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**Lee**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2014/0018943 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Jan. 16, 2014**(54) **SEASONING DISPENSING DEVICE FOR AN  
INTERNET-LINKED COOKING ASSISTANT  
SYSTEM**(76) Inventor: **Ho Lee**, Siheung-si Kyeonggi-do (KR)(21) Appl. No.: **13/823,523**(22) PCT Filed: **Sep. 14, 2011**(86) PCT No.: **PCT/KR2011/006759**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to an Internet-linked cooking assistant system that includes a digital chef providing continuously updated recipe information, and an automatic seasoning dispensing unit for storing and automatically dispensing seasonings to the outside, wherein the Internet-linked cooking assistant system comprises: seasoning containers respectively installed on the digital chef and defining a dispensing hole through which seasoning is dispensed; a screw shaft movably and rotatably installed on a dispensing hole of a seasoning container to open and close the dispensing hole; dispensing means coupled to the screw shaft and moving the screw shaft, so as to rotate the screw shaft and dispense seasoning; and rotating means for rotating the digital chef and selecting a seasoning container. By being able to supply a more accurate amount of seasoning stored in a seasoning container, a precise amount of seasoning can be dispensed according to provided cooking information and the number of servings, so that the same taste can always be replicated for a certain dish.

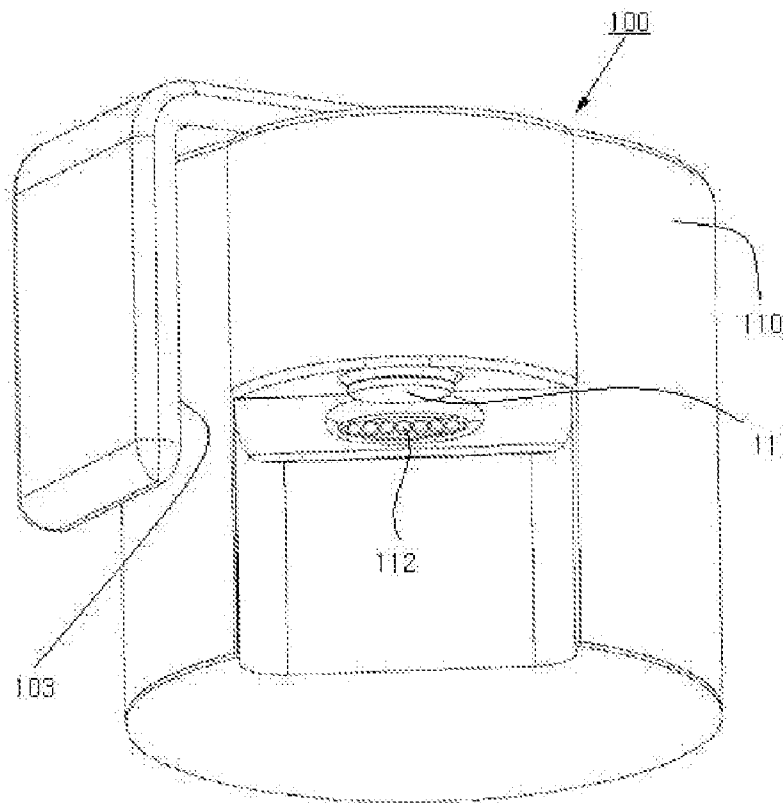


FIG. 1

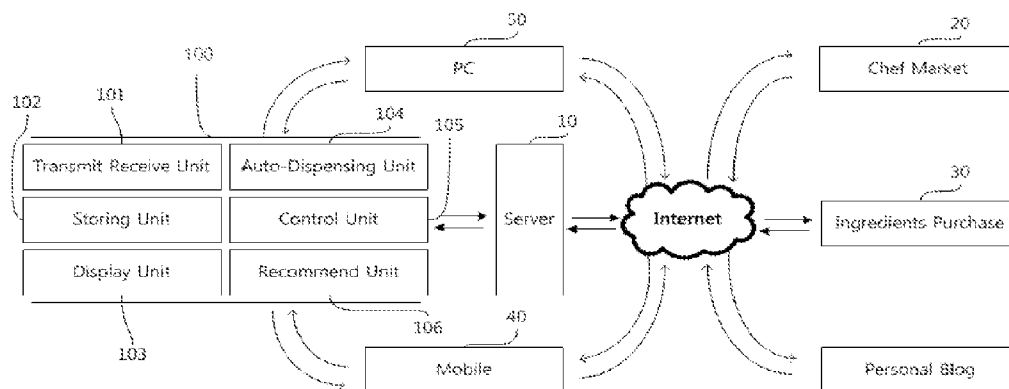
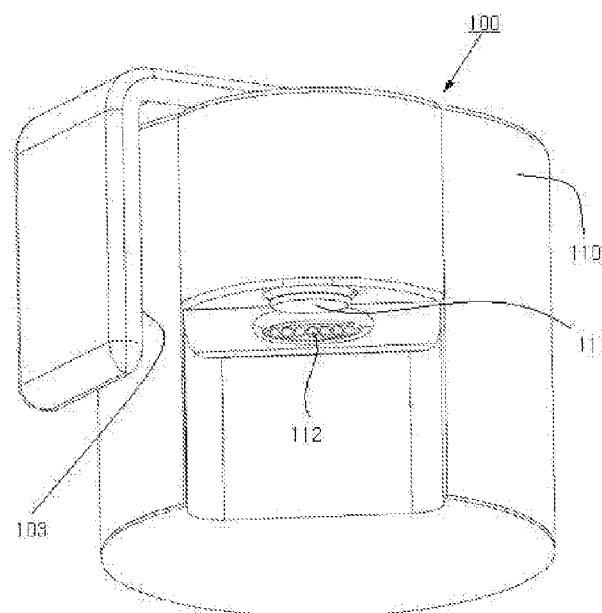
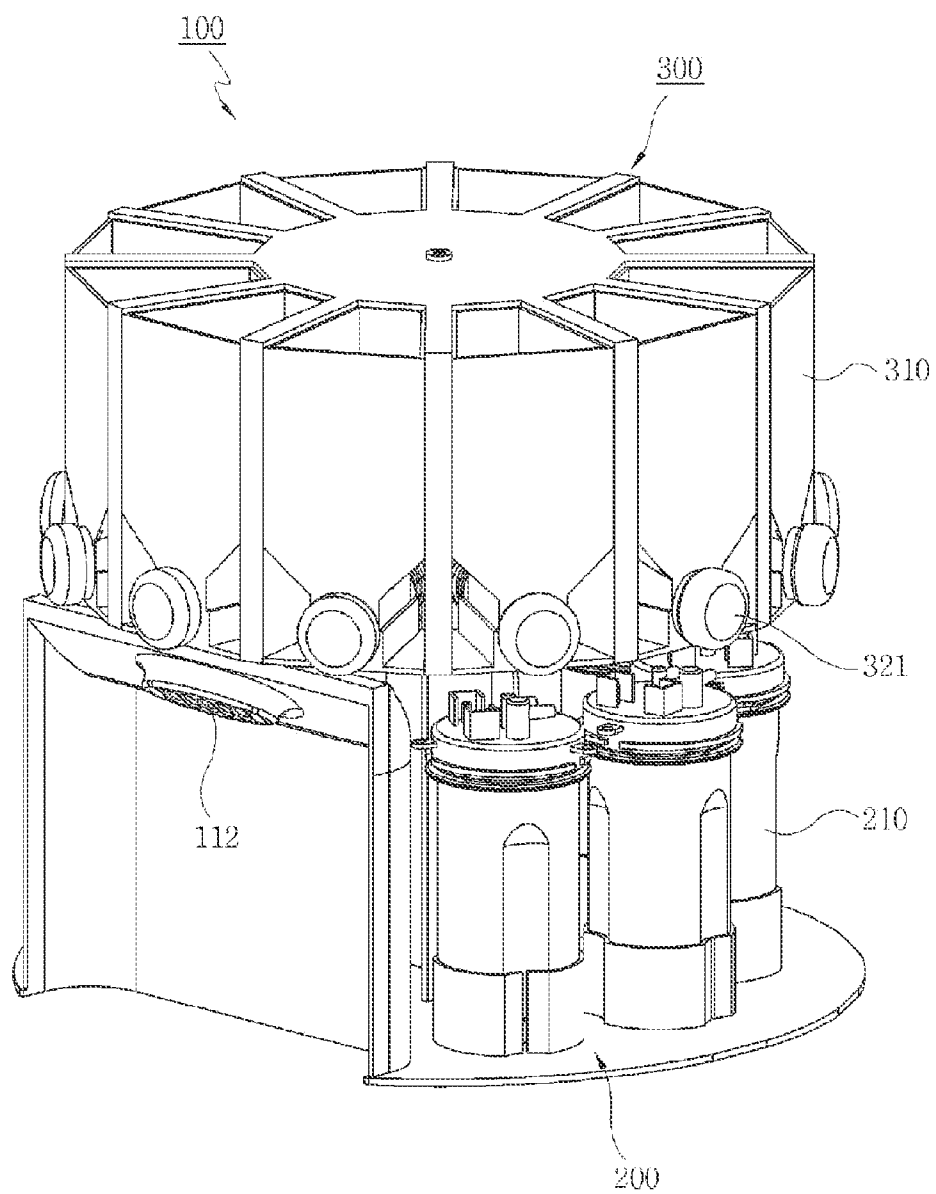


