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To Interested Parties

The European Commission has asked Member States to supply information on the use of nitrites in meat products. This monitoring exercise was envisaged in Commission Decision 2010/561/EU by means of which the Commission approved the retention of national provisions in this area in Danish legislation for a period of five years. On the basis of the collective responses, the Commission will decide whether it is appropriate to amend the levels of nitrites that may be added to meat products in Directive 2006/52/EC (see attached table which sets out the levels of nitrites currently permitted by Directive 2006/52/EC).

As you will see from the questionnaire attached, the Commission is asking a number of questions relating to the typical and maximum amounts of nitrites added to various types of meat products. From the phrasing of the questions, it seems that the Commission is asking about non-traditional meat products, controls on the levels of nitrites and nitrates in which are based on added rather than residual amounts.

It would be very helpful if you could provide information in response to these questions by **31st October**

Yours sincerely

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The table below contains the maximum levels established by Directive 2006/52/EC.

E No	**Name**	**Foodstuffs**	**Maximum amount that may be added during manufacture (expressed as NaNO2)**	**Maximum residual level (expressed as NaNO2)**
E 249	Potassium nitrite (*)	Meat products	150 mg/kg	
E 250	Sodium nitrite (*)	Sterilised meat products (Fo> 3,00)(**)	100 mg/kg	
Traditional immersion cured meat products (1)				
		Wiltshire bacon (1.1); Entremeada, entrecosto, chispe, orelheira e cabeça (salgados) Toucinho fumado (1.2); and similar products		175 mg/kg
		Wiltshire ham (1.1); and similar products		100 mg/kg
		Rohschinken, nassgepökelt (1.6); and similar products		50 mg/kg
		Cured tongue (1.3)		50 mg/kg
Traditional dry cured meat products (2)				
		Dry cured bacon (2.1); and similar products		175 mg/kg
		Dry cured ham (2.1); Jamón curado, paleta curada, lomo embuchado y cecina (2.2) Presunto, presunto da pá and paio do lombo (2.3) and similar products		100 mg/kg
		Rohschinken, trockengepökelt (2.5) and similar products		50 mg/kg
E No	**Name**	**Foodstuffs**	**Maximum amount that may be added during manufacture (expressed as NaNO2)**	**Maximum residual level (expressed as NaNO2)**
Other traditionally cured meat products (3)				
		Vysočina Selský salám Turistický trvanlivý salám	180 mg/kg	

		Poličan Herkules Lovecký salám Dunajská klobása Paprikáš (3.5); and similar products		
		Rohschinken, trocken-/nassgepökelt (3.1) and similar products Jellied veal and brisket (3.2)		50 mg/kg

(*) When labelled 'for food use', nitrite may be sold only in a mixture with salt or a salt substitute

(**) Fo-value 3 is equivalent to 3 minutes heating at 121 °C (reduction of the bacterial load of one billion spores in each 1 000 cans to one spore in 1 000 cans).

1 Meat products are immersed in curing solution containing nitrites and/or nitrates, salt and other components. The meat products may undergo further treatments e.g. smoking.

1.1 Meat is injected with curing solution followed by immersion curing for 3 to 10 days. The immersion brine solution also includes microbiological starter cultures.

1.2 Immersion cured for 3 to 5 days. Product is not heat-treated and has a high water activity.

1.3 Immersion cured for at least 4 days and pre-cooked.

1.6 Curing time depending on the shape and weight of meat pieces for approximately 2 days/kg followed by stabilisation/maturation.

2 Dry curing process involves dry application of curing mixture containing nitrites and/or nitrates, salt and other components to the surface of the meat followed by a period of stabilisation/maturation. The meat products may undergo further treatments e.g. smoking.

2.1 Dry curing followed by maturation for at least 4 days.

2.2 Dry curing with a stabilisation period of at least 10 days and a maturation period of more than 45 days.

2.3 Dry cured for 10 to 15 days followed by a 30 to 45 day stabilisation period and a maturation period of at least 2 months.

2.5 Curing time depending on the shape and weight of meat pieces for approximately 10 to 14 days followed by stabilisation/maturation.

3 Immersion and dry cured processes used in combination or where nitrite and/or nitrate is included in a compound product or where the curing solution is injected into the product prior to cooking. The products may undergo further treatments e.g. smoking.

3.1 Dry curing and immersion curing used in combination (without injection of curing solution). Curing time depending on the shape and weight of meat pieces for approximately 14 to 35 days followed by stabilisation/maturation.

3.2 Injection of curing solution followed, after a minimum of 2 days, by cooking in boiling water for up to 3 hours.

3.5 Dried product cooked to 70 C followed by 8 to 12 day drying and smoking process. Fermented product subject to 14 to 30 day three-stage fermentation process followed by smoking.

USE OF NITRITES BY THE INDUSTRY IN MEAT PRODUCTS

Please complete the table with information on the typical and maximum amount of nitrite added.

Type of meat	**Typical amount of nitrite added**	**Maximum amount of nitrite added**
Sterilised meat products (Fo > 3.00)		
Other heat treated meat products derived from whole pieces of meat, including slices of products (in general) (eg cooked ham)		
Heat treated poultry meat products		
Non-heat treated meat products derived from whole pieces of meat including slices of products (in general) (e.g. dried ham, bacon, ...)		
Other heat treated meat products derived from minced meat including slices of products (in general) (e.g. mortadella, paté,)		
Non-heat treated meat products derived from minced meat including slices of products (in general) (e.g. salami, chorizo)		
Marinated meat		