

PROPOSED CLAIMS FOR PM-1522 EPO APPLICATION

35. A process for expanding tobacco comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting tobacco with carbon dioxide gas;

(b) increasing the pressure of the carbon dioxide gas contacting the tobacco from a first pressure to a second pressure in the range of from greater than 185 psig to about 430 psig;

(c) at least at a preselected pressure in the range between the first pressure and the second pressure, flowing carbon dioxide gas through the tobacco to cool the tobacco to the saturation temperature of carbon dioxide gas at the preselected pressure;

(d) condensing carbon dioxide on the tobacco during at least a portion of the pressure increasing step (b) after completion of the flow-through cooling step (c);

(e) releasing the pressure; and

(f) thereafter subjecting the tobacco to conditions such that the tobacco is expanded.

36. The process of claim 35, wherein the second pressure is from greater than 185 psig to about 430 psig.

37. The process of any of claims 35 to 36, wherein the first pressure is about atmospheric pressure.

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38. The process of any of claims 35 to 37, wherein the preselected pressure is a substantially constant pressure.

39. The process of any of claims 35 to 38, wherein the tobacco has an initial OV content of from about \_\_\_ % to about \_\_\_ %.

40. The process of any of claims 34 to 39, wherein from about 0.1 to about 0.6 pound of carbon dioxide per pound of tobacco is condensed on the tobacco before releasing the pressure in step (e).

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