CLAIMS

1. A method for producing a heated food comprising pretreating a food precursor susceptible to water exudation on heating by applying a composition containing a monovalent metal salt of alginic acid and a slightly water-soluble divalent metal salt to the food precursor, heating the pretreated food precursor, and performing a gelling prevention measure to prevent the alginic acid in the composition from gelling after completion of the pretreatment and before performing the heating, so that the gelling of the alginic acid occurs during heating,

wherein "prevention of alginic acid from gelling" means prevention of the gelling to such a level that the non-gelling ratio measured by the method described below during the time period from after completion of the pretreatment to before performing heating is 50% or higher,

the gelling prevention measure comprising controlling the temperature of the food precursor immediately before applying the composition thereto in the pretreatment at or below 30°C, controlling the time in which the temperature of the pretreated food precursor is 40°C or higher so as not to be 2 hours or more, and controlling the time in which the temperature of the pretreated food precursor is in the range of from 10°C to 20°C so as not to be 12 hours or more;

the method for determining non-gelling ratio:

a food precursor after the pretreatment, i.e., "a food precursor having the composition applied thereto and not having been heated" is used as a sample. The surface of the sample is washed with neutral running water to wash away the non-gelled portions of the composition from the surface, leaving the gelled portions attached to the surface. The total area of the composition remaining on the surface of the sample (gelled portions) is measured, from which a non-gelling ratio is calculated by formula:

non-gelling ratio (%) = {(surface area of sample – total area of gelled portions)/surface area of sample} × 100.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the gelling prevention measure further comprises storing the pretreated food precursor frozen until before the heating is performed.

3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the gelling prevention measure

further comprises using a frozen food precursor as the food precursor to be pretreated.

4. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the gelling prevention measure further comprises controlling the product of the temperature of the pretreated food precursor and the time from after completion of the pretreatment to before performing the heating to less than 220°C·h when the temperature of the pretreated food precursor is lower than 40°C.

5. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the composition is in powder or liquid form when it is applied to the food precursor.

6. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the divalent metal salt has a water solubility of 0.1 g/100 g water or less in water at pH 7.0 and 20°C.