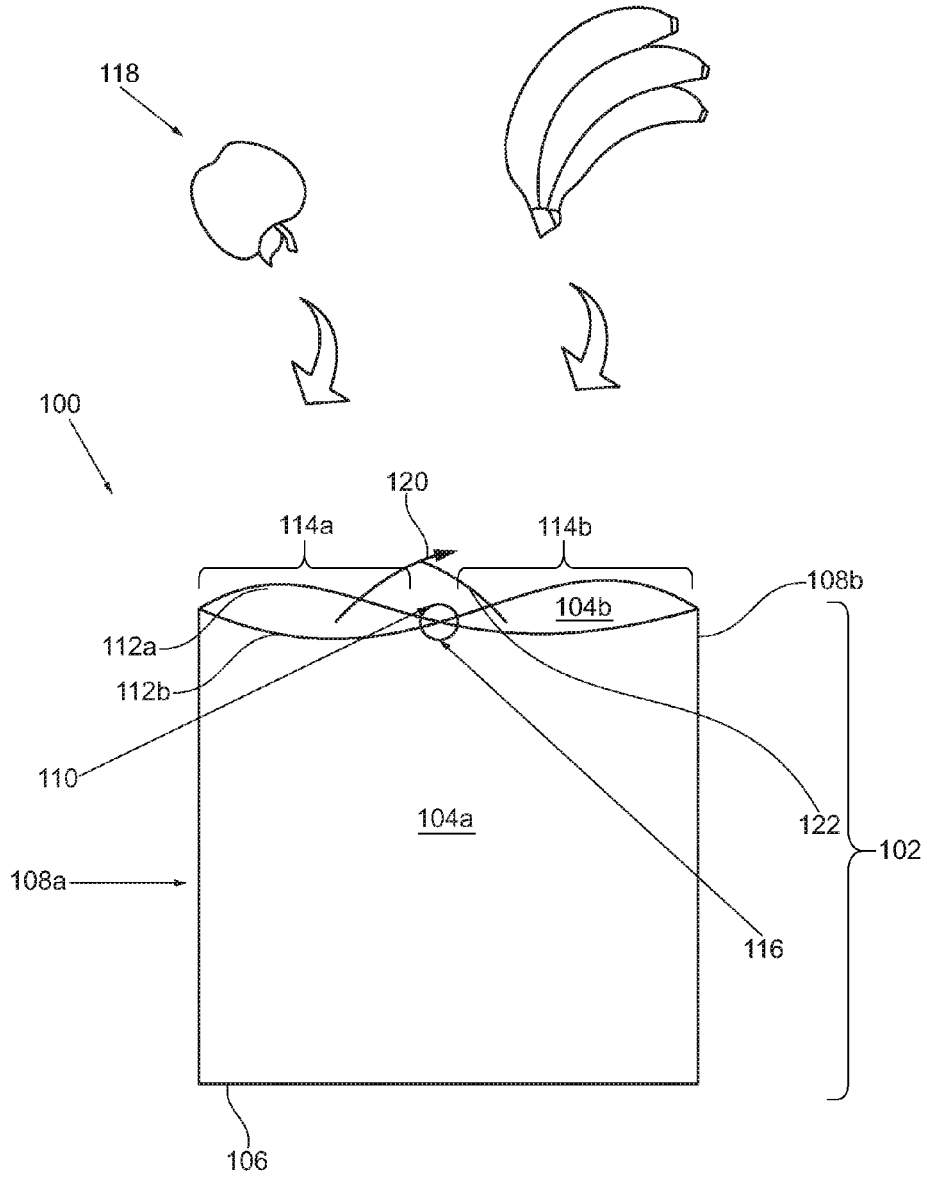
(57) **ABSTRACT**

An easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag and method of saliva-free opening provides enables facilitated opening of the bag for loading produce inside. The bag has thin, transparent sidewalls with four sides. The sides include a closed side, a pair of sealed lateral sides, and an openable side. The openable side has a first edge and a second edge that separate and come together to create an open position and a closed position, respectively. The openable side has a connected center region, where the first and second edges join; and a pair of open outer regions, where the first and second edges are separated. This separation creates a visual que for which end of bag is for loading fresh produce. By placing the fingers in the openings at the open outer regions, and prying the first and second edges



