

CARE LABELING OF CARPETS AND RUGS: AVAILABILITY
AND USE BY SELECTED CARPET DEALERS AND
HOMEMAKERS IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

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PREFACE

This study considers the subject of availability and use of care labeling of carpets and rugs. The major areas of investigation of the study are: (1) the availability of information on carpet care; (2) the use of the information, and (3) the information which the consumer would like to see on carpeting labels.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Families today are more mobile than ever before. However, moving from place to place presents no major problem. Furnishings can be moved or sold when the distance families move is great. This mobility and a greater affluence in America have caused homemakers to be more style conscious than in previous times. Homemakers today know that they are able to change their furnishings when styles change. It is very likely that they will not expect their carpet to last a lifetime. However, since carpeting is an expensive investment, longevity of carpet life is still a major factor to many homemakers.

"The emphasis on style, color, and texture in carpets and rugs has increased the last five years."¹ The use of synthetics, alone or with natural fibers, has given carpets and rugs a new dimension in styling. Since synthetics are being used in carpeting, methods of cleaning and caring for carpets are not familiar to the homemaker. Many homemakers lack the knowledge necessary to care for carpets properly. This lack of knowledge can lead to damage of the carpet. "Fiber damage is often the result of careless selection of a cleaning chemical or use of one type of chemical for all types of rugs."²

Most carpet labels give no information regarding proper care of the carpet. "Labeling of rugs and carpets is almost entirely limited to giving the kind of material used and the type of construction."³

United States legislation requires that all textile products must include a label of fiber content. However, rugs and carpets are specifically excluded from the provisions of the Wool Products Labeling Act. The specifications which are required for rugs and carpets are definitions of the type of construction, character of raw materials, workmanship, colorfastness, weight in sizing, and minimum requirements as to pitch, shots, wires, frames, and/or rows according to the type of fabric. These specifications have little bearing on the manner in which the homemaker will care for the carpet, and they may add to the confusion which may arise when the homemaker has to clean her carpeting.

Consumer educators and researchers have been slow in recognizing that homemakers know very little about carpeting. Even as early as 1929, Christine Frederick states:

Further, I have checked up on numerous places and bureaus where the consumer is educated to better home values, and found that the subject of carpets and rugs is scarcely mentioned to students taking household courses, or to women who come to secure more information on running their homes.⁴

This study has considered the subject of availability and use of care labeling of carpets and rugs. The major concerns of the study are: (1) the availability of information on carpet wear and care, (2) the use of information by the consumer, and (3) the information which the consumer wants to know regarding care of carpet and rugs.

The instruments used to obtain the data required specific answers except in five instances where opinions were requested. Two brief schedules were used to facilitate responses: one for carpet dealers, the other for homemakers.

The sample for this study consisted of seven carpet dealers and forty homemakers who had purchased carpeting or who had moved into a

home with carpeting within the last two years. The interviews were held at the convenience of those included in the sample.

It is hoped that this study will be beneficial to consumers and manufacturers. This study may also be beneficial to consumer educators who are interested in helping consumers become aware of labeling and of information given on labels.

FOOTNOTES

¹Isabel B. Wingate, Karen R. Gillespie, and Betty G. Addison, Know Your Merchandise, Third Edition (Dallas: Gregg Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 280.

²The National Observer, The Consumer's Handbook (Princeton, New Jersey: Dow Jones Books, 1969), p. 12.

³Jessie V. Coles, Standards and Labels for Consumers' Goods (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1949), p. 480.

⁴Christine Frederick, Selling Mrs. Consumer (New York: The Business Bourse, 1929), p. 216.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Textile products are labeled to identify the product, to aid the businessman in selling his product, and to aid the consumer in making an intelligent decision. Textile products may be labeled in various ways, such as printed information on the bolt, spool, or wrapper; information woven into or printed on the selvage; printed label pasted onto the item; hang tag attached to the item; or a woven or printed label permanently attached. Other labeling can be stamped on the product.

There are three classifications into which all labels are placed. They are the brand labels, the certification labels, and the informative labels. Brand labels are "a distinctive mark, design, symbol, word, or combination of these used to identify the goods of a particular seller, a single design or 'line' of a manufacturer."¹ Trademarks are brand labels.

Certification labels, such as DuPont's certification labels which appear on some carpeting, are labels that indicate that an item has been tested by a laboratory which maintains fixed standards of quality. Certification labels are sometimes referred to as "seals of approval."

A certification label which appears on carpeting is the "seal of cleanability." Carpets are labeled in this manner if, after testing, they stand up to the various types of professional cleaning. The types

of tests are the professional cleaning operations and the spot removal operations. Professional cleaning operations include:

- (1) Mechanical rug dusting test
- (2) Plant rotary brush on cleaning floor with rinsing, use of squeegee and removal of excess water by vacuuming. Drying by hanging in heated dry room.
- (3) Installed reciprocating brush machine with pressure jet and rinsing, excess water removed by squeeze roll wringer. Drying by hanging in heated dry room.
- (4) Roll-a-jet machine with rinsing, excess water removed by squeeze roll wringer. Drying by hanging in heated dry room.
- (5) "On-location" rotary brush shampoo followed by drying at room temperature in place.
- (6) Steam cleaning followed by drying at room temperature in place. Depending upon the carpeting, the following cleaning procedures may be used:
 - (7) Absorbent dry-cleaning powder. The powder is applied by hand and then worked into the pile with a power-driven brush; the powder vacuumed off and then dried at room temperature.
 - (8) Immersion wash wheel, water extraction by centrifuge, drying by drying tumbler.
 - (9) Cleaning test by modified drycleaning process, extraction by centrifuge, drying by tumbler at moderate temperatures.²

Spot reagent testing determines the effect of spotting reagents used on fourteen commonly encountered spotting agents in the home or by professional rug cleaners. It also evaluates the effect of wetting by soaking and setting agents where the effect of various detergents and other cleaning and setting agents is noted.

