

Consumers studied

Reporting on a University of Kentucky study examining consumer usage of laundry products, LoErna Palmer Simpson of the University of Kentucky told participants at the AOCS 1985 annual meeting that age seemed to be the only significant factor in purchasing habit differences.

"I found it fascinating that age was significant in choosing a product while the geographic region and level of education weren't," she noted. Her talk, "A Laundry Profile: Products, Problems and Satisfactions," co-authored with Linda Medlen Heaton, was based on results gathered from a four-page, forced-answer written questionnaire sent to 1,500 Kentucky residents between October 1983 and January 1984.

The study examined laundry product categories used, repeated purchasing of the same product, cleaning satisfaction and any problems encountered.

Over 1,200 responses were received. Of these, 1,159 were usable for compilation. "Subjects were eliminated if they did not complete the demographic information, if they didn't do their own laundry or if they did dry cleaning mostly," Simpson explained.

Respondents fell into the following age categories: age 29 or younger, 14%; age 30-39, 22%; age 40-49, 20%; age 50-59, 17%; age 60 and over, 27%.

Educationally, 20% of the respondents had completed a college education while an additional 30% had some college education. An additional 37% had completed high school only while 11% had less than a high school education. By profession, homeworkers led, with 60%, while office workers represented 15%, professional, 12% and miscellaneous, 13%. Ninety-six percent were females. Geographically, 34% lived on farms, 33% lived in rural areas but not on farms and 33% were from urban or suburban areas.

Asked where they do their laundry, respondents indicated 94.4% do it in their home or apartment, 4% at a coin-operated laundry, 1.5% in a laundry room at their apartment building and 0.1% use a commercial laundry service.

Questioned about laundry temperature selected, 39% said they sometimes use cold wash, 25% sometimes use warm wash and 36% sometimes use hot wash. However, 72% said they usually use warm water, while 19% use cold and 9% use hot.

"Today's consumer no longer believes one temperature is suitable for all uses," Simpson explained.

Eighty-four percent indicated they use fabric softener, and 79% said they use bleaches. Meanwhile, usage of the various product categories was noted as follows: Powdered detergents only, 42%; powdered detergents and others, 92%; liquid detergents only, 5%; liquid detergents and others, 53%; soaps only, none; soaps and others, 8%.

"The temperatures selected were not related to laundry products used," Simpson noted.

However, she said, people in their 20s and people in their 50s and 60s were more likely to use soaps as well as liquid detergents. Meanwhile, those in their 60s were less likely than those in their 20s to use fabric softeners.

Asked whether they purchased the same product each time, 55% said yes and 45% said no. "There seems to be flexibility, with consumers willing to try other products," Simpson said. Those who purchase powdered detergents or

powdered detergents and others were more likely to purchase the same product than those using liquid detergents, however.

Questioned about the cleaning level of the laundry products they use, 72% of the respondents were usually pleased and 24% were always pleased; only 4% said they were displeased.

"Even cold water wash gave satisfactory results in their opinion," Simpson noted.

Of those always pleased, 66% continued to purchase the same product, while 51% of those usually pleased stayed with the product. Forty-seven percent of those dissatisfied continued to purchase the same product.

"Whether a consumer bought the same product was not related to age," Simpson said.

Asked what factors are important in choosing a product, 69% said brand, 58% said price and 20% said phosphate level. Thirty-six percent of those responding said they were aware of the phosphate level of the brand they use.

Laundry problems encountered included stains remaining, 63%; static cling, 43%; soils remaining, 42%; wrinkles, 23%; greyed clothing, 23%, and odors, 8%.

Consumer satisfaction with cleaning was tabulated as follows:

- Those using powered detergents—27% always pleased, 69% usually pleased, 4% displeased.
- Those using liquid detergents—21% always pleased, 77% usually pleased, 2% displeased.

Simpson said data from such a study can be helpful to soaps and detergents manufacturers to determine what today's consumers are like and what they are seeking in the products they use.