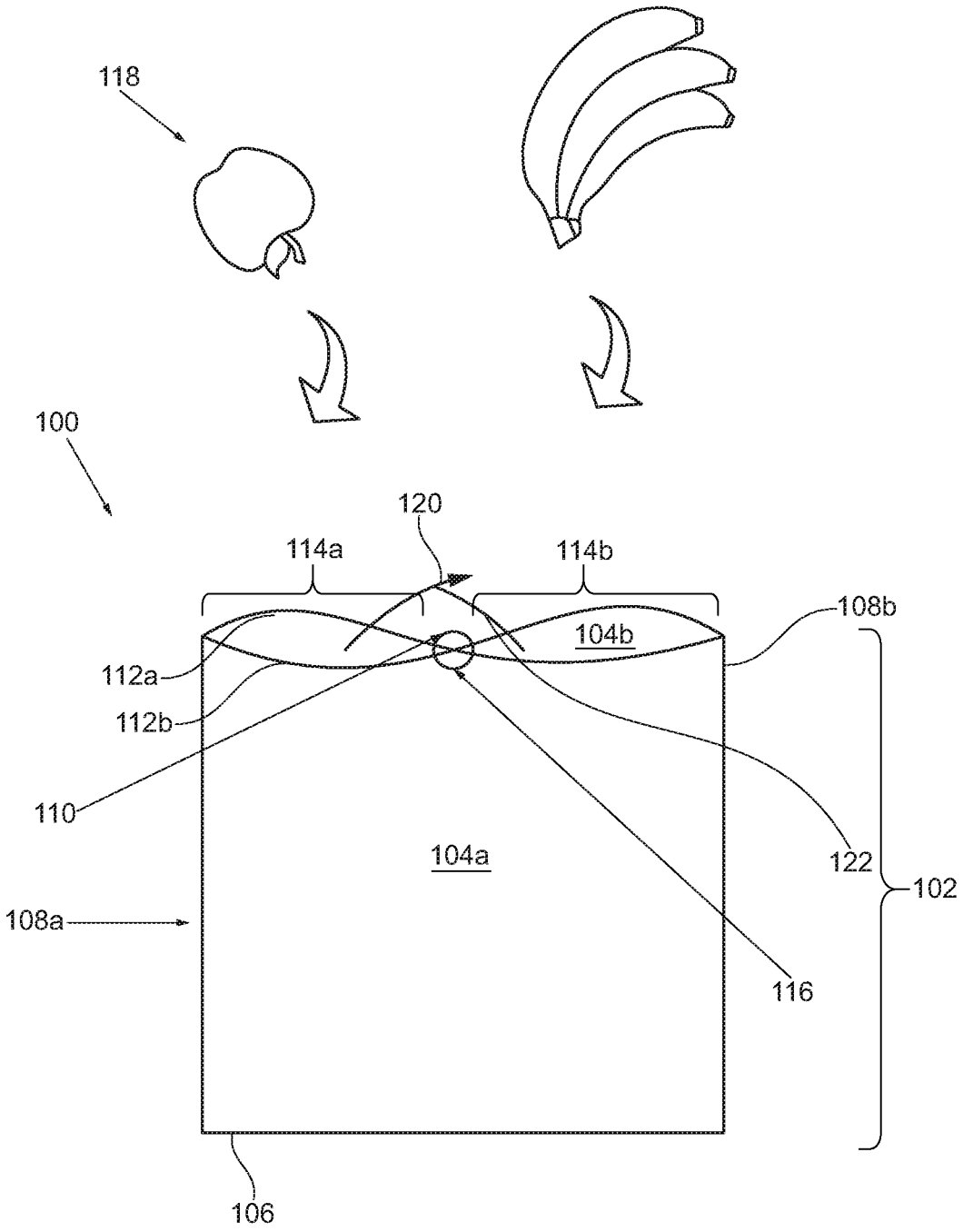

118
100
120
114a
114b
108b
104b
112a
112b
110
122
102
104a
108a
116
106

FIG. 1

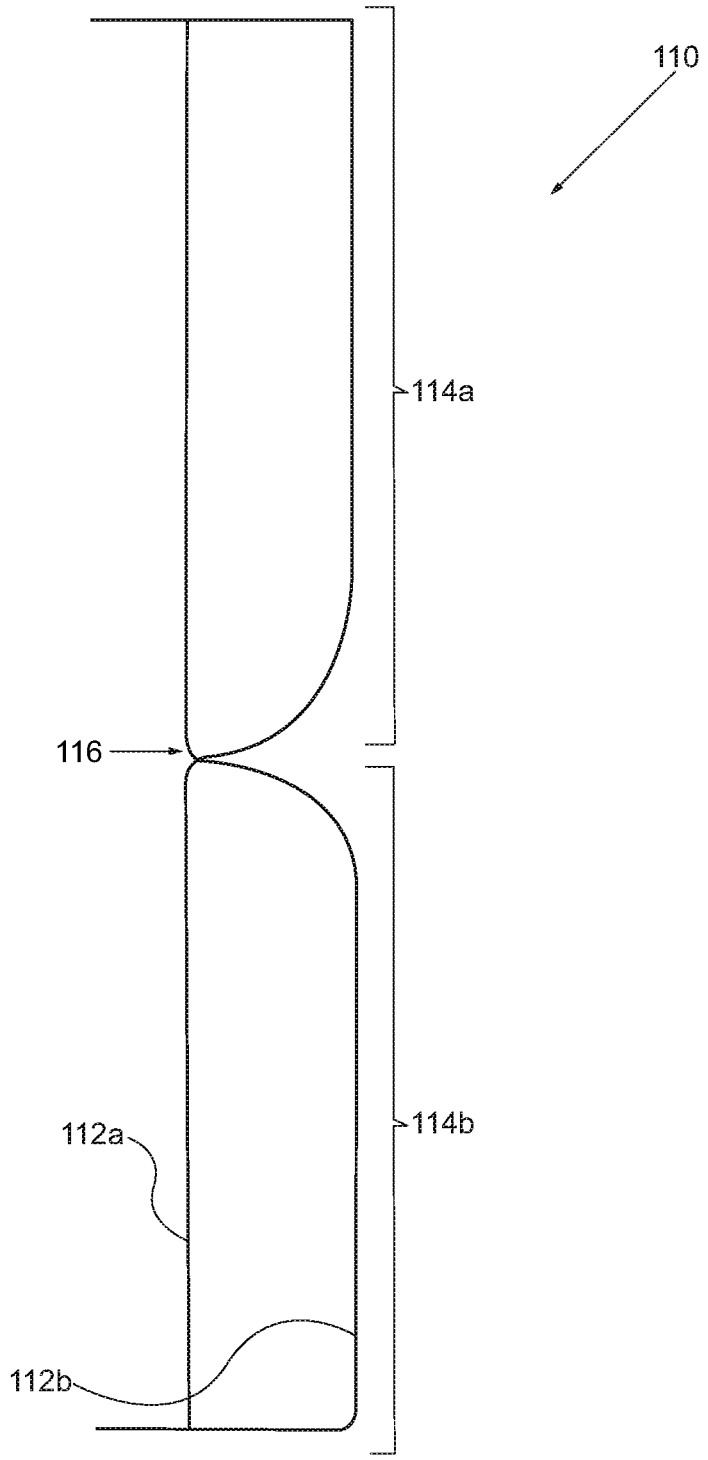


FIG. 2

HYGIENIC PRODUCE BAGS AND BAGS OF VARIED SIZES FOR VARIED USES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to an easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag and method of saliva-free opening. More so, the present invention relates to a plastic produce bag having thin, transparent sidewalls with four sides, including: a closed side, a pair of sealed lateral sides, and an openable side having a first edge and a second edge defined by a connected center region and a pair of open outer regions; whereby placing the fingers in the openings at the open outer regions and prying the first and second edges apart separates the connected center region, and the first and second edges to an open position; whereby separating the edges in this manner does not require lateral motion, friction, and saliva on the fingers which can be unhygienic.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The following background information may present examples of specific aspects of the prior art (e.g., without limitation, approaches, facts, or common wisdom) that, while expected to be helpful to further educate the reader as to additional aspects of the prior art, is not to be construed as limiting the present invention, or any embodiments thereof, to anything stated or implied therein or inferred thereupon.

[0003] Typically, plastic produce bags and the dispensers that dispense them are utilized in produce outlets and supermarkets. Such bags are configured to store fresh produce, fruit, and spices. Such plastic bags are generally configured with sidewalls fabricated from thin, transparent plastic having a closed end edge, a pair of closed side edges, and a top edge that is semi-sealed, but can be opened by creating lateral friction on the surface. Once the top edge is