United States Patent Office.

WILLIAM GIBSON BELL, OF CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS.

Letters Patent No. 97,268, *dated November* 30, 1869.

IMPROVED MODE OF CURING BACON, HAMS, AND SHOULDERS.

The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same.

To all persons to whom these presents may come:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM GIBSON BELL, of Charlestown, of the county of Middlesex, and State of Massachusetts, have made a new and useful invention, having reference to the Curing or Treating of the Ham or Leg of a hog or other animal, for the preservation of the same from decomposition, or in a state fit for being used as food.

It is well known that the decay or decomposition of a ham, preparatory to its being either cured or smoked, or after being cured or smoked, generally commences in or immediately around the bone, in consequence of which large quantities of hams yearly become damaged and lost to the dealers and consumers.

The object of my invention or improvement, in the process of preserving a ham, is to save this destruction and waste resulting from decomposition, which is due to the presence of the bone, and especially to the marrow thereof.

In carrying out my invention, I first extract the bone from the flesh of the ham or leg.

In some cases it may not be necessary to draw out the entire bone, but the first step in my process is the extraction of the bone, either in whole or in part.

Next the ham or leg so boned is to be subjected to the action of pickle or a saline solution, such as is generally employed for preparing hams, preparatory to submitting them to the smoking-process.

The salt or pickle may be applied in any of the known or usual methods, taking care to have it thoroughly enter the space previously occupied by the extracted bone.

Finally the ham or leg is to be either dried or smoked, in the way generally adopted, the smoking of it being by submitting it to the action of smoke, in a chamber filled with such.

The great advantage of my invention, over the old process of preparing, or curing, or smoking a ham with the bone in it, is that by removing the bone, we not only greatly lessen the liability of the ham or leg to decay, but we enable the pickle, as well as the smoke, to readily gain access to the interior of the ham or leg, and thereby greatly facilitate, as well as improve the curing or the smoking of the article.

A ham or shoulder treated by my process will be left in a better condition for being boiled, as the water can penetrate the space previously occupied by the bone, and, of course, gain a better access to the ham.

Furthermore, by boning a ham, all trouble of sawing or disjointing it is avoided.

Hams treated by my process will be better for shipment to warm climates.

I believe that my invention is calculated to save not only much meat that would otherwise be lost, but the cost or value of such to the dealers and consumers.

In fact, as a very extensive dealer and manufacturer of hams, one possessing large experience in the matter, I fully believe, from the results thus far attained by me, in the application of my invention, that it will effect a saving, to the community of this country, of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

I claim, as an improved article of manufacture, a ham or leg, treated by the processes of boning and curing, or boning, curing, and smoking it, substantially as hereinbefore explained.

Witnesses: WILLIAM GIBSON BELL.

R. H. EDDY,

J. R. SNOW.