Manufacturers must make application to the National Institute of Rug Cleaning, Inc., for the use of the seal of cleanability. The seal is awarded for one year from the date of issuance and can be renewed annually. If the product does not meet the requirements of the National

Institute of Rug Cleaning, Inc., technical advice and counsel will be available to correct the faults of the product.

Seals of cleanability tell the consumer that a carpet has been tested under professional cleaning processes. However, these tests do not include the effects of in-service wear, soiling, spots and stains, atmospheric gases, fungus, bacterial attack, light fading or possible deteriorating factors not specifically connected with professional cleaning procedures. These tests evaluate the effect of spot removal agents, detergent and wetting effects, heating effect tests, pile appearance, dimensional changes, and loss or change of color. They are conducted on new carpeting and the results of these tests are not necessarily valid for carpeting in use.

Informative labels include information which helps the consumer make a wise choice and care for an item properly. These labels should state fiber content, fabric structure, special finishes that give specific appearance or serviceability qualities, directions and precautions on proper use and care. The label should also have the size of the item and the name and address of the manufacturer. Informative labels also include information required by legislation.

Informative labels are the best method of assuring good trade practice. They allow the consumer to decide whether the product is the quality he desires.

According to one school of thought, an informative label should include as much technical information as possible concerning the product. With regard to textiles for example, the label should include such information as breaking strength and number of yarns to the inch in both warp and filling; its resistance to fading in light, laundering or cleaning, dry and wet pressing, atmospheric gases, etc.; its resistance to water penetration depending on the use of the products; its fiber content; and other characteristics depending on the type of product and its use.³

There are other persons who indicate that similar labels which include reference only in compliance with standards of quality of national recognition amplified where necessary by instructions concerning care in the use of the product. These instructions may include such items of care as will indicate whether the product is washable or should be dry-cleaned, and, if washable, the method to be used.⁴

Many labels which appear on carpeting give only information concerning fiber content, color, carpet structure and pattern, standard sizes, and the address of the manufacturer (Appendix B, Figure 1). Other carpeting may include labels with more information such as seals of approval or guarantees (Appendix B, Figure 2). Still other labels include information which is helpful in cleaning (Appendix B, Figure 3).

"Care of textile products is an important element in consumer-ship."⁵ Care of textile products refers to care during wearing or using these products, but it also refers to conditions of cleaning and maintenance of the products. From the viewpoint of cleaning we can safely assume that the better the care, the longer the wear.

The removal of stains from a textile product is an important factor in maintenance of any textile product. "It is not an experiment to be made blindly, however, because the success of the operation depends upon the chemical characteristics of the textile fiber, finishing agent, and dye as well as the agency causing the stain."⁶

In carpeting a variety of fibers are used. These fibers include acrylics, modacrylics, polyester, polypropylene, wool, cotton, rayon, acetate, saran, and blends. Padding for carpeting can be all hair, hair and jute, rubberized hair, or all rubber. Carpets are generally backed with jute although other materials may be used. Each generic class of fibers is characterized by certain properties and, because of

these properties, react differently to cleaning agent. Homemakers may not be interested in identifying fibers per se, but they are interested in knowing how certain fibers will perform under general maintenance procedures.

Some properties of carpet fibers affect cleaning methods. Among these properties are strength of the fiber, wet strength, moisture regain, extensibility, elasticity, abrasion resistance, resiliency, and special finishes.

Strength refers to the amount of force that a fiber can withstand. High tensile strength produces a stronger end product. "However, low tensile strength of a fiber can be compensated for in construction of yarn and fabric and in finishing processes."⁷ An example of this is in the case of wool.

Some natural fibers are outstanding in regard to strength while other natural fibers are not. There is a wide range in the strengths of natural fibers because in natural fibers there is less uniformity than in manufactured fibers. Many synthetic fibers are produced in high strengths as well as regular strengths.

Wet strength is an important factor in cleaning since many fibers lose strength when wet. Many fibers, on the other hand, gain strength when wet and this makes them easy to care for.

Of the natural fibers, cotton gains strength when wet. Wool decreases in strength when wet. Of the synthetic fibers, the cellulose, cellulose acetates, and protein fibers decrease in strength. Nylons, acrylics, and polyesters are man-made fibers which maintain the same strength wet or dry.

The amount of moisture that textile fibers absorb from the atmosphere is referred to as moisture regain. Moisture regain is an important factor in the dyeing and drying of fibers. Other factors which may, however, influence these processes are yarn and fabric construction.

Extensibility, elasticity, and abrasion resistance play an important role in laundering. Extensibility refers to the amount of extension that a fiber will accept while elasticity refers to the percent of return from elongation toward original length.