opened, the fresh produce can be placed inside. Often, a tie or wire is used to cinch the bag closed. Though a zip-lock is also available on some types of plastic bags. The plastic bags are often dispensed from a roller, or a standard bag hanger, in which the bags are pulled off individually.

[0004] Unfortunately, the thin nature of the sidewalls tends to cling together, making them difficult to separate. This also creates difficulties for opening the top edge of the bag. Further, the top edge and the bottom edge can be difficult to identify, since they look similar. This makes it difficult to identify the proper end for opening. Consequently, the user has to lick the fingers to create sufficient grip on the sidewalls of the plastic bags. This creates a situation in which saliva forms on the sides of the bags, and also the saliva sticks to fresh produce that is touched by the user. Often, the user may touch multiple pieces of produce without putting them in the bag. This creates an unhygienic situation where the produce and the bags are covered with germs from saliva of different users.

[0005] Other proposals have involved plastic produce bags used in supermarkets and the like. The problem with these plastic bags is that they do not separate easily at the open edge, so as to enable easy opening thereof. Also, the top and bottom edges are hard to identify. Even though the above cited plastic produce bags meet some of the needs of the market, an easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag and method of saliva-free opening having thin, transparent sidewalls with four sides, including: a closed side, a pair of sealed lateral sides, and an openable side having a first edge and a second edge defined by a connected center region and a pair of open outer regions; whereby placing the fingers in the openings at the open outer regions and prying the first and second edges apart separates the connected center region, and the first and second edges to an open position, is still desired.

