

# 'Pop Culture' Disturbing Agri-business

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From earliest times, man has eaten both meat and vegetable foods, increasing greatly in numbers and in achievements.

Now, what has been called "a pop culture on foods" has arisen to tell us that our eating habits are wrong. Vegetarians, who survive on fruits and vegetables, have been joined by "granivores," who eat only seeds and grains; "fruitarians", who consume only fruits; and "vegans," who won't utilize any animal products.

These types have created considerable disturbance of the agri-business world because of their efforts to make everybody's habits conform to their own. This has led to peculiar and sometimes disastrous rulings of federal agencies.

## Meat Blamed for Anything

Scientific devices now can measure minute quantities or even traces of substances contained in foods and in the human body, which could not be measured precisely in the past.

It wasn't difficult for those who already were opposed to the eating of meat to make quick deductions that traces of substances found in meat, as well as meat itself, could be blamed for all sorts of human ailments. Even some scientists jumped to conclusions based upon meager evidence, contrary to their presumed scientific training.

This happened last year when the National Cancer Institute published obviously superficial observations of a team of epidemiologists that beef caused bowel cancer. The report was based upon

a statistical study of 536 Japanese immigrants and their offspring living in Hawaii; not upon cause and effect research.

## Remember Cyclamate Scare?

Nevertheless, it was immediately picked up and widely publicized by anti-meat extremists as "proof" of dangers in eating meat.

Under pressure from reformers, many of them holding key government offices, federal agencies

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frequently go along with this type of thing. Remember the cyclamate scare?

Although scientists still have not been able to determine what causes cancer, present government policy is to ban all foods or chemicals which bureaucrats determine may be or are suspected of causing cancer. Scientists don't know, bureaucrats do.

Certainly, it is a responsibility of the food industry and the government to maintain usage of preservatives, additives and other chemicals at the lowest safe and practical level. However, the banning of chemicals merely because they have been called suspect and because slight traces may be found is an unjustifiable extremist attitude. Benefits as well as hazards should be considered.

## FDA Is After Peanuts

Currently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is going after peanuts and peanut products, eaten by millions. FDA has decided to lower the level of aflatoxin, a chemical generated by a mold, which, it is claimed, causes cancer.

Whether research that resulted in this action was similar to that used to stir up "The Great Bacon Fry of 1975" is unknown. In this instance, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed changes in regulations to modify the use of nitrate, nitrite and salt in cured meat and poultry products.

The American Meat Institute reports that in this research, rats were fed three milligrams per kilogram of body weight per day for their normal lifetime (600 days). These developed liver tumors, while rats fed lesser amounts of the chemical did not.

## Regulations Based on Suspicion

For humans to equal the rate of consumption that produced cancer in rats, a 154-pound person would have to eat 46,245 pounds of bacon containing 10 parts per billion of nitrosopyrrolidie every day of the person's entire lifetime!

"These nitrite levels take into account the very real danger to people of botulism poisoning if too little nitrite is used," said Dr. Harry C. Mussman, executive secretary of the Expert Panel and Associate Administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). "Because of the botulism threat, we can't remove all nitrite from the meat curing process immediately without risking human lives."

Thus, the bacon-eating public's health is delicately balanced on bureaucratic regulations based upon suspicion that certain curing materials possibly might cause cancer, if used, and the knowledge that certain death could result from botulism if they are not used.

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