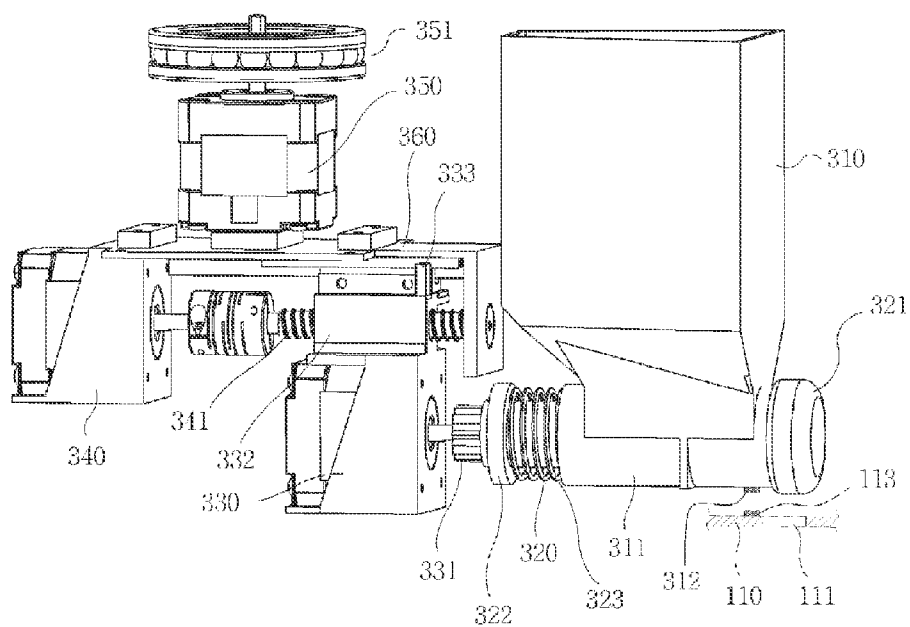
FIG. 2



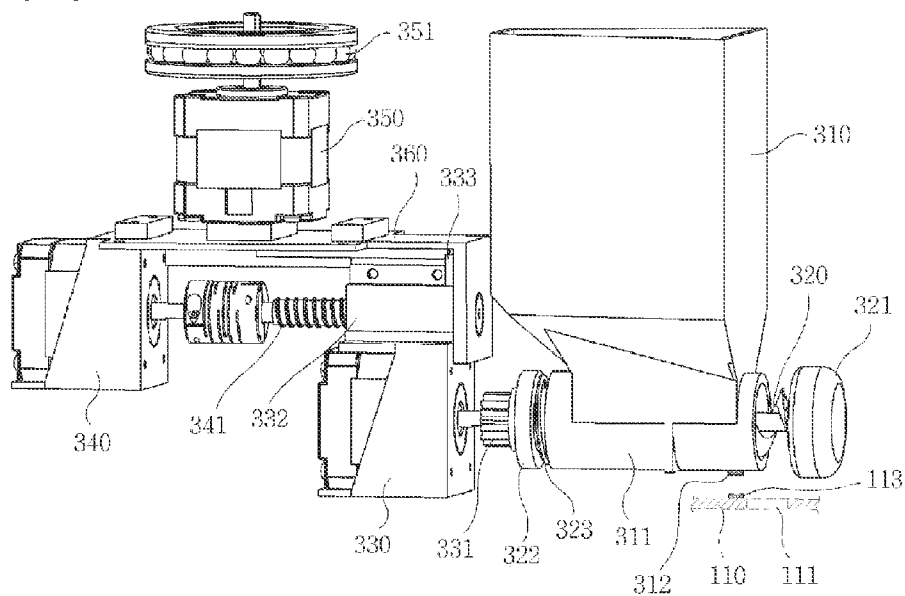
[Fig. 3]



