

The Communicator

May 2012

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Greetings—The semester is drawing to a close. Commencement takes place on our four campuses next week. Already graduating seniors can be seen posing for pictures on campus in their regalia. Spring and commencement go hand-in-hand: new beginnings all around.

Search Updates

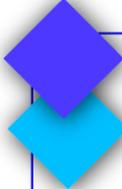
Family and Consumer Sciences have three searches underway. On Tuesday, May 8, we are interviewing a candidate for the Director position. **Dr. Sonya Meyer** is Professor of Textiles and Merchandising in Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Wyoming. On Wednesday, we are interviewing a candidate for the Food and Nutrition position. **Dr. Aida M. El-Asfahani** is Home Economics Extension Specialist at the Agricultural Extension Research Center in the Ministry of Agriculture in Cairo, Egypt. Finally, we are rounding up a search committee for the Extension Specialist in Family Economics. Ideally, the committee will convene and put the final touches on the vacancy announcement before the end of the fiscal year—and before fair season.

Transitions

As the academic year ends, we will be saying farewell to beloved colleagues. **Janice Fletcher** is retiring at the end of June. Our last faculty meeting is May 4 when we will wish her well. **Susan Torntore** has accepted a position as curator of the Avenir Collection at Colorado State University. She will be overseeing the historic costume collection and teaching two museum courses. Please join me in thanking these scholars and teachers for their contribution to Family and Consumer Sciences.

Apparel Quality

Last year cotton prices rose 25 percent higher than the previous decade. This naturally trickled up to the cost of apparel. Many apparel producers were in a quandary. Should they lower quality to maintain their consumer's preferred price point? Or should they maintain quality, raise prices, and protect their reputations? As you can see from this Cotton



Interim Director



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Incorporated report below, the issue is complicated by what consumers do and do not know about textiles and apparel. If your clients complain about the high cost of apparel, remind them about the concept of cost-per-wear. You might end up paying more for your favorite brand of jeans, but you will probably wear them once a week for two years. Divide the price by the number of projected uses and it starts to look a lot better. I aim for under \$1 per wear or less for most items of clothing.

Cotton Incorporated Supply Chain Insights: Quality Conundrum

As nearly 20 years of declining U.S. apparel prices came to an end in 2011, fiber prices stabilized at rates 25 to 30 percent higher than in the previous decade. Confronted with these significant challenges, retailers and brands were left to find ways to minimize costs and to save margins. Reconstructing apparel with fewer or less expensive materials was a risk that many in the supply chain took in 2011, while simultaneously raising prices. According to the Consumer Price Index, apparel prices have risen 5.6 percent since the beginning of 2011. Many consumers noticed the changes in clothing quality and coupled with difficult economic conditions, resisted higher prices. Retailers were forced to cut some prices during the back-to-school and holiday sales seasons to encourage consumers to buy. Attempts to maintain profit margins by re-engineering products may have been detrimental to reputations throughout the industry and have continued into the first half of 2012.

BALANCING QUALITY AND PRICE

Quality and price have always been important to consumers. More than 9 out of 10 consumers say price

(92%) and quality (91%) are important in their apparel purchase decisions. Nearly two decades ago, the majority of consumers agreed they would pay more for better-quality clothing rather than sacrifice quality for a lower price. However, with the increase in low-priced mass merchants, cross-channel shopping, and the adoption of fast-fashion, the percentage of consumers willing to pay a premium for quality eroded. During the recession, the share of consumers willing to pay more for quality was surpassed by those stating that they were willing to sacrifice some quality for a better price. Current consumers' opinions were formed during a period when retailers and brands were not downgrading products and quality options were available at all types of retail channels.

Over the past year, consumers have noticed significant changes in apparel products being offered at retail. Nearly 7 out of 10 consumers (69%) say clothing prices have increased compared to last year, while nearly three-fourths (73%) say clothing does not last as long as it used to. The majority of consumers (60%) also say clothing fabrics have gotten thinner, and 41 percent say the quality of clothing has decreased. The changes consumers are noticing in clothes offerings at retail are directly related to their idea of "good quality." Consumers define good-quality clothing as "durable or long lasting" (58%), "made of good, strong fibers or materials" (23%), "made well" (12%), and "good value or worth the money" (11%). Over the past few years, consumers' definitions of quality clothing have not changed. However, savvy consumers realize that the quality of their clothing options has decreased, leading many consumers to believe they are paying more and getting less.

