CLAIMS

1. A method to protect iron ore pellets during their slag phase aging process, **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that ~~it includes the phase during which~~ hydration reaction inhibitors, composed of metal oxides, ~~hydration reaction inhibitors that are composed of metal oxides,~~ for the slag phase of heat-treated iron ore agglomerates are added.

2. In accordance with Claim 1, a method **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that the inhibitors are added to the pulp before the cold agglomeration process (pelletizing or microagglomeration).

3. A method in ~~In~~ accordance with Claim 1, ~~a method~~ **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that aforementioned metal oxides are selected from a group of materials that consist of aluminum, kaolinite ($Al_2O_3.2SiO_2.2SH_2O$), fine silica, titanium oxides, magnesium oxide~~Mg~~, and ~~Zn~~zinc oxide.

4. A method in ~~In~~ accordance with Claim 1, ~~a method~~ **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that the aforementioned metal oxides are ~~preferably~~ selected from any other oxides that reduce the content of potassium, sodium and calcium ~~silicate~~of silicates~~'s K, Na, and Ca content~~.

5. A method in ~~In~~ accordance with Claim ~~6~~1, ~~a method~~ **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that the aforementioned metal oxides shall be introduced and tested at an increasing rate, ~~preferably~~ to the effect that the slag's composition in the agglomerate after firing simultaneously meets the conditions of ($CaO+Na_2O+K_2O$) <45% and

$$\frac{(SiO_2/60) + (Al2O3/102)}{(CaO/56) + (Na2O/62) + (K2O/94)} > 0,6$$

~~6. In accordance with Claim 7, a method **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that, at the end of the process, the pellets have a chemical quality that is acceptable in the iron and steel market.~~

6. A method in ~~In~~ accordance with Claim ~~6~~1, ~~a method~~ **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that the hydration reaction inhibitors ~~inhibiting material~~ shall be applied as particulate material <45 μm or preferably 80% <20 μm to ensure the stabilizing elements' greater reactivity and integration in the slag.

8. A method in ~~In~~ accordance with Claim ~~96~~, ~~a method~~ **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that the inhibiting materials may be added as a powder or diluted in the pulp.

~~9. In accordance with Claim 1, a method **CHARACTERIZED** by the fact that the method may be applied to other types of iron ore agglomerates whose resistance depends on the type of calcium silicate and iron in the slag phase.~~