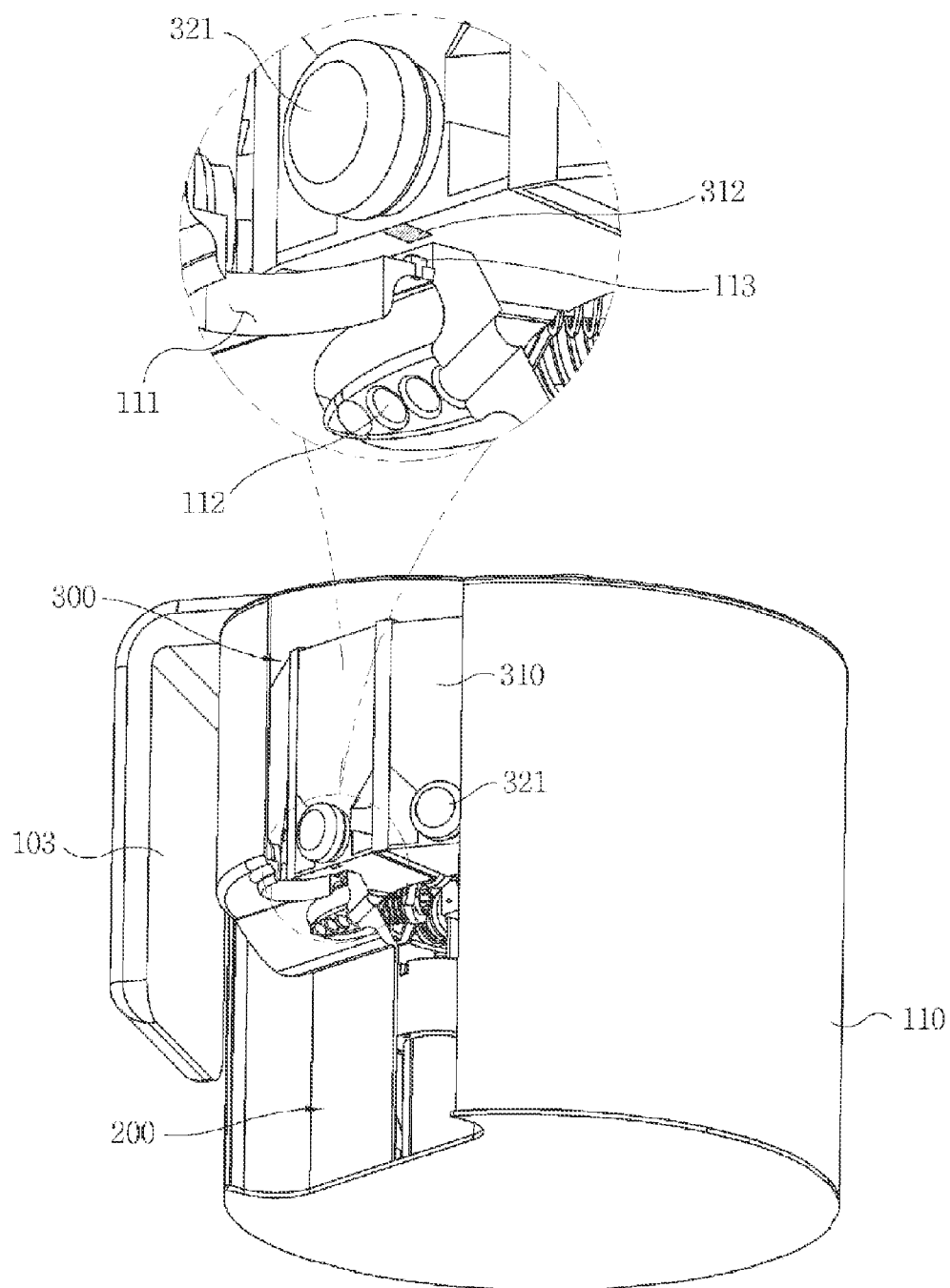
[Fig. 4a]



[Fig. 4b]



[Fig. 5]



# SEASONING DISPENSING DEVICE FOR AN INTERNET-LINKED COOKING ASSISTANT SYSTEM

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

**[0001]** 1. Field of the Invention

**[0002]** The present invention relates to an Internet-linked cooking assistant system, more particularly to a seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system, which is able to supply a more accurate and precise amount of seasoning stored in a digital chef, an assistant system, which makes anybody cook a food of a relevant recipe easily by exchanging various recipe information through the internet.

**[0003]** 2. Description of the Related Art

**[0004]** In the families of recent modern society, Couples who work together for a living and singles are increasing.

**[0005]** Especially in the case of both working couples, they eat out more due to a shortage of time. Due to the settlement of the culture of eating out, taste buds accustomed to the taste of food provided by an expert chef quality, but the food cannot be cooked at home because of the absence of the food information.

**[0006]** Many professional chefs provide own know-how through the books of disclosed cooking or the Internet personal blogs, which are often used for cooking at home. However, people usually cook through own experience or presumption because cooking information is rough and does not provide precise information according to the number of servings. Therefore, there is a problem that people cannot cook like the cooking information provided at the books or the Internet.

**[0007]** In addition, the cooking information through the books or the Internet has much discomfort and disadvantage that food can be exposed to the environment at which food is easily contaminated with the bacteria because people have to continue to find the books or the Internet during cooking.

**[0008]** Thus, the present inventor developed the digital chef but more accurate and precise dispensing of seasoning was required in order to flavor close to the cooking information.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

**[0009]** The present invention is contrived to solve former problems. A dispensing device is installed to supply a more accurate and precise amount of seasoning stored at a digital chef so that a more accurate amount of seasoning is dispensed according to provided cooking information and the number of servings. As a consequence, the same taste can always be replicated for a certain dish.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0010]** FIG. 1 shows a detailed diagram of an Internet-linked cooking assistant system applied in the present invention.

**[0011]** FIG. 2 shows an outside view of a digital chef in the cooking assistant system applied in the present invention.

**[0012]** FIG. 3 shows an inside view of a digital chef, of which the case is removed, applied in the present invention.

**[0013]** FIG. 4 shows a seasoning dispensing device of a digital chef applied in the present invention, FIG. 4a shows a state before operating a dispensing device, and FIG. 4b shows a state of operating a dispensing device.