DISAPPOINTING DURABILITY

Clothing durability and longevity are areas where most consumers said they have seen a decline in apparel quality; however, consumers have expectations for how long their clothing should last. For example, according to Cotton Incorporated's Lifestyle Monitor™ Survey, consumers expect their jeans to last an average of four years. When consumers notice their jeans starting to fall apart after one year, retailers can expect to receive complaints from their customers. The Internet also provides dissatisfied customers with the opportunity to inform other potential buyers to beware as shown in the following comment from an apparel retailer's website:

Other factors that compromise the longevity of consumers' clothing relate to durability issues that result after laundering. In many cases, issues with clothing fading, shrinking, and pilling may be the fault of consumers' poor laundering habits; however, these problems can also be caused by changes in clothing quality, and ultimately consumers may associate these durability issues with the brand or retailer. More than eight out of ten con-

sumers have experienced their clothing fading (91%), pilling (87%), losing shape (84%), or shrinking (83%). Among those who have experienced durability issues, most say they are bothered when their clothing shrinks (85%), loses its shape (82%), pills (81%), or fades (78%).

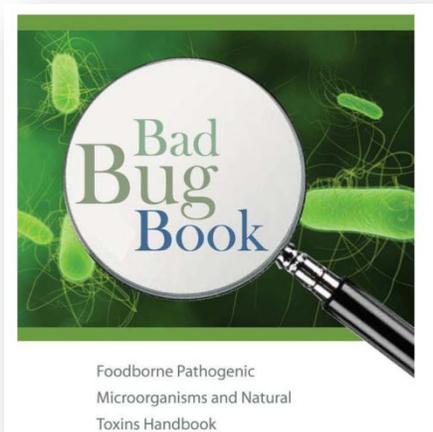
SWITCHING FIBERS

Due to escalating fiber prices in 2010/2011, some brands and retailers chose to switch fibers in key product categories, and consumers are aware of the change. More than half of consumers (54%) say they have observed a switch in clothing fibers away from cotton. Data from OTEXA on imported apparel coming into the U.S. showed cotton-dominant clothing (clothes containing 51% cotton or greater) declined 11.8 percent in 2011 compared to 2010, while man-made-dominant apparel imports increased 8.3 percent, indicating a switch from cotton to synthetic fibers among apparel importers. Because more than 6 out of 10 consumers (62%) say cotton clothing tends to be higher in quality than synthetic clothing, shifts away from cotton could be seen by many as a shift away from quality. More than half of consumers say they are bothered that retailers/brands would substitute synthetic fibers for cotton in their jeans (58%) and T-shirts (58%). The majority of consumers say they are even willing to pay a premium to keep cotton from being substituted in their jeans (63%) and T-shirts (58%), and some indicate plans to shift their spending dollars to retailers where they can find the quality they desire.

MANAGING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Due to consumers' evolving awareness of price versus quality, manufacturers will need to keep a focus on finding ways to add value to clothing. Regardless of the type of store, more than half of consumers have high quality expectations for clothing offered at department stores (84%), chain stores (80%), specialty stores (79%), off-price stores (57%), and mass merchants (50%). With higher prices at retail and tight budgets carried over from the recession, it makes sense that 73 percent of consumers expect to wear new clothing longer than in the past. Manufacturers must find ways to enhance quality in order to minimize clothing returns, prevent discounting, and restore brand reputation. Cotton Incorporated has recently published a DVD to assist in these efforts and to illustrate cost-saving ways to help navigate common clothing quality issues faced today. More information is available at cottoninc.com/rd/QualityCD. Because shoppers are savvier and less brand- and store-loyal than ever, it is essential that the apparel offered at retail meets their quality expectations.

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FDA Releases Updated “Bad Bug Book” with New Features

Last month (April 4, 2012) the U.S. Food and Drug Administration made available at its website the second edition of the *Bad Bug Book, Handbook of Foodborne Pathogenic Microorganisms and Natural Toxins*. In addition to updated scientific information, the book includes five new chapters (on *Cronobacter*, *Enterococcus*, *Francisella tularensis*, phytohaemagglutinin, and venomous fish).