Abrasion resistance is the degree to which a fabric can withstand the friction of rubbing or chafing. "The newer man-made fibers, such as nylon, acrylics, and polyesters, have good abrasion resistance, but the natural fibers do not have this property."⁸ To solve the problem of fibers with low abrasion resistance, fibers of high abrasion resistance are mixed with those of low abrasion resistance. Thermoplastic resins, particularly acrylic, may be used but these resin finishes may increase wet-soiling of the fabrics.

"Resiliency is the ability of a fiber to bounce back or return to shape following compression, bending, or similar deformation."⁹ This property is closely related to extensibility and elasticity; good elastic recovery indicates good resiliency.

Finishes are applied to fabrics to enhance their qualities. Finishes can be mechanical or chemical, permanent or renewable, general or functional, or those which do or do not alter appearance. These finishes influence care of the fabrics to which they are applied. Many finishes reduce the amount of care required for fabric maintenance.

Dyes can also affect cleaning methods. Many dyes are not fast to washing; however, better dyes are considered to be fast to washing.

There are two distinct kinds of dyestuffs: the natural dyes and the artificial dyes. Natural dyes are obtained from plants and insects and offer a wide range of dyes for the rugs and carpets on which they are used.

Many of these natural materials are now synthesized in chemical plants and laboratories; others have been abandoned as synthetic dyestuffs of superior quality have been perfected to produce better and more permanent color.¹⁰

Artificial dyes are obtained primarily from coal-tar. "There are at present hundreds of dyestuffs made from coal-tar products, which produce an enormous variety of shades, hues, and pure colors."¹¹ The coal-tar dyes are pure, and they result in colors which are crude and hard. These colors may also fade to ugly tones. However, the manufacturers of these dyes employ chemists to discover new dyes and to perfect the method of using those already known since beautiful and fast colors may be obtained more cheaply and with greater certainty with coal-tar dyes.

Dyes can be applied to carpets in different ways. They can be applied to the fibers, the yarn, or the carpet fabric itself.

The method of applying color to the fiber is called fiber dyeing or stock dyeing. "This provides the possibility of deep penetration of the dye into the fiber that gives uniform color and a tendency to greater colorfastness."¹²

In the case of synthetic fibers, color may be added to the chemical solution before it is forced through the spinnerettes. This method produces a color which is uniform and also fast to most outside influences. This method of dyeing is especially important in coloring acetate fibers and the olefin fibers.

Yarn dyeing is one of the oldest methods of coloring textile products. This method is economical and successful since it provides good color absorption and adequate penetration.

Piece dyeing is the easiest method for adding color to a finished fabric. This is also a very inexpensive method. By using this method manufacturers can color fabrics as they are ordered. Piece dyeing does not always provide deep penetration of colors. Piece dyed articles are usually one color, but variations in fibers can produce variations in color if the various fibers do not accept the colors in the same manner.

Union dyeing indicates that a fabric composed of more than one fiber has been dyed one color. For this method dyes must be mixed properly in order to insure uniform color.

In cross dyeing, fabrics of two or more fibers may be dyed so that each fiber accepts a different dyestuff and becomes a different color. In this method, the dyebath is sometimes planned so that certain fibers will accept no color and will remain white.

Although fiber properties, the type of weave, the firmness of the construction, and the quality of yarns used help to determine durability, longevity is largely dependent upon the care the carpet receives while in service. Manufacturers of carpets feel that a cleaning schedule should be set up by homemakers to insure thorough cleaning of carpets. They have set up a three-step carpet care program which gives the following instructions:

1. Vacuum frequently
2. Remove spots immediately¹³
3. Clean before too soiled.

The home cleaning schedule should include complete and thorough cleaning of carpets with an electric cleaner at least twice a week or

more often if necessary. Carpet dirt should be removed from the carpet soon after it enters the rug; stains should be removed immediately. Carpet cleaning sometimes needs to be supplemented by a thorough shampooing. Although many products are recommended to give good results, shampooing at a reliable rug cleaning establishment may give the best results.

A knowledge of the materials which make up carpet dirt imparts an appreciation for the need of thorough cleaning of carpets.

Carpet dirt is made up of three general types of material:

1. Surface litter, such as lint, hair, threads, ravelings, and sewing-room scraps.
2. Light clinging dirt which is deposited on the top of the rug by air currents but is worked about half-way down into the pile tufts by the tread of feet on the carpet. This type of carpet dirt is quite readily removed even by the least effective electric cleaner. After it is removed the carpet appears clean at the surface although large quantities of dirt may remain farther down in the pile tufts and in the furrows between the rows of pile.
3. A heavier type of dirt composed of fine sand, powdered clay, powdered limestone, gypsum, etc., bound together by sticky substances such as asphalt, grease, rubber, oils and fats present in quantities as great as one-half pound to every ten pounds of dirt.¹⁴

There are three significant mechanisms by which soil is retained by carpet fibers. These mechanisms are macro-occlusion, micro-occlusion, and sorption. Macro-occlusion is the "entrapment of particles in the interyarn spaces."¹⁵ When soil is held in this way, it can be removed by sweeping or vacuuming. Micro-occlusion is the entrapment of particles in the irregularities of the fiber surfaces. These particles are difficult to remove by mechanical cleaning methods. In sorption, particles are held at the surface or within the pores and crevices of the fiber. One type of sorption is the oil bonding of soil

to fiber. In this case, it is sometimes impossible to remove the particles by mechanical cleaning methods.

