

## S&D productivity reviewed

The U.S. soap and detergent industry had an average 2.9% annual increase in productivity during the period 1958-1977, according to a report on "The Productivity Trend in the Soaps and Detergents Industry," published earlier this year in *Monthly Labor Review*.

The article attributed the increase to intensive capital investment in new machinery and equipment, improving production and packaging operations. Production increased 4.1% annually, while employee hours rose 1.2%, the report said.

From 1958 to 1965, average productivity growth was 1.9%. From 1965 to 1974, productivity increased at a much faster rate, averaging 4.3% each year. The trend was reversed in 1975, a recession year, when productivity fell 7.1%. By 1976, productivity growth had returned with a 3.0% gain. In 1977, productivity again showed a decrease, this time a slight 0.6% decline. Increased use of home laundry equipment and dishwashers, population growth, successful advertising and sales promotions have contributed to expansion from 1958-1977, the article said.

Growth has been influenced by the availability of a wide variety of products advertised to handle different types of cleaning problems. The range of products includes light-duty, mild hand-dishwashing products, all-purpose and heavy-duty laundry detergents, presoak products, automatic dishwashing detergents and laundry soaps, plus the classical bar of toilet soap which is available in an assortment of sizes, colors and scents, with or without additives such as cold creams and deodorants.

The industry also has grown in response to new fabrics developed by the textile industry, the article said. Because

oily soils are more difficult to remove from synthetic fibers, which were increasingly used in clothing during this period, new detergent products were formulated. Products were developed that retained their cleaning abilities at lower temperatures, recommended to prevent the setting of oily soils in some synthetics.

Most soap and detergent production takes place in large plants. Of the 642 plants in operation in 1972, fewer than 60 had 100 or more employees and produced 80% of the total value of shipments. About 440 plants employed fewer than 20 persons.

About half of all production originates in the north central region of the U.S. because of a former trend of locating near the source of principal raw materials. With increased use of detergents, this factor is less important and sites are increasingly chosen for their nearness to distribution centers.

Capital expenditures in the soaps and detergents industry, \$4,191 per employee, are higher than the manufacturing average, \$2,300 per employee. As in other manufacturing segments, in the soaps and detergents industry, about three-fourths of capital expenditures have been for new machinery and equipment.

Productivity forecasts for the soaps and detergents industry continue to be favorable. Demand for all products should be up with an increased output of dishwasher detergents as more dishwashers are purchased. The number of washing machines in U.S. households also is expected to increase, resulting in additional growth in the soaps and detergents industry. □

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## Calendar

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### AOCS NATIONAL MEETINGS

Annual Meeting, 1981: May 17-21, Fairmont Hotel, New Orleans, LA.

Annual Meeting, 1982: May 2-6, Sheraton Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Annual Meeting, 1983: May 8-12, Chicago Marriott, Chicago, IL.

### AOCS SHORT COURSES

AOCS Short Course on Soaps and Detergents, Sept. 14-17, 1980, Hershey, PA.

### 1980

Society of Cosmetic Chemists Annual Seminar, May 15-16, 1980, Hyatt Regency, San Francisco, CA. Contact: Susan W. Cole, SCC, Suite 1701, 1995 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.

Technical Exhibition of the Oil and Colour Chemists Association, May 13-15, 1980, Cunard International Hotel, London, England. Contact: British Information Services, 845 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

"Colloids and Surfaces," short course sponsored by Carnegie-Mellon University, May 19-23, 1980, Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: Carolyn B. Simon, Carnegie-Mellon University, Post College Professional Education, 405 MMCH, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

"Principles of Color Technology," June 2-6 and June 9-13, 1980, sponsored by Rensselaer Color Measurement Laboratory, Rensse-

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