Although the book is intended primarily for scientific and technical readers, each chapter now also includes a separate section for consumers. The consumer sections are written in everyday language and focus on food safety, including tips on how to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Most chapters have been expanded, and the scientific information in each has been reformatted. The new format enables readers to extract more easily from the chapter the specific information they seek. Examples include a separate section on the pathogen’s or toxin’s characteristics and habitats, and factors that affect its survival or stability; and separate sections on detection methods, food sources and analysis, and disease characteristics. Links to related information from other Federal agencies are included.

The announcement suggests users check the FDA website periodically, as more chapters will be added. The updated edition of the *Bad Bug Book* is



Food Safety

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available at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FoodborneIllness/FoodbornellnessFoodbornePathogensNaturalToxins/BadBugBook/default.htm>.

Keywords: food safety, resources, foodborne disease.



Online Tool to Help Farmers with Food Safety

During the heated debate two years ago that finally resulted in the Food Safety Modernization Act (passed by Congress in December 2010 and signed by President Obama on January 4, 2011; see “At Long Last, New Food Safety Bill Now Law,” in the January 2011 issue of *The Communicator*), small farmers were concerned about burdensome food safety regulations. The Tester amendment to the Act did provide certain exemptions for small farmers from the new food safety rules. Recently, an online tool was developed to make it easier for farmers of all sizes create customized food safety plans.

In announcing the online tool in December 2011, Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan said "Farmers want to work the land; they don't want to spend days upon days trying to figure out paperwork."

The free online tool was developed by FamilyFarmed.org, whose mission is "to expand the production, marketing and distribution of locally grown and responsibly produced food, in order to enhance the social, economic and environmental health of our communities." Funding was provided by USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). A broad range of input and expertise was used in development of the tool, from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to trade groups to agricultural extension specialists. Large buyers, which usually require GAP food safety certification, including Compass Group, SYSCO, and Chipotle Mexican Grill, also supported the project financially and with technical assistance. Groups that participated in the development and review of the tool include: Chipotle Mexican Grill, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Compass Group, Earthbound Farm, Farm Aid, FDA, NSF Agriculture, Produce Marketing Association, SYSCO, The Organic Center, Western Growers, Wallace Center at Winrock International, Wild Farm Alliance, University of California at Davis, United Fresh Produce Association, and USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The tool is expected to be especially helpful for small- and mid-sized farmers to achieve Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) harmonized standards and certification. USDA's GAP audit verification program, administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), focuses on best agricultural practices to verify that farms are producing fruits and vegetables in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. USDA's voluntary audit based program verifies adherence to the recommendations made in the Food and Drug Administration's *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*.

To generate a food safety plan using the tool, the user must answer a series of questions on topics including worker health and hygiene, agricultural water, previous land use, soil amendments and

manure, animals and pest control, packinghouse activities, product transportation, agricultural chemicals, and field harvesting. In addition to helping farmers create a food safety plan, the tool offers farmers a full-set of record keeping templates to document their food safety efforts as well as useful food safety resources.

Once users have completed their farm's food safety plan and compiled necessary documentation, they have the capacity to apply for GAP food safety certification, a certification required by many larger buyers.

"USDA believes that a strong farm safety net—including effective, market-based risk solutions for producers of all variety and size—is crucial to sustain the vitality of American agriculture," said Merrigan when the tool was announced. "Effectively managing risk is important to all producers, and having an acceptable food safety program is in the best interest of consumers, buyers, and the farmers themselves. USDA is proud to have worked with private, public, and non-profit partners to introduce this free tool to farmers seeking to gain certification as a Good Agricultural Practices producer."

The tool makes customizing a food safety program "approachable and less daunting," said Will Daniels, vice president for food safety for Earthbound Farm, explaining that some large-scale auditing schemes "really aren't made for everyone." "Food safety is not something that should be ignored by anybody. But it's not a one-size-fits-all. This is really going to advance food safety for small and mid-sized producers."

The tool is available at www.onfarmfoodsafety.org.

Source: USDA Office of Communications News Release, "Agriculture Deputy Secretary Merrigan Introduces New Risk Management Tool to Help Producers Achieve GAP Certification," Release No. 0517.11, Dec. 15, 2011, <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2011/12/0517.xml&contentidonly=true>; Bottemiller, H. "USDA Unveils Online Tool to Help Farmers With Food Safety," FoodSafetyNews.com, December 16, 2011.

Keywords: food production, food safety.



Diverging Trends for Dads

Two views of today's fathers are common in the popular press. One is the absent father, separated from his children through out-of-wedlock parenthood, desertion, or divorce. A second view is the increasingly engaged dad—outpacing his own father in daily activities with his children. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center researchers allows us to compare these images against current trends among American fathers.