Carpet stains fall roughly into three groups:

1. Water soluble stains, which usually respond to the detergent solution.
2. Oily materials, which respond to dry-cleaning fluids.
3. Materials that combine water soluble stains and oily stains and must first be cleaned with a detergent solution and, when dry, with cleaning fluid.

Surface litter and light clinging dirt are easily removed since they remain generally above the pile. However, heavy dirt works to the base of the pile tufts where it can damage the carpet. The grease and oil of heavy dirt cause the dirt particles to cling to the fibers and damage them; they also cause the fibers to become dull and lose their original color.

Brooms should never be used to clean the pile of carpets. The ends of brooms have sharp points and rough edges. These factors, coupled with the pressure used in sweeping, tear pile fibers and hasten the wearing process. Brooms are ineffective in cleaning carpets and, besides damaging the fibers, they tend to embed dirt into them.

Carpet sweepers are used to a large extent by homemakers. They have an advantage in that their expense is low in comparison to their efficiency; they have soft bristles and are less destructive, and they eliminate dust caused by sweeping. Carpet sweepers, however, are capable of removing only surface dirt.

Electric vacuum cleaners produce satisfactory results in cleaning carpet pile. "A vacuum cleaner with a revolving agitator bar or brush and strong suction not only removes surface dust but the deeper embedded dirt particles as well."¹⁶

"After a period of time, even with consistent use of the vacuum cleaner, the appearance of your carpet may be dulled by an accumulation of soil which is not readily removed by sweeping or brushing."¹⁷ Home cleaning can be used to improve the appearance of the carpet. Home cleaning, however, cannot be used as a substitute for professional cleaning, but it can brighten the carpet surface.

There are three types of home cleaning methods. These methods are: (1) the dry method, using an absorbent powder-type cleaner; (2) the wet method, using a water-and-detergent solution; and (3) foam spray.

The dry method consists of vacuuming thoroughly, sprinkling the powder liberally over the carpet, then vacuuming thoroughly once again. This method of carpet cleaning is not as thorough as wet cleaning, but it has its advantages since there is less distortion of texture, better removal of greasy soil, no color bleeding and less drying time, thus making the area available faster.

The wet method uses a neutral detergent or a commercial rug shampoo. Only the foam of the cleaning solution should be used to avoid wetting the back. After the foam is applied, the carpet should be dried thoroughly. Carpet pile should then be raked or brushed to restore pile. This method of cleaning is not recommended for continuous use since it does leave a residue on the pile which may increase soiling.

The foam spray method is a relatively new method. "The procedure for this method is to spray a thin layer of foam on the carpet, sponge in with a sponge mop and then vacuum when dry."¹⁸ The dry-foam method is suitable for cleaning carpets where there is heavy traffic that

never stops completely. Because of the low moisture content this process requires comparatively little time.

Plant cleaning methods are more thorough than on-location methods. Plants use several methods but all in-plant cleaning involves the three basic steps of dusting, cleaning and drying.

Carpet wear is caused primarily by dust, sand, and grit that are constantly tracked onto the carpet. Grit and sand work into the pile and cut the pile. Before plant cleaning this soil must be removed in a dusting machine.

The dusting machine is a mechanical version of the handwielded rug beater. A cylinder feeds the carpet into the machine as rotating arms with leather straps remove all dirt from the carpet. This dirt is collected in bags by a vacuum apparatus. Some dusting machines use highspeed vibrators so that some of the noise is eliminated.

The carpet goes to the wash floor after it has been dusted. At this stage, any pre-spotting or pre-washing is done if the carpet is badly soiled. Following this step, the carpet is cleaned by the jet spray system, the reciprocating brush system, or a combination of both.

In the reciprocating brush method the rug is fed in either on a turning cylinder or a flat bed. This brings the carpet under a line of jet nozzles, through which detergent is spread. Reciprocating brushes work the detergent into the fibers. Then the rug is rinsed under spray nozzles. After rinsing, the carpet passes through squeeze rolls where the water is extracted.

The jet spray method does not employ any brushes at all. As the rug is fed in, it passes under a set of nozzles which force detergent into the pile under high pressure. Next the carpet passes under rollers

with rubber teeth which work the detergent into the fibers. The carpet is then rinsed and passed between squeeze rolls.

If the rug is too large to pass through a machine, it is cleaned on the wash floor in a manner similar to on-location work. This method can be even more effective than automatic cleaning if it is done properly.

After the carpet is cleaned, it is suspended in a drying room where it stays approximately six hours. Air at a temperature of 145°F is circulated through ducts in the ceiling.

There are two important elements in successful spotting. "The most important element in successful spotting is immediate action."¹⁹ Many staining materials will react with fibers and cause permanent damage if given time. Practically any stain can be removed if attended to at once. The second important element in successful spotting is perserverance. Certain stains require time and patience if they are to be removed.

There are numerous spotting agents in general use. These agents include paint, oil, and grease removers; volatile solvents; detergents; amyl acetate; ammonia; acetic acid; hydrofluoric acid; and spray preparations.

When removing spots, excess stain should be broken up and vacuumed if it is hard or removed with a spoon and tissue if it is semi-liquid or liquid. Some liquid stains can be completely absorbed if immediate action is taken. Before using a cleaning agent, it is best to try it on an inconspicuous spot. Spots should never be rubbed with a rag or brush; this will only spread the stain and distort the pile. Spots should be removed starting from the edge working towards the center.

