To temporarily support the empty bags on a flat surface for printing of indicia, the horizontal flat support platform **296** is positioned in the path of a movable print mechanism **160** and under the bag support system **294**. The bag support system ends at a container into which filled bags are deposited.

In this embodiment, the discharge tube assembly **290** engages the septums one by one, such as the septums **274A–274G**, and moves the septums along the support means **294** so that the corresponding one of the bags **24A–24G** lies flat on the support surface **296**. The printhead **160** is then moved over the bag and the support mechanism **296** to print the required indicia. After the printing, the discharge assembly **290** moves each the bag further to a position where it drops free of the support surface **296**, at which time it is filled and the discharge mechanism **290** moves it free from the support system **294**.

The discharge assembly **290** includes an outer tubular sheath **276**, an inner needle **273** and a downwardly, vertically-moving control assembly **277** that operates in the same manner as the embodiment of FIGS. **12** and **13**. The discharge needle **273** communicates with an inner telescoping tube **300** which is moved by a motorized rack and pinion system **302** to reciprocate along the bag holding assembly **294** to move the bags one by one into position. The positioning mechanism is encoded on a code wheel on the motor **302** which moves the rack to position the discharge needle **273** under the control of the microprocessor **14**. Instead of moving the bags from position to position on the bag holding assembly **294**, the bags may remain in place and the telescoping tube **300** may move the discharge needle **273** over each bag and fill them in place without moving them.

For this purpose, the microprocessor **14** receives signals indicating the first position for engaging the septum while the bag is on the support **296**, a second position for printing, a third position for filling the bag after it has fallen from the support **296** and a fourth position at the end of its travel path, at which time the bags, already filled, are pushed free of the support **294** to drop into a container located nearby.

In FIG. **15**, there is shown a plan view of the support system **294** having first and second parallel rails **310** and **312** upon which the bags **24A–24C** are mounted through eyelets in the ends of the bags so that the bags depend downwardly from the rails. With this arrangement, the bags **24A–24C** are stretched between the rails **310** and **312** so they are relatively flat with their septums **274A–274C** extending upwardly between the rails.

As shown in FIG. **14**, the septum of each bag may be grasped by the discharge assembly **290** one by one and the bags moved over the support surface **296**. While there, the printing mechanism **160** is moved on parallel shafts **314** and **316** so that it is cantalevered over the bag and the support **296**. The printhead is driven by a nut and screw drive, with the shaft **314** rotably positioning it. The motor drive for the shaft **314** includes a coded wheel which positions the printhead and controls the timing of its position with the indicia under the control of the microprocessor.

In FIG. **16**, there is shown a block diagram of the sampler **10** interconnected with a flow meter **320** and/or a liquid level detector **322** positioned in a liquid flow path **324**. These instruments detect either the flow rate or the liquid level and provide a signal to the microprocessor **14** which controls the printing of the sample information on the bag and the collection of the sample by the sampler **10**, indicating the condition that results in the taking of a sample. For example, the liquid height or a sudden increase in the flow rate may indicate the proper time for taking a sample or for taking a larger sample. In that event, the time and the reason for sampling are printed on the bag.

From the above description, it can be understood that the wastewater sampler of this invention has several advantages such as: (1) it can form a large number of packages; (2) data is conveniently printed right on the package as it is formed; (3) the size of the package can be automatically tailored to the size of the sample to avoid air that may contaminate the liquid therein; (4) the sample is immediately sealed in the package amd thus reduces contamination; and (5) overflow can easily be avoided.

Although a specific embodiment has been described with some particularity, many modifications and variations may be made in this specific embodiment without deviating from the invention. Therefore, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced other than as specifically described.

What is claimed is:

1. A sampler comprising:
- an inlet port adapted to communicate with a source of water and an outlet port positioned so that water flows from the inlet port to the outlet port;
- means for pumping fluid through the inlet port for collection;
- means for initiating movement of a web of packaging material;
- means for folding the web of packaging material and sealing it to form a pouch;
- means for causing water from the inlet port to flow from the outlet port into the pouch;
- means for sealing the pouch;
- means for controlling the pumping means; and
- means for drawing the web so that the pouch corresponds in internal volume to the volume of water pumped into the pouch prior to sealing the pouch.

2. A sampler comprising:
- an inlet port adapted to communicate with a source of water and an outlet port positioned so that water flows from the inlet port to the outlet port;
- means for pumping fluid through the inlet port for collection;
- means for initiating movement of a web of packaging material formed into bags;
- means for causing water from the inlet port to flow from the outlet port into the bags;
- means for sealing the bags; and
- programmable means for controlling the means for pumping and means for initiating movement of a web so that each of the bags corresponds in internal volume to the volume of water pumped into the bag prior to sealing the bag.

3. A sampler in accordance with claim **2** in which the means for forming the bag includes a means for folding the web against itself and heat-sealing the web together, whereby a bag is formed before the water is inserted, and sealing the web to form a water-tight container.

4. A water sampler in accordance with claim **3** further including means for printing information on the web.

5. A sampler in accordance with claim **1** in which the means for forming the pouch includes a means for folding the web against itself and heat-sealing the web to-