U.S. Census data show that one in ten children lived apart from their fathers in 1960, increasing to one in four by 2010. Education and race figure prominently in the trends. Black fathers are twice as likely as white dads to live apart from their children, with Hispanic fathers in between, (44%, 21%, and 35% of fathers in the three groups respectively). Among high school dropout dads, 40 percent do not live with their children, compared with only 7 percent of college graduates.

Many nonresident dads consistently keep in contact with their children. Four in ten nonresident dads are in touch with their children several times a week, and one in five visit their children more than once a week. However, nearly 1/3 of nonresident dads contact their children less than once a month and 27 percent have not seen them in the past year.



Family Development



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Dads who live with their children have shown steadily increasing involvement with their children in recent decades. In 1965, married co-resident fathers spent an average of 2.6 hours per week caring for their children, rising slowly to 3 hours per week in 1985. But by 2000, dad time with resident children more than doubled to 6.5 hours per week. Though moms still logged in twice as much kid time (12.9 hours/week), the gap between mom and dad is closing. Common dad-child activities included sharing a meal, talking with children about their day, helping with homework, and taking children to and from activities. Resident fathers with children under five years report engaging with their child several times a week in play (98%), reading (60%), and caregiving (89%).

The desire for fatherhood is strong among American males—87 percent of childless males 15-44 years of age say they want to have children at some point. However, fatherhood is not seen as essential to happiness—only 8 percent of childless men say people can't be happy unless they have children. Among all adults, 57 percent agree that it is more difficult to be a father today than it was 20 or 30 years ago.

These data generally support the diverging images of dad evident in the media today. That is, there are more and more homes with fathers absent, and, at the same time, resident fathers are increasingly involved with the children they live with. Perhaps the one image under-represented in the media is

that of the actively engaged nonresident father—20-25 percent of nonresident dads—maintaining paternal relationships through shared custody, regular visits, phone, email, and social media.

Source: Livingston, G. & Parker, K., A Tale of Two Fathers, Pew Research Center: Social and demographic trends, 2011, www.pewsocialtrends.org.

Keywords: family, fathers, mothers.



Working Moms Feel Better than Stay-at-Home Moms

Mothers with jobs tend to be healthier and happier than moms who stay at home during their children's infancy and pre-school years, according to a new study. Researchers analyzed National Institute for Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development data, beginning in 1991 with interviews of 1,364 mothers shortly after their child's birth and including subsequent interviews and observations spanning more than 10 years. The findings were published in the December issue of American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology*®.

"In all cases with significant differences in maternal well-being, such as conflict between work and family or parenting, the comparison favored part-time work over full-time or not working," said lead author Cheryl Buehler, PhD, professor of human development and family studies, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. "However, in many cases

the well-being of moms working part time was no different from moms working full time."

For example, mothers employed part time reported better overall health and fewer symptoms of depression than stay-at-home moms, while there were no reported differences in general health or depressive symptoms between moms employed part time and those who worked full time, the study said.

The part-time and full-time working moms also showed no significant differences when it came to the women's perception that their employment supported family life, including their ability to be a better parent, the authors wrote.

The analysis found that mothers employed part time were just as involved in their child's school as stay-at-home moms, and more involved than moms who worked full time. In addition, mothers working part time appeared more sensitive with their pre-school children and they provided more learning opportunities for toddlers than stay-at-home moms and moms working full time.

Particularly in tough economic times, employers looking for cost savings hire part-time employees because they typically do not receive the same level of benefits, such as health insurance, training and career advancement, the authors pointed out.

"Since part-time work seems to contribute to the strength and well-being of families, it would be beneficial to employers if they provide fringe benefits, at least proportionally, to part-time employees as well as offer them career ladders through training and promotion," said study co-author Marion O'Brien, PhD, professor of human development and family studies, also of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Source: American Psychological Association, www.apa.org, December 12, 2011.

Keywords: mothers, work and family.



The Number of Whole Grain Products Continue to Increase

Global Industry Analysts (GIA), a marketing research company, recently reported two major findings in their April 2012 report, *Whole Grain and High Fiber Foods*. The first was that they predicted that the global market for these products will reach \$27.6 billion by 2017 and the second was that the U.S. would lead the world in producing them.