**[0014]** FIG. 5 shows a position control means of a seasoning container applied in the present invention.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

**[0015]** The present invention relates to an Internet-linked cooking assistant system that includes a digital chef providing continuously updated recipe information, and an automatic seasoning dispensing unit for storing and automatically dispensing seasonings to the outside, wherein the Internet-linked cooking assistant system comprises: seasoning containers respectively installed on the digital chef and defining a dispensing hole through which seasoning is dispensed; a screw shaft movably and rotatably installed on a dispensing hole of a seasoning container to open and close the dispensing hole; dispensing means coupled to the screw shaft and moving the screw shaft, so as to rotate the screw shaft and dispense seasoning; and rotating means for rotating the digital chef and selecting a seasoning container.

**[0016]** The dispensing means comprises: a dispensing motor coupled to a screw shaft so as to rotate the screw shaft; a moving block installed on the dispensing motor; a transferring screw to penetrate through and coupled to a moving block by a bolt; and a transferring motor coupled to and rotating the transferring screw normally or reversely so as to move a moving block and dispensing motor.

**[0017]** A guider to prevent a moving block from rotating and move it straight is installed on the digital chef, and a sensing means to stop the moving block on the guider by sensing is installed on the moving block.

**[0018]** The screw shaft comprises a cap to open and close a dispensing hole of a seasoning container at its front side, and a coupled block coupled to a drive shaft of a dispensing motor so as to prevent relative rotation at its back side. An elastic means to return a moved screw shaft is installed between the coupled block and the seasoning container.

**[0019]** The drive shaft and the coupled block are coupled by key, spline or serration coupling.

**[0020]** The rotating means comprises: a base unit at the bottom; a rotating unit installed on the base unit to rotate and on which several seasoning containers are installed; a rotating motor coupled to and rotate the rotating unit.

**[0021]** A position control means is installed at the digital chef for a selected seasoning container to dispense seasoning at the same position. The position control means comprises: a sensing means installed at each seasoning container; and a sensing unit to be sensed by the sensing means installed at the digital chef.

**[0022]** The sensing means is a photo sensor or a magnetic sensor.

**[0023]** The transferring motor and the rotating motor are a step motor.

## EFFECTS

**[0024]** The seasoning dispensing device for an internet-linked cooking assistant system of the present invention can be effective to replicate the same taste always for a certain dish because a precise amount of seasoning can be dispensed according to provided cooking information and the number of servings by being able to supply a more accurate amount of seasoning stored in a seasoning container.

[0025] According to the present invention, a dispensing motor is coupled selectively to a screw shaft installed at a seasoning container so that the selected seasoning can be dispensed in order.

[0026] According to the present invention, a screw shaft coupled to a dispensing motor opens and closes a dispensing unit as moving on the dispensing unit of a seasoning container so that dry type and wet type seasoning stored in a seasoning container can be prevented from lumping.

[0027] According to the present invention, a seasoning container can be placed at a precise position on the dispensing hole by a position control means comprising a sensing means installed a seasoning container and a sensing unit installed at a case so that a seasoning can be dispensed precisely.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0028] The internet-linked cooking assistant system and the seasoning dispensing device according to the present invention are illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 5.

[0029] First, the internet-linked cooking assistant system, as illustrated in FIG. 1, comprises a digital chef (100); a cooking assistant apparatus, a server (10), a PC (50), a mobile (40), a chef market (20) and partners market (30).

[0030] A digital chef (100), a server (10), a PC (50), a mobile (40), a chef market (20) and a partners market (30) are connected with each other directly or indirectly so that various recipes information can be exchanged. In other words, various recipes can be updated or downloaded. The recipe information is meant by overall information such as main ingredients, the number and weight of main ingredients, the kinds and amount of seasoning, the order of adding seasoning, cooking method like cooking time and cooking temperature, number of servings and a category belonged to by the recipe information.

[0031] The server (10) exchanges various recipes information continuously over internet, storage media, such as flash memory, card memory and removable hard disk drive, or transmission media like a transmission method using public communications network. In other words, the server (10) stores or downloads updated information by exchanging various recipes through a digital chef (100), a server (10), a PC (50), a mobile (40), a chef market (20) and a partners market (30). Therefore, the server (10) can use various functions and contents of internet site, recipes can be real time updated and downloaded, and data can be transmitted and received.

[0032] The mobile (40) can get information about recipes by transmitted data such as text, image, video and encoded data from the digital chef (100), and my recipes inversely can be added and provided to the digital chef (100) through the mobile (40). Such the mobile (40) can be interlocked with not only the digital chef (100) but also the server (10) like the digital chef (100) noted above.

[0033] The PC (50) can store data, interlocked with the digital chef (100) and storage media such as flash memory and removable hard disk drives, and data can be provided to the digital chef (100) through the PC (50) inversely. Such the PC (50) can be interlocked with not only a digital chef (100) and storage media but also the server (10) as noted above.

[0034] The digital chef (100) can exchange various recipes information, connected with a PC (50), a mobile (40), a chef market (20), a partners market site (30) besides a server (10), and provides relevant recipes information visually, acousti-

cally and audiovisually, meanwhile, and also dispenses seasoning automatically according to a recipe information from a state stored as type.

[0035] The digital chef (100) comprises a transmission and reception unit (101), a storage unit (102), a display unit (103), an automatic seasoning dispensing unit (104), a control unit (105), and a recommendation unit (106).