Market studies

There are excellent prospects for producing conventional and specialty surfactants through existing biochemical methods, according to a study by Hewin International Inc. of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In a report on "Biotechnology in Surfactant Production," the firm reports the range of uses for surface-active agents has been expanding and biochemical systems can provide better quality feedstocks at costs competitive to nonrenewable resources. The report is available for \$3,000. For information contact: Hewin International Inc., van Leyenberghlaan 157, PO Box 7813, 1088 AA Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Preventive aging creams and products are spurring growth in Europe's cosmetics and toiletries markets, according to a recent Frost & Sullivan study. The New York based research firm predicted skin care products in Europe will experience healthy growth through 1989, when total annual retail sales are expected to be over \$2 billion, up from 1982's market of \$1.6 billion. The firm noted an unexpected revival in the demand for beauty products, particularly fragrances, prestige skin care products and suntan preparations, while make-up continues to stagnate. In the toiletries market, meanwhile, the demand for bath additives and deodorants remains strong. Also, the firm noted, the demand for men's cosmetics and toiletries is buoyant.

Biotechnology for the Oils & Fats Industry

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Stepan expanding

Stepan Company announced in June it had purchased the specialty surfactant business of Westvaco Corporation. The purchase includes manufacturing facilities in Winder, Georgia.

In addition, Stepan has expanded its surfactant production facilities at Fieldsboro, New Jersey. Improvements include installation of a computer-controlled neutralization system to continuously monitor quality through the neutralization process. This eliminates time-consuming batch checking and improves control, particularly with the more difficult to mix, higher viscosity products, Stepan said. Project development and construction were conducted with Stepan personnel serving both as process designer and general contractor.

Meanwhile, Stepan has named Jeffrey M. Boettcher and T. Bruce Lyall surfactant sales representatives in the Midwest. Boettcher will be based in Cleveland, Ohio, and Lyall will be based in Chicago, Illinois.

News briefs

Procter & Gamble Co. will add a new fractionated fatty acid facility at the Quincy plant of its industrial chemicals division in Boston, Mass. The unit, which will produce a multiple product line of fractionated fatty acids, is expected to be in production about July 1986.

Alkaril Chemicals Inc. has appointed Wayne C. Smith director of manufacturing for its Winder, Georgia, location. Smith will be responsible for plant operations as well as for the plant expansion scheduled to be completed early in 1986. Alkaril Chemicals plans to invest \$500,000 in new facilities during the next year, including construction of an effluent pre-treatment facility on the company's 48-acre site in Winder, and installation of new reactors and ancillary equipment there. Alkaril, owned by Alkaril Chemicals Ltd. of Canada, manufactures surfactants and related chemicals for textile, cosmetic and personal care, emulsion polymerization, industrial and institutional markets.

Witco reportedly has agreed to sell its Witfield Division in Carson, California, to Monsanto. The Witfield division produces linear and branched alkylbenzenes and other products.

AOCS member Durfee Combs has been named to the management committee for Emery Chemicals and Monsanto Company's joint tall oil venture. The agreement covers long-term fractionation agreements for supply of tall oil fatty acids used by Emery and tall oil rosin for Monsanto. Other committee members are Emery's Paul E. Van Nortwick and Monsanto's Larry Baird and W. Mack Hunt. The new management group was created after the retirement of AOCS member David R. Eagleson as vice president at Emery.

Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids

A monograph edited by Wolf-H. Kunau and Ralph T. Holman, 258 p.
Hardbound—\$20 for AOCS members and students, \$30 for nonmembers.

This monograph records the contributions of twenty noted researchers who contributed to the 1975 AOCS symposium on unsaturated fatty acids. The symposium was premised on the increasing need to combine separate disciplines in lipid research. Speakers thus were invited who specialized in chemical, physical and biochemical properties of lipids. Topics included biosynthesis, oxidation and regulation of metabolism, analysis, chemistry/physicochemistry, and experimental and clinical data. Illustrations and references enhance this collection.

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News

PQ Corporation has named **Ronald A. Kent** market development manager for its new products ventures department, specifically commercializing PQ's silica catalysts and supports.

Indian LAB plant announced

UOP Inc. has announced licensing agreements for a 50,000 metric ton-capacity linear alkyl benzene plant in India. The plant is to be built by Tamilnadu Petroproducts, a new Company formed by Tamilnadu Industrial Development Corporation and Southern Petrochemicals Corp. Ltd. The plant will use petroleum-derived kerosene as feedstocks, according to a report in the *Chemical Marketing Reporter* of June 10, 1985.

Synthetic Organic Chemical Manufacturers Association's new offices are in Suite 300, 1330 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C.

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