Three factors driving the growth of Whole Grain and High Fiber products include:

- Improved flavor and taste of whole grain and high fiber products
- An increase in consumer awareness of health benefits of these products
- Promotion of whole grain consumption in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

In the U.S., a market research company, Global New Products Database (GNPD) began collecting data in 2000 on the number of new whole grain products that were launched. They found that there were approximately 20 times as many new whole grain products launched in 2011 than in 2000. Specifically, in 2000, 164 new whole grain products were launched and 3,378 in 2011. Most of the new whole grain products fall into three categories: whole grain bakery products, whole grain breakfast cereals, and whole grain snacks.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating three daily servings of whole grains daily to help prevent type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, several types of cancers, and excess weight gain. Unfortunately, various studies have shown



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that teens and young adults consume approximately ½ serving of whole grain per day and adults consume approximately one serving of whole grain per day.

Spokesman at GIA stated, “By providing whole grain products that provide long-term health benefits, food companies are allowing consumers to make a transition towards a healthy diet.”

Source: http://www.strategyr.com/Whole_Grain_And_High_Fiber_Foods_Market_Report.asp; February 2010, *JADA*, Whole Grain Consumption by Teens and Young Adults Falls Short of Recommendations; <http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/newsroom/whole-grain-statistics>.

Keyword: whole grains.

Which Beverages Went Up or Down in Consumption in 2011?

The Beverage Marketing Corporation, a research consulting beverage firm, reported that total U.S. liquid refreshment intake during 2011 was 29.54 billion gallons. This was a slight increase, 0.9 per-



cent, over beverage consumption in 2010. Beverage consumption peaked in 2007, at 30.38 billion gallons, just before the recession started to make an impact.

The percentage increase (+) or decrease (-) in consumption of various beverages in 2011 is listed below:

- energy drinks (+14.4%)
- ready to drink coffee (+9.4%)
- sports beverages (+8.8%)
- ready to drink tea (+4.8%)
- bottled water(+4.1%)
- carbonated soft drinks (-1.7%)
- fruit beverages (-2.1%)

The most popular energy drink was Monster ® and Gatorade ® was the most popular sports beverage. Gatorade ® hit a milestone with 1.028 billion gallons being consumed in 2011.

Even though carbonated soft drink consumption decreased, it still accounted for almost half of the total beverage volume intake at 13.6 billion gallons. Dr. Pepper and Coke Zero were two soft drinks that had an increase in consumption.

Source: <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Market/The-rise-and-rise-of-energy-drinks-New-data-shows-14.4-volume-surge-in-2011>.

Keywords: beverage, soda.

Health Care Costs of Obesity

Two studies have found obesity increases health care costs. In the first study, researchers at the Mayo Clinic compared health care costs of 30,000 employees and retirees who were smokers, non-smokers, or obese from 2001 to 2007.

They found that average annual health costs were \$1,275 higher for smokers than nonsmokers. Those who were obese paid approximately \$1,850 more annually in health care costs than those who were normal-weight. Those who were morbidly obese (100 pounds above their ideal body weight) had excess costs of up to \$5,500 per year.

In the second study, researchers at Cornell University found that obesity now accounts for 21 percent of U.S. health care costs. Obese individuals paid \$2,741 more in medical costs annually than non-obese individuals. Nationwide, this adds up to \$190.2 billion per year in health care expenditures. They found that being obese raises the costs of treating almost any medical condition.

Effective weight loss programs are necessary to help lower medical costs.

Source: www.joem.org, April 2012; *Journal of Health Economics*, January 2012.

Keyword: obesity.

Weight Loss Aids—What Works?

Approximately 2/3 of Americans are either overweight or obese and many are trying to lose weight. Researchers at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston monitored weight loss of 4,021 obese patients between 2001 and 2006 and what weight loss strategies were most effective.

Approximately 41 percent (1,021) lost 5 percent of their body weight. Even though this seems like a small amount, studies have shown that small reduction can improve health.

The strategies that helped them lose weight were:

- eating less food
- eating less fat
- switching to foods with fewer calories

The strategies that did not help them lose weight were:

- drinking more water
- eating “diet foods or products”
- using nonprescription diet pills, including herbal remedies
- following a “liquid-diet formula”

Overall, a common sense strategy of eating less food or fewer calories helped them lose weight.

Source: <http://www.ajpmonline.org>, April 2012.

Keyword: diet.