[0036] The transmission and reception unit (101) plays a role of transmission and reception recipes information with the server (10). It provides a user with recipe information received from the server (10) and transmits a user's inputting own recipe information to the server (10).

[0037] The storage unit (102) stores recipes information transmitted from the transmission and reception unit (101), amount of various seasoning stored at the automatic seasoning dispensing unit (104), users' own recipes information input by users and a using history like a using frequency of the recipes information chosen by users.

[0038] The display unit (103), a kind of monitor, displays recipe information stored at the storage unit (102), and a user can input an order on the display unit (103) because it can be one or selective combination of a touch screen, a touch pad or a keypad.

[0039] The automatic seasoning dispensing unit (104) stores various seasoning, and dispenses stored seasoning outside automatically according to the signals of the control unit (105).

[0040] The control unit (105) controls dispensing seasoning outside automatically according to recipe information chosen by a user among recipes information displayed on the display unit (103). In other words, the control unit (105) outputs a control signal to dispense seasoning as a relevant amount stored in the automatic seasoning dispensing unit (104) based on recipe information.

[0041] The recommendation unit (106) recommends a recipe by reflecting at least one between a using frequency of recipe information which users choose and popularity of recipe information transmitted from the server (10). Therefore, the digital chef can provide an optimum recipe and users' satisfaction increase as much. At this moment, the recommendation unit (106) can also judge similarity comparing seasoning mixing ratio in the recipe information, which a user chooses, to seasoning mixing ratio in the recipe information stored at the storage unit (102). A result according to such a judgment is displayed on the display unit (103), and because a user can choose other recipes judged similar to main ingredients and seasoning mixing ratio which a user chooses on the digital chef (100), there are various choices for users.

[0042] The recommendation unit (106) can also recommend a recipe which users can cook by based on the seasoning stored in the automatic seasoning dispensing unit (104). In the case that the automatic seasoning dispensing unit (104) doesn't have necessary seasoning in a recipe which a user choose, this is for providing a user with a recipe able to cook using remaining seasoning.

[0043] Meanwhile, a user can buy ingredients needed in a chosen recipe on a digital chef portal site. To achieve this, the transmission and reception unit (101) transmits a request of buying the relevant ingredients in recipe information chosen by a user to the server (10), and receives a paying request according to a buying request from the server (10). And the display unit (103) displays a breakdown of buying when the payment is completed according to the received paying

request. Thus, a user doesn't have to operate other devices in order to buy ingredients or goods needed to cook, and a user has convenient advantage because they can confirm a breakdown of buying or state of an order immediately on the digital chef (100).

[0044] Meanwhile, as illustrated in FIG. 2 and FIG. 3, the automatic seasoning dispensing unit comprises the base unit (200), the rotating unit (300) to rotate on the base unit (200) and the case (110) to cover the base unit (200) and the rotating unit (300).

[0045] The case (110), sub material of the last exterior, comprises dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111) to dispense dry type seasoning contained no water such as sugar and salt and wet type seasoning contained a little of water such as soybean paste and red pepper paste at the center, and liquid spice dispensing hole (112) to dispense liquid spice such as starch syrup, oil, soy sauce and vinegar.

[0046] Dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111), as illustrated in FIG. 2, is one hole, and the liquid spice dispensing hole (112) is the same number of the liquid spice container's (210) number.

[0047] And, a sensing unit (113) to sense by a sensing means of dry and wet type seasoning container is installed on a side of dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111) and the case (110) apart. Such a sensing unit (113) can be of various shapes and structures according to the sensing means (312), but in the present embodiment the sensing unit (312) has a hole so that the photo sensor can receive light because the sensing means (312) comprises a photo sensor.

[0048] Several liquid spice containers (210) are installed round at the same interval in the base unit (200), as illustrated in FIG. 3, a dispensing hose is installed on each liquid spice container (210) to dispense liquid spice outside, and the dispensing hose is connected with each liquid spice dispensing hole (112) on the case (110).

[0049] The rotating unit (300), a cylinder of which the center is empty, is installed to rotate on the upper face of the base unit (200), the rotation means is installed at the inside, and the several seasoning containers (310) to store dry and wet type seasoning are installed at the surface as a regular interval by circumferential direction and it can be removable.

[0050] The seasoning container (310) can be transparent or opaque, the dispensing unit (311) of which center is empty is installed vertically, and the seasoning dispensing device of this present invention is installed on the dispensing unit (311).

[0051] The seasoning dispensing device of this present invention comprises the screw shaft (320) inserted and installed as a state able to rotate in the dispensing unit (311), and the dispensing unit (311) of the seasoning container (310) is opened and closed by this screw shaft (320).

[0052] The screw shaft (320), as illustrated in FIG. 4a, has a spiral wing on the its outside, the cap (321) to open and close the dispensing unit (311) of the seasoning container is installed as one body at its fore unit, and the combination block (322) coupled to the dispensing means mentioned later is installed at its rear unit. And, the elastic means (323) is installed at the screw shaft in the front of combination block (322), it is a compressed coil spring, and it's both side of the end are installed as supporting elastically at the outside of the combination block (322) and the seasoning container.