This will prevent the formation of a ring. A small amount of cleaning agent should be applied to the spot, and it should be removed with absorbent tissues. Press the stain; do not rub it. The application of the cleaning agent and absorption of the stain and agent should be repeated until the stain is gone. When the stain is gone, use a fan or weighted tissues to dry the area rapidly.

Simple care procedures may be common knowledge, but the consumer needs more precise information so that the guesswork can be taken out of cleaning. Specific cleaning information should be provided by the manufacturer. If only mandatory information is given on a label, consumers must make assumptions about other information. These assumptions may sometimes be incorrect.

Consumers sometimes have a tendency to assume that a purchase will perform well under general wear and care. Few questions may be asked at the time of purchase about quality after cleaning. Other consumers, however, must rely on the purchasing proficiency of someone other than themselves. In the case of contract carpeting, selling is done on a bid basis and the carpeting is bought by someone other than the end user. Contract carpeting includes the areas of hospitals, schools, hotels, offices, apartments, and other buildings and may soon represent fifty percent of all carpet sales.

Many consumers do not realize the important role they should play in developing standards for textiles. Consumers should recognize and assume this responsibility. Information on performance of a textile product should go back to the manufacturer. If corrections should be made, the manufacturer will make them.

Manufacturers are interested in seeing that consumers get their money's worth. The entire textile industry welcomes legitimate consumer complaints. They are doing their part by giving to consumers the best possible results of their scientific research. Consumers can do their part by requesting information that they would like to have. Through the shared efforts of the consumer and the manufacturer comes progress.

FOOTNOTES

¹The American Home Economics Association, Textile Handbook, Fourth Edition (Washington, D. C.: The American Home Economics Association), p. 90.

²National Institute of Rug Cleaning, Inc., "'Seal of Cleanability': Testing Procedures" (Enclosure, personal letter from Richard N. Hopper, Technical Director, Association of Interior Decor Specialists, Inc., 1815 North Fort Myer Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22209).

³H. F. Herrman, "Informative Labeling of Textiles," American Dye-stuff Reporter, 35 (December, 1946), p. 617.

⁴Ibid., p. 98.

⁵Jules Labarthe, Textiles: Origins to Usage (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), p. 491.

⁶Ibid., p. 498.

⁷The American Home Economics Association, p. 2.

⁸Isabel B. Wingate, Textile Fabrics and Their Selection (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 167.

⁹Marjory L. Joseph, Introductory Textile Science (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), p. 19.

¹⁰Labarthe, p. 83.

¹¹Charlotte M. Gibbs, Household Textiles (Boston: M. Barrows and Company, 1926), p. 131.

¹²Joseph, p. 371.

¹³American Cyanamid Company, "3-Step Care for Carpets" (111 West 40th Street, New York 18, New York).

¹⁴Madge E. Dilts, Carpets and Rugs (North Canton, Ohio: The Hoover Company, 1934), p. 33.

¹⁵Dow Badische Company, "Cleaning and Spotting Carpets" (Williamsburg, Virginia, June, 1968), p. 1.

¹⁶Eastman Chemical Products, Inc., "When You're Thinking of Buying Carpeting . . . Think Kodel" (113 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York, 10036), p. 10.

¹⁷Carpet and Rug Institute, Inc., "Carpet and Rug Care Guide" (Dalton, Georgia, 30720), p. 10.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁹Dow Badische, p. 15.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

This study has considered the subject of availability and use of care labeling for carpets and rugs. The major concerns of the study are: (1) the availability of information on carpet care, (2) the use of the information, and (3) the information which the consumer wants to know regarding care of carpets and rugs.

Schedules (see Appendix A) for personal interviews with carpet dealers and for interviews with homemakers were designed to investigate the availability of information on carpet care, the use of the information, and the information that homemakers would like to see on labels.

The questions appearing on the schedules required specific answers except in five instances where opinions were requested. Brief schedules were used to facilitate better response.

The interviews for the carpet dealers were held during business hours at their places of business and at the convenience of those interviewed. Homemakers were interviewed within their homes, having previously been contacted by telephone, or they were interviewed in the Department of Housing and Interior Design at their convenience. All of the interviews were conducted by the writer.

The sample for this study consisted of seven dealers and forty homemakers who had purchased carpeting or who had moved into a home or apartment with carpeting within the last two years.

The carpet dealers were selected from the listings of carpet and rug dealers in the yellow pages of the Stillwater telephone directory. The names of homemakers interviewed were obtained from the files of carpet dealers and from students at Oklahoma State University who volunteered their participation.

The sample of homemakers was limited to those who had acquired carpeting in the last two years in order that the homemakers would have had enough time to evaluate the maintenance performance of their carpeting and yet have a recent recollection of labeling or type of information regarding care of the carpeting.

Six of the seven carpet dealers included in the study indicated that care labeling rarely accompanied carpeting. One carpet dealer indicated that he received care labeling occasionally. However, all dealers commented that this information is sometimes supplied in the form of pamphlets. The dealers felt, however, that these pamphlets are easily overlooked or lost.

All of the carpet dealers indicated that they requested more information from manufacturers concerning care. This information is used by five of the seven carpet dealers for promotional purposes. All of the carpet dealers used care information in selling since they felt that this information influences purchases made.

