

Editorial on Petroleum Chemistry

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Petroleum Chemistry, which was founded in 1961, publishes original articles as well as reviews of theoretical and experimental studies on topics such as the chemical composition of crude oils and natural gas liquids, petroleum refining (cracking, hydrocracking, and catalytic reforming), and catalysts for petrochemical processes (hydrogenation, isomerization, oxidation, and hydroformylation) activation and catalytic transformation of hydrocarbons and other components of petroleum, natural gas, and other complex organic mixtures; new petrochemicals, including lubricants and additives; environmental issues; and information on related scientific meetings. Every geographical area, and hence each oil field, produces raw petroleum with a different combination of molecules based on the total percentage of each hydrocarbon present; this has a direct effect on the coloration and viscosity of the petroleum chemistry.

The alkanes, also known as paraffin's, are the most common type of hydrocarbons in petroleum chemistry. These are known as saturated hydrocarbons, and their molecule chains are either branched or straight. The alkanes are what give petroleum chemistry its combustible nature; paraffin's are very pure hydrocarbons that contain only hydrogen and carbon.

Pentane and Octane will be refined into gasoline, hexadecane and nonane will be refined into kerosene or diesel or used as a component in jet fuel production, and hexadecane will be refined into fuel oil or heating oil. Petroleum molecules with less than five carbon atoms are an exception; these are a form of natural petroleum gas that will either be burned or extracted and sold under pressure as LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas).

The naphthenes, which are also known as cycloalkanes, are a saturated type of hydrocarbon. By saturated, we say that the molecule has one or more carbon rings with hydrogen atoms attached to them. These hydrocarbons are almost similar to paraffin's in terms of properties, but they have a much higher point of combustion.

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