[0053] Therefore, the screw shaft, as illustrated in FIG. 4b, (320) compresses the elastic means (323) by combination of the dispensing means and moves forward so that the dispensing unit (311) is open and the seasoning on the dispensing unit

(311) advances and is dispensed by the rotating screw shaft (320). The seasoning is dispensed of the exact amount because the amount is proportional to the number of rotation (pitch).

[0054] In addition, the seasoning can be prevented from lumping because the dry and wet type seasoning can be stored and kept as dry by the cap of the screw shaft (320) to open and close the dispensing unit (311) of the seasoning container (310).

[0055] The dispensing means is coupled to the combination block (322) of the screw shaft (320), and moves and spins the screw shaft (320) so that the dry and wet type seasoning in the seasoning container (310) is dispensed.

[0056] The dispensing means, as illustrated in FIGS. 4a and 4b, comprises a dispensing motor (330) which has a drive shaft to spin the screw shaft (320), a moving block installed at the upper side of the dispensing motor (330) as projecting, the transferring screw (341) penetrating and coupled to the moving block (332) by bolts, and a transferring motor (340) coupled to and spinning the transferring screw (341) at the normal and reverse direction so as to move the moving block (332) and the dispensing motor (330).

[0057] The drive shaft (331) of the dispensing motor (330) and the screw shaft (320) of the combination block (322) are coupled unable to rotate by key, spline and serration combination. Specially, for the drive shaft (331) moves straight easily, the drive shaft (331) and the combination block (322) are coupled by spline or serration combination.

[0058] The transferring motor (340) is installed at a side of the guider (360) and is preferred to be a step motor in order to control the precise moving quantity of the moving block (332) and the dispensing motor (330) by the rotation of the transferring screw (341).

[0059] the guider (360) to guide the moving block (332) is installed at the inside of the digital chef (100) for the moving block (332) and the dispensing motor (330) are prevented from rotating when they move by the transferring motor (340). Meanwhile, the guider (360) is installed at the lower side of the rotation motor (350) as a shape of a traditional rail way installed at the digital chef (100), and the sensing means (333) is installed at the moving block (332) to stop the moving block (332) by sensing when it moves straight on the guider (360).

[0060] The sensing means (333) can be a traditional sensor or switch such as a photo sensor or a magnetic sensor, and specially, if the sensing means (333) is a photo sensor, a transparent type is preferred. In other words, the transparent photo sensor senses when it receives light in a light reception unit through the guider (360).

[0061] when the transferring motor (340) is operated, the transferring screw (341) rotates at the normal direction so that the moving block (332) and the dispensing motor (330) move toward and are coupled to the screw shaft (320) in the seasoning container (310). When the transferring motor (340) rotates reversely, the transferring screw (341) rotates at the reverse direction so that the dispensing motor (330) and the moving block (332) coupled to the screw shaft (320) move backward and separate from the screw shaft (320).

[0062] Meanwhile, the transferring motor (340) is installed at a lower side of the guider (360) and fixed.

[0063] The rotating means, a means to spin the rotating unit (300) on the lower base unit (200), comprises the rotating motor (350).



[0064] The rotating motor (350) is inserted and placed at the inside of the rotating unit (300) which its center is empty, and the bearing (351) is installed between the rotating motor (350) and the rotating unit (300). It is preferred to be installed at the rotating motor (350).

[0065] When the rotating motor (350) is operated, the rotating unit (300) rotates on the base unit (200). The rotation motor (350) can be a step motor in order to control the rotating quantity of the rotating unit (300) precisely.

[0066] And, the position control means is installed at the rotation unit (300) for the selected seasoning container among the all seasoning containers dispense at the same position of the case (110), that is the dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111). The position control means, as illustrated in FIG. 5, comprises the sensing means (312) installed at a lower side of the dispensing unit (311) of each seasoning container (310) and the sensing unit (113) installed at the case (110) so as to be matched with the sensing means (312).

[0067] The sensing means (312) of the seasoning container (310) like the sensing means (333) on the moving block (332) as noted above can be a traditional sensor or switch such as a photo sensor or a magnetic sensor, and the sensing unit (113) can be of various shapes and structures according to the sensing means (312). Meanwhile, the sensing unit (113) is preferred to be installed around the dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111) installed at the case (110).

[0068] Therefore, when one seasoning is selected among the several seasoning containers (310) installed at the rotating unit (300), the seasoning container which contains the selected seasoning rotates by the rotating unit (300) and when the sensing means (312) at a lower side of the dispensing unit (311) in the seasoning container (310) senses the sensing unit (113) installed at the case (110), the rotating unit (300) stops. And then the seasoning in the selected seasoning container is dispensed outside exactly through the dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111).

[0069] Hereinafter, operations of above-mentioned seasoning dispensing device in the digital chef are described.