A full representation of fibers used in carpets was indicated by homemakers in the study. However, synthetic fibers were indicated more frequently than natural fibers. Only 27 percent of the homemakers indicated that the fiber content was unknown to them.

Forty-seven percent of the homemakers selected their carpeting personally while fifty-three percent of the homemakers moved into homes

where carpeting was previously installed. However, 85 percent of all the homemakers had cleaned their carpeting personally at the time of the study while only 15 percent had had their carpets cleaned professionally.

Of the homemakers who personally selected their carpeting, 30 percent obtained information on wear, 27 percent obtained information on care, 25 percent obtained information on fiber content, 5 percent obtained information on colorfastness, 12 percent obtained information on resiliency, and 5 percent obtained other information such as fiber properties and types of carpet shampoos to use.

Twenty-five percent of the homemakers indicated that the information obtained from salespeople affected their decision in purchasing. Fifteen percent of the homemakers indicated that their final decision was not affected by this information.

Of those who had seen labels, 25 percent of the homemakers indicated that labels for the carpeting which they selected were easily seen. Seven percent indicated that the label was not easily seen while thirty percent indicated that they had not seen any type of label for their carpeting.

When selecting their carpeting, 17 percent of the homemakers indicated that the information on the label affected their decision in purchasing. Thirty-five percent indicated that the information on the label did not affect their purchasing.

Of those who responded, 17 percent of the homemakers felt that information regarding cleaning the carpeting was adequate, while 37 percent felt that it was inadequate (see Figure 1).

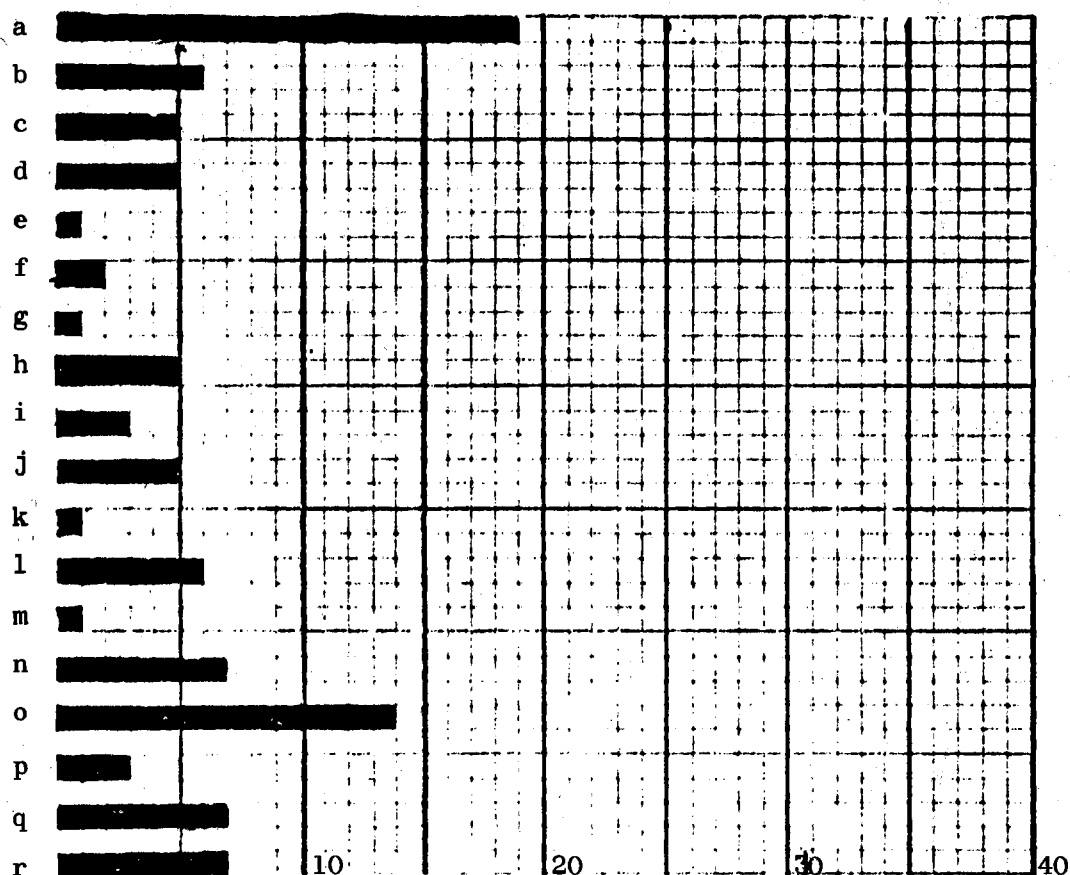


Figure 1. Findings on Homemakers Who Selected Carpeting Personally

a - selected carpeting personally; b - obtained information on wear; c - obtained information on care; d - obtained information on fiber content; e - obtained information on colorfastness; f - obtained information on resiliency; g - obtained other information ; h - information affected decision; i - information did not affect decision; j - no response; k - label easily seen; l - label not easily seen; m - no label; n - label affected decision; o - label did not affect decision; p - no response; q - information was adequate; r - information was inadequate.

Thirty-seven percent of the homemakers used the information on the labels to select carpeting which was appropriate for their needs as compared to thirty-two percent who did not.