SUMMARY

[0006] Illustrative embodiments of the disclosure are generally directed to an easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag and method of saliva-free opening. The plastic produce bag provides a visual means to enable facilitated opening for loading produce and other items inside the produce bag. The plastic produce bag has thin, transparent sidewalls with four sides. The sides include a closed side, a pair of sealed lateral sides, and an openable side.

[0007] The openable side has a first edge and a second edge that separate and come together to create an open position and a closed position, respectively. The openable side is also defined by a connected center region, where the first and second edges join; and a pair of open outer regions, where the first and second edges are separated. This separation creates a visual que as to which end of the bag is for loading the fresh produce.

[0008] Thus, by placing the fingers, or other object, in the openings at the open outer regions, and prying the first and second edges apart, the first and second edges separate to an open position. Opening the edges in this manner does not require lateral motion, friction, and saliva on the fingers to separate the openable side.

[0009] In one aspect, the bag comprises a produce bag.

[0010] In another aspect, the bag is at least partially transparent.

[0011] In another aspect, the bag is configured to receive at least one fresh produce.

[0012] In another aspect, the sidewalls have a rectangular shape.

[0013] In another aspect, the closed side and the openable side of the bag are parallel.

[0014] In another aspect, the pair of sealed lateral sides are parallel.

[0015] In another aspect, the closed side and the openable side of the bag are separated by a perforation.

[0016] In another aspect, the connected center region and the open outer regions form a figure eight shape.