[0070] First, when a user chooses a recipe, the control unit (105) in the digital chef (100) operates the seasoning dispensing device and dispenses various relevant seasoning according to the main ingredients of the chosen recipe as one by one in order automatically.

[0071] In other words, in the seasoning dispensing device operated by control unit (105), the rotating unit (300) rotates and moves circularly by the rotating motor (350) on the base unit (200). When the sensing means (312) of the seasoning container (310) senses the sensing unit (113) installed at the case (110), the rotating motor (350) stops and the dispensing unit (311) of the seasoning container (310) is placed on the dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111).

[0072] And then, the transferring motor (340) installed at the guider (360) on the lower side of the rotating motor (330) is operated and spins the transferring screw (341). The moving block (332) coupled to the transferring screw (341) by bolts moves toward on the transferring screw (341). The moving block (332) to move toward is guided by the guider (360) so it can move straight only with prevented from rotating. The moving block (332) stops according to the sensing operation by the sensing means (333).

[0073] Meanwhile, the dispensing motor (330) installed as one body at the moving block (332) moves toward with the moving block (332) together so that the drive shaft (331) of

the dispensing motor (330) is coupled to the combination block (322) of the screw shaft (320) installed at the dispensing unit (311) of the seasoning container (310) as a state unable to rotate. And then the screw shaft (320) compresses the elastic means (323) and moves toward on the dispensing unit (311) by the dispensing motor (330) so that the cap (321) which covers the dispensing unit (311) is separated apart and opens the dispensing unit (311).

[0074] In the present state, when the dispensing motor (330) is operated, the drive shaft (331) and the screw shaft (320) rotate in the dispensing unit (311) through the combination block (322) coupled by spline or serration coupling.

[0075] The dry or wet type seasoning placed in between the spiral wings of the screw shaft (320) is pushed forward and moves by the rotation of the screw shaft (320) so that it is dispensed outside through the opened dispensing unit (311). And then the accurate amount of seasoning can be dispensed according to the rotation of the screw shaft (320).

[0076] Meanwhile, when one seasoning is completed to be dispensed, the transferring motor (340) is operated reversely by the control unit (105) and moves dispensing motor (330) backward so that it is separated from the screw shaft (320). At the same time that the dispensing motor (330) is separated, the elastic means (323) compressed between the seasoning container (310) and the combination block (322) of the screw shaft (320) is tensile so that the cap (321) closes dispensing unit (311) of the seasoning container (310) again by moving the moved forward screw shaft (320) back.

[0077] And then the control unit (105) operates the rotating motor (350) and spins the rotation part (300) again so that the rotating part (300) stops at the position of the dry and wet type seasoning dispensing hole (111) by the sensing means (312) of another relevant seasoning container (310), and the seasoning dispensing device is operated again as mentioned above in the present state.

1. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system that includes a digital chef providing continuously updated recipe information, and an automatic seasoning dispensing unit for storing and automatically dispensing seasonings to the outside, wherein the Internet-linked cooking assistant system comprises: seasoning containers respectively installed on the digital chef and defining a dispensing hole through which seasoning is dispensed; a screw shaft movably and rotatably installed on a dispensing hole of a seasoning container to open and close the dispensing hole; dispensing means coupled to the screw shaft and moving the screw shaft, so as to rotate the screw shaft and dispense seasoning; and rotating means for rotating the digital chef and selecting a seasoning container.

2. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 1, wherein the dispensing means comprises: a dispensing motor which has a drive shaft coupled to and spinning a screw shaft; a moving block installed at the dispensing motor; a transferring screw penetrating and coupled to the moving block by bolts; and a transferring motor coupled to and spinning the transferring screw at normal and reverse direction so as to move the moving block and the dispensing motor.

3. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 2, wherein a guider is installed at the digital chef so that it guides for the moving block to move straight and to be prevented from rotating.

4. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 3, wherein a sensing means is installed at the moving block so as to stop the moving block on the guider by sensing.

5. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 2, wherein the screw shaft has a cap to open and close the dispensing hole in the seasoning container at the front side, and the coupling block coupled to the drive shaft of the dispensing motor so as to be prevented from rotating.

6. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 5, wherein the drive shaft and coupling block are coupled by key, spline or serration coupling.

7. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 1, wherein the rotating means comprises: a base unit at the lower side; a rotating unit installed at the base unit so that it can rotate, and several seasoning containers are respectively installed at the rotating unit; and a rotating motor coupled to and spinning the rotating unit.

8. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 1, wherein the digital chef has a position control unit so that a selected seasoning container dispenses seasoning to the outside and supply seasoning. The position control unit comprises: a sensing means installed respectively at a seasoning container; and a sensing unit installed at the digital chef so as to sense by the sensing means.

9. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 4, wherein the sensing means is a photo sensor Or a magnetic sensor.

10. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 2, wherein the transferring motor is a step motor.

11. A seasoning dispensing device for an Internet-linked cooking assistant system of claim 7, wherein the rotating motor is a step motor.

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