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Autore	Pegg Ronald B
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Sommario/riassunto	Meat has been treated for centuries with rock salt as a means of preservation. However, only one century has passed since the German researchers, Polenske in 1891, Kisshalt in 1899, and Lehmann in 1899, discovered that the active component in the curing process was nitrite. Soon after the role of nitrite as a meat curing agent was revealed, government regulators placed guidelines on the level of nitrite and nitrate permitted for use in cured meat formulations. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the development of the so-called ""nitrite problem"" surfaced because of the detection of N-nitrosam