[0017] In another aspect, the connected center region joins the first and second edges through at least one of the following: a weld, an adhesive, a wire, a magnet, and a friction fit mechanism.

[0018] In another aspect, the open outer regions are at opposing ends of the openable side of the bag.

[0019] In another aspect, the bag further comprises a tie or wire to cinch the openable side of the bag closed.

[0020] One objective of the present invention is to facilitate opening of a produce bag with the fingers.

[0021] Another objective is to visually identify the openable side of the bag.

[0022] Yet another objective is to provide an inexpensive to manufacture produce bag.

[0023] Other systems, devices, methods, features, and advantages will be or become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following drawings and detailed description. It is intended that all such additional

systems, methods, features, and advantages be included within this description, be within the scope of the present disclosure, and be protected by the accompanying claims and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0024] The invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0025] FIG. **1** illustrates a perspective view of an exemplary an easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag, showing the openable side with the edges ready for opening, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; and

[0026] FIG. **2** illustrates a top view of the easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag, showing the edges from a bird's eye view, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0027] Like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the various views of the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0028] The following detailed description is merely exemplary in nature and is not intended to limit the described embodiments or the application and uses of the described embodiments. As used herein, the word "exemplary" or "illustrative" means "serving as an example, instance, or illustration." Any implementation described herein as "exemplary" or "illustrative" is not necessarily to be construed as preferred or advantageous over other implementations. All of the implementations described below are exemplary implementations provided to enable persons skilled in the art to make or use the embodiments of the disclosure and are not intended to limit the scope of the disclosure, which is defined by the claims. For purposes of description herein, the terms "upper," "lower," "left," "rear," "right," "front," "vertical," "horizontal," and derivatives thereof shall relate to the invention as oriented in FIG. **1**. Furthermore, there is no intention to be bound by any expressed or implied theory presented in the preceding technical field, background, brief summary or the following detailed description. It is also to be understood that the specific devices and processes illustrated in the attached drawings, and described in the following specification, are simply exemplary embodiments of the inventive concepts defined in the appended claims. Specific dimensions and other physical characteristics relating to the embodiments disclosed herein are therefore not to be considered as limiting, unless the claims expressly state otherwise.

[0029] An easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag **100** and method of saliva-free opening is referenced in FIGS. **1-2**. The plastic produce bag **100** is configured to store at least one fresh produce **118**, fruit, meat, nuts, and spices. The produce bag **100** is generally configured with square or rectangular sidewalls **104***a-b* that are fabricated from thin, transparent plastic. In some embodiments, the sidewalls **104***a-b* may be fabricated from materials including, without limitation high-density polyethylene, low-density polyethylene, and a plastic film known in the art of packaging.

[0030] The sidewalls **104***a-b* are welded at the sides **106**, **108***a-b* to form a container-like body **102**. The body **102** has an inner cavity that retains the fresh produce **118**. The inner cavity is sized and dimensioned to receive fresh produce **118** commonly found in supermarkets and grocery stores.

[0031] Looking at FIG. **1**, the sidewalls **104***a-b* of the body **102** are defined by a closed side **106**, a pair of lateral sides **108***a-b,* and a top openable side **110** that is semi-sealed, but can be opened by prying the edges **112***a,* **112***b* apart in the outer open regions **114***a*, **114***b* thereof. Once the top openable side **110** is separated to enable access to the inner cavity of the body **102**, the fresh produce **118** can be placed inside. Often, a tie **122** or wire is used to cinch the bag **100** closed. The outer open regions **114***a*, **114***b* also provide a visual means to enable facilitated opening for loading produce and other items inside the body **102**.

[0032] In one possible embodiment shown in FIG. **1**, the plastic produce bag **100** has thin, transparent sidewalls **104***a-b* with four sides **106**, **108***a*, **108***b*, **110**. The sides include a closed side **106**, a pair of sealed lateral sides **108***a-b,* and an openable side **110**. In one embodiment, the closed side **106** and the openable side **110** of the bag **100** are parallel. In another embodiment, the pair of sealed lateral sides **108***a-b* are parallel. These parallel alignments create the rectangular or square shape of the body **102**.

