Meat additives carcinogenic

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convert some nitrogen compounds or even the nitrogen in the air into carcinogenic or nitrous compounds. The danger, according to Newberne, that whatever our bodies gain in extra nitrites from additives in processed meat might overcome the body defenses and cause cancer. This extra amount has been estimated by the FDA to be 20 percent of all the nitrites that enter or are produced in the body.

Newberne’s research has also shown that certain vitamins such as ascorbic acid (vitamin C) can neutralize the nitrites so that they can not be converted to nitrosamines, but that they also neutralize the effects against botulism.

Newberne is also involved in other areas of cancer study. He is Dept. Heads are picked slowly

By Lily Martin
Editor’s note: This article, the first in a three part series on Department Heads, focuses on how they are chosen and how they view their jobs.

Choosing a new Department Head in a school at MIT is a long, tedious process. It typically involves extensive research leading to a recommendation by a search committee, appointment by the school’s Dean and final approval by an administrative committee composed of the President, Provost and Chancellor.

Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering Herbert Richardson ’53 was recommended for his post by a search committee having two faculty members from each of the department’s three divisions and two from outside the department. William Hawthorne of Cambridge University’s Department of Mechanical Engineering served as a consultant. The Dean of the School of Engineering asked all mechanical engineering faculty members to provide inputs, and the search committee interviewed most of them personally.

The Head of the Department of Civil Engineering, Frank Perkins ’55 is an example of one who had clearly stated that he did not want the position when it became available initially. Perkins, however, was asked by the Dean of the School of Engineering to be active as Head as well as the search committee chairman — logical choices he feels, since he did not want the job, but, ironically, they led to his changing his mind.

He gained awareness of support for him throughout the faculty and discovered that he felt reasonably comfortable as Department Head. These factors led to Perkins’ accepting the job after being recommended by the rest of the search committee.

Department heads made mostly positive comments about their job. Kenneth Hoffman, Head of the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Jack Kernerbruck, said that he considered it an honor to succeed people like Jerome Hunskeler, one of aviation’s founders, along with the Wright Brothers, and Charles Draper, founder of the Draper Laboratory. Edgar Brown, Head of the Department of Economics said, “You’re kind of keeper of what you think the department wants you to do.”

The one typical complaint, on the other hand, was the dissatisfaction over reduced involvement in teaching and research. Head of the Department of Physics, Herman Feshbach pointed out, “My central aim in life is to do research and educate the young.”

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