Of the homemakers who did not personally select their carpeting, 25 percent knew the fiber content of the carpeting while 42 percent did not. Thirty-two percent made attempts to learn the make-up of their carpeting while thirty-seven percent did not (see Figure 2).

All of the homemakers in the study were interested in having information which recommends products for carpet care and which gives step-by-step methods of cleaning. However, only 32 percent indicated that care instructions were given in the form of labels as compared to 30 percent who indicated that labels of this type were not available. Thirty percent indicated that the instructions were easily understood while two percent indicated that they were not.

Of those instances where there were not instructions, 17 percent of the homemakers asked salespeople for instructions while 22 percent did not. Seventeen percent of the homemakers who sought information indicated that the salespeople seemed informed on care instructions while thirty-two percent indicated the salespeople were inadequately informed.

Fifty-five percent of the homemakers indicated a knowledge of properties of the fibers which make up their carpeting and how these fibers react to water, detergents, and other cleaning agents. Forty-five percent of the homemakers indicated a lack of knowledge concerning these factors. Ninety-seven percent of the homemakers indicated the belief that understanding of these properties would impart a greater

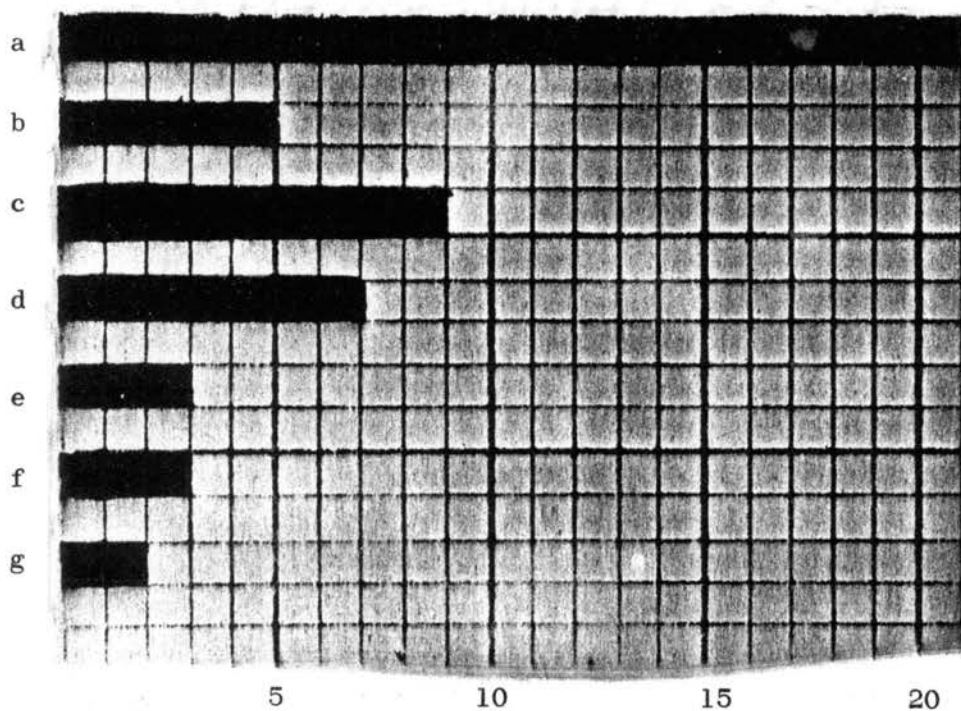


Figure 2. Findings on Homemakers Who Did Not Select Carpeting Personally

- a - Did not personally select
- b - Knew fiber content
- c - Did not know fiber content
- d - Did not respond
- e - Made attempts to learn
- f - Did not make attempts to learn
- g - Did not respond

understanding of care procedures for carpeting. Only three percent felt that this information was not useful to them (see Figure 3).

Ninety-seven percent of the homemakers indicated a desire for labels with information on spot and stain removal. Only three percent felt that this information was not necessary.

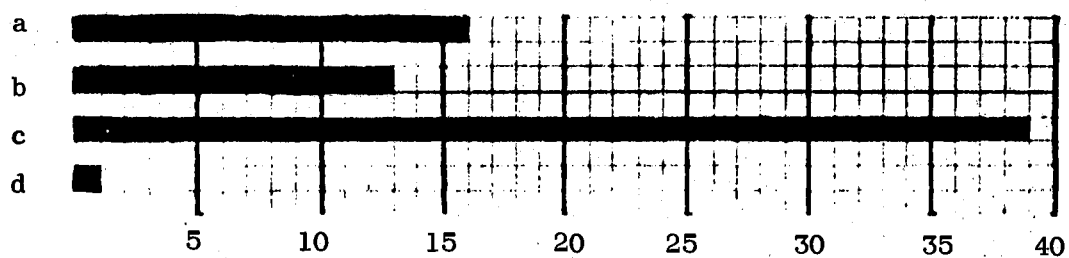


Figure 3. Findings on Knowledge of Fiber Properties

- a - Indicated knowledge of fiber properties
- b - Indicated a lack of knowledge of fiber properties
- c - Indicated that a belief of fiber properties would impart a greater understanding of care procedures
- d - Indicated that information was not needed

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

Personal interviews were held with forty homemakers and seven carpet dealers to investigate the availability and use of care labeling for carpets. The study was conducted in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The schedules for the study were based on three major questions: what information on care is available, how is the information used, and what information is demanded by the consumer.