[0033] The openable side **110** has a first edge **112***a* and a second edge **112***b* that separate and come together to create an open position **120** and a closed position, respectively. The openable side **110** is also defined by a connected center region **116**, where the first and second edges **112***a-b* detachably join. FIG. **2** illustrates a top view of the easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag, showing the edges from a bird's eye view. This shows the top part of each side.

[0034] The connected center region **116** joins the first and second edges **112***a-b* in a weak connection that can be broken by the fingers prying the edges together at a 90° separation, an orthogonal, or at a relative angle, with minimal force. This connectivity at the connected center region **116** may include a weld, an adhesive, a wire, a magnet, and a friction fit mechanism. However, any means to create this connection at the edges may also be used.

[0035] The openable side **110** of the body **102** is also defined by a pair of open outer regions **114***a-b,* where the first and second edges **112***a,* **112***b* are separated. As illustrated in FIG. **1**, the open outer regions **114***a-b* are at opposing ends of the openable side **110** of the bag **100**. Thus, the unique configuration of the edges **112***a-b* creates a connected center region **116** and the open outer regions **114***a-b* form an elongated figure eight shape.

[0036] The open outer regions **114***a-b* create sufficient space to allow the fingers or an elongated object to generate opposing, 180° forces that create separation of the edges. This force may simply be a gentle yanking effort. Thus, such outer openings at the edges **112***a-b* negate the need for lateral separation of the sidewalls near the edges, which requires traction—often by wetting the fingers with saliva. Further, the separation at the openable side **110** works to create a visual que, informing which end (closed or openable) of the bag **100** is the appropriate end for loading/unloading the fresh produce **118**.

[0037] In opening the openable side **110** of the body **102**, the open outer edges **114***a*, **114***b* are the parts of the plastic bag that serve as its opener. The two outer edges **114***a-b* is pulled in opposite directions to open the body **102** of the bag by holding **114***a* with the thumb and the index finger (or any finger) of the left hand and holding **114***b* with the thumb and the index finger (or any finger) of the right hand. When the

fingers are in place, outer edge **114***a* is pulled away from the body and outer edge **114***b* is pulled towards the body (opposite direction motion). This is an axial motion separation. Consequently, the plastic bag opens very easily without applying saliva on it or putting pressure at the top of the bag.

[0038] Thus, in operation, a method of using the produce bag **100** includes an initial step of detaching one body **102** from a roll of other bodies where the openable side **110** and closed end **106** are perforated, and thereby separable. Or in other embodiments, the body **102** can simply be yanked off a bag dispenser, hook, or other bag retention mechanism known in the art. Another Step of the method may include thrusting the fingers, or other linear object, in the openings at the open outer regions **114***a-b,* and prying the first and second edges **112***a-b* apart. Consequently, the first and second edges **112***a-b* are separated to an open position **120**.

[0039] It is significant to note that opening the openable side in this manner does not require lateral motion, friction, and saliva on the sidewalls and fingers, creating a more hygienic bag **100**. Nonetheless, once the openable side **110** is fully separated at the edges, another Step comprises filling the body **102** with at least one fresh produce **118**, or other appropriate item. In one alternative embodiment, the bag **100** further comprises a tie **122** or wire to cinch the openable side of the body **102**. The tie **122** is configured to wrap around the openable side to prevent air, moisture, or contaminants from entering the inner cavity of the body **102**.

[0040] In conclusion, an easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag **100** and method of saliva-free opening provides enables facilitated opening of the bag **100** for loading produce inside. The bag **100** has thin, transparent sidewalls **104***a-b* with four sides. The sides include a closed side **106**, a pair of sealed lateral sides **108***a-b,* and an openable side **110**. The openable side **110** has a first edge **112***a* and a second edge **112***b* that separate and come together to create an open position **120** and a closed position, respectively.

