The review highlights the role of antioxidants in minimizing oxidative changes that may adversely affect the quality of meat and meat products, cause changes in their testing and nutritional properties. This applies particularly to the use of natural antioxidants based on plant extracts, which can be a good alternative to traditional antioxidants, thanks to its high content of phenolic compounds. From the literature it can be concluded that extracts of broccoli, rosemary, mint, grape seed and green tea have a significant antioxidant effect in the meat products. Broccoli and grape seeds extracts have a pronounced antioxidant activity compared to synthetic antioxidants. Laminarin/fucoidan extracts have prooxidative effect on lipid perperoxidation. Essential oils of *L. angustifolia* and *M. piperita* effectively inhibit *E. coli* O157:H7 and *S. aureus* in the chopped beef meat. The alcoholic extract of the dried leaves of oregano has the highest content of total phenols, however, does not exhibit antioxidant properties. The extracts of rosemary, orange, lemon, mint and curry have positive effect on the color of the meat products. When choosing natural antioxidants it is necessary to pay attention to their impact on testing and qualitative characteristics of these food products.

**Key words:** meat, meat products, natural antioxidants.

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