[0041] In some embodiments, the openable side **110** has a connected center region **116**, where the first and second edge **112***bs* join; and a pair of open outer regions **114***a-b,* where the first and second edge **112***bs* are separated. This separation creates a visual que for which end of bag **100** is for loading fresh produce **118**. By placing the fingers in the openings at the open outer regions **114***a-b,* and prying the first and second edge **112***bs* apart, the first and second edges **112***a-b* separate to the open position **120**.

[0042] These and other advantages of the invention will be further understood and appreciated by those skilled in the art by reference to the following written specification, claims and appended drawings.

[0043] Because many modifications, variations, and changes in detail can be made to the described preferred embodiments of the invention, it is intended that all matters in the foregoing description and shown in the accompanying drawings be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense. Thus, the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalence.

1. An easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag, the bag comprising:

a body having:

a pair of sidewalls at least partially joined at four sides, the sides comprising a closed side, a pair of sealed lateral sides, and an openable side,

the openable side comprising a first edge and a second edge,

the openable side being defined by a connected center region, where the first and second edges join,

the openable side further being defined by a pair of open outer regions, where the first and second edges are in a spaced-apart relationship,

whereby prying the edges apart until the edges separate at the connected center region forms an open bag position.

2. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the sidewalls are at least partially transparent.

3. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the sidewalls have a rectangular shape.

4. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the closed side and the openable side are parallel.

5. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the pair of sealed lateral sides are parallel.

6. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the connected center region and the open outer regions form a figure eight shape.

7. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the connected center region of the openable side joins the first and second edges through at least one of the following: a weld, an adhesive, a wire, a magnet, and a friction fit mechanism.

8. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the open outer regions are at opposing ends of the openable side of the body.

9. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the closed side and the openable side are perforated.

10. The bag of claim **1**, wherein the body is sized and dimensioned to receive at least one fresh produce.

11. The bag of claim **1**, further comprising a tie operable to cinch the openable side.

12. An easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag, the bag comprising:

a body having:

a pair of sidewalls having a rectangular shape, the sidewalls being at least partially transparent, the sidewalls at least partially joined at four sides, the sides comprising a closed side, a pair of sealed lateral sides, and an openable side,

the openable side comprising a first edge and a second edge,

the openable side being defined by a connected center region, where the first and second edges join,

the openable side further being defined by a pair of open outer regions, where the first and second edges are in a spaced-apart relationship, the open outer regions disposed at opposite ends of the openable side,

whereby prying the edges apart until the edges separate at the connected center region forms an open bag position.

13. The bag of claim **12**, wherein the closed side and the openable side are parallel.

14. The bag of claim **12**, wherein the pair of sealed lateral sides are parallel.

15. The bag of claim **12**, wherein the connected center region and the open outer regions form a figure eight shape.

16. The bag of claim **12**, wherein the connected center region of the openable side joins the first and second edges through at least one of the following: a weld, an adhesive, a wire, a magnet, and a friction fit mechanism.

17. The bag of claim **12**, wherein the closed side and the openable side are perforated.

18. The bag of claim **12**, wherein the body is sized and dimensioned to receive at least one fresh produce.

19. The bag of claim **12**, further comprising a tie operable to cinch the openable side.

20. An easy-open hygienic plastic produce bag, the bag comprising:

a body having:

a pair of sidewalls having a rectangular shape, the sidewalls being at least partially transparent, the sidewalls at least partially joined at four sides, the sides comprising a closed side, a pair of sealed lateral sides, and an openable side, the closed side and the openable side being perforated,

the closed side and the openable side being parallel,

the pair of sealed lateral sides being parallel,

the openable side comprising a first edge and a second edge,

the openable side being defined by a connected center region, where the first and second edges join,

the openable side further being defined by a pair of open outer regions, where the first and second edges are in a spaced-apart relationship, the open outer regions disposed at opposite ends of the openable side,

whereby prying the edges apart until the edges separate at the connected center region forms an open bag position; and

a tie operable to cinch the openable side.

* * * * *