Forty-seven percent of the homemakers selected their carpeting personally, while fifty-three percent of the homemakers did not. Eighty-five percent of all the homemakers cleaned their carpet personally and the remaining fifteen percent had their carpet cleaned professionally.

When selecting carpeting, thirty percent of the homemakers obtained information on wear of carpets, twenty-seven percent obtained information on care, twenty-five percent obtained information on fiber content, five percent obtained information on colorfastness, five percent obtained information such as fiber properties and types of shampoos to use. Fifteen percent of the homemakers indicated that their decision in purchasing was affected by this information.

All of the homemakers were interested in information which recommends products for carpet care and which gives step-by-step methods of cleaning. However, only thirty-two percent of the homemakers indicated that care instructions were given in the form of labels while thirty

percent indicated that labels of this type were not present. Thirty percent indicated that these instructions were easily understood and two percent indicated that they were not.

Where care labels were not present, homemakers asked salespeople. However, only seventeen percent of the homemakers felt that the salespeople were well informed and thirty-two percent felt that they were not.

Ninety-seven percent of all homemakers indicated a desire for care labeling which included information on spot and stain removal.

Six of the seven carpet dealers indicated that care labeling rarely accompanied carpeting. All of the carpet dealers reported they requested more information from manufacturers since this information is used for promotional purposes and it also affects purchases.

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APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE FOR PERSONAL INTERVIEW
WITH RETAIL CARPET DEALERS

1. Do the labels for carpeting you sell include care instructions?
 - a. Usually Rarely Occasionally
2. Do you request information on care instructions from the manufacturer?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 2a. If YES, do your salespeople use this information?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 2b. Is this information used for promotional purposes?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

(OPINION)

3. Do you feel that this information affects purchases?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Do you feel that the manufacturer's information on carpet care is adequate?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

COMMENTS:

SCHEDULE FOR PERSONAL INTERVIEW
WITH HOMEMAKERS

General Information

A. Fiber Content

Is your carpet a:

1. a. mixture of fibers
b. one fiber
2. a. all synthetic fibers
b. all natural fibers
c. synthetic and natural fibers
3. a. unknown

B. Selection

Was your carpet:

- a. selected personally
- b. other

Explain:

C. Care of Carpet

Do you:

- a. clean your carpet personally
- b. clean your carpet professionally

Information Available to the Consumer

If you personally selected your carpeting:

1. Did salespeople provide information concerning:

a. <input type="checkbox"/> wear	d. <input type="checkbox"/> colorfastness
b. <input type="checkbox"/> care	e. <input type="checkbox"/> resiliency
c. <input type="checkbox"/> fiber content	f. <input type="checkbox"/> other

Explain:

2. If information was given, did this information affect your final decision?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Was the label for your carpeting in a place which was easily seen?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No label
4. Did the label on the carpet affect your decision?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. (OPINION) Was there adequate information regarding cleaning the carpeting?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If you did not personally select your carpeting:

1. Do you know the fiber content of your carpeting?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Have you made any attempts to learn the make-up of your carpeting so that you can care for it properly?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. (OPINION) Do you feel that any commercial carpet cleaner will give you the cleaning results you desire?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Use of the Information

1. Were you able to select a carpet which was appropriate for your needs by reading the information on the label?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Were any care instructions given on the label of the carpeting?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. If so, were the instructions easily understood?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. If not, did you ask the salespeople for this information?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. (OPINION) Did the salespeople seem informed on care and maintenance of carpeting?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Was any particular information on the label helpful in caring for your carpet?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. If yes, what information was helpful?
Answer:

Information Desired on Labels

1. Are you interested in having information which recommends products for carpet care and which gives step-by-step methods of cleaning?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Do you know the properties of the fibers of your carpet and how they may react to water, detergent, and cleaning agents?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Do you feel that listing these properties on labels will impart greater understanding of care procedures for carpeting?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Do you demand information regarding care and fiber properties or do you rely on brands, tradenames, or trademarks when purchasing carpets?
 - a. demand information
 - b. brands, tradenames, or trademarks
5. Would you like information on spot and stain removal?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

APPENDIX B

TUMBLEWEAVE
3288



MONARCH
CARPET MILLS
CHAMBLEE, GA.

FACE - MONARCH APPROVED
100% POLYESTER

12 FOOT WIDTH
SLIGHT VARIATION FROM DYE LOT TO DYE LOT
EXPERT CRAFTSMANSHIP AND STYLING

GOLD TONE 3540

LUMINOUS
3188



MONARCH
CARPET MILLS
CHAMBLEE, GA.

FACE - 100% NYLON

12 FOOT AND 15 FOOT WIDTHS
SLIGHT VARIATION FROM DYE LOT TO DYE LOT
EXPERT CRAFTSMANSHIP AND STYLING

TARTAN GREEN 8106

F-613-A

Alexander Smith 
CARPETS AND RUGS

A DIVISION OF MONASCO INDUSTRIES INC.

Commercial Carpets, Unlimited

CASTLEWOOD

PILE CONTENT- 70% ACRILAN® ACRYLIC 30% MODACRYLIC
PATTERN NO.- 9900R/09
COLOR- GOLD TWEED

Appendix B, Figure 1

Living Classics

Pattern: Highland Blue Green Number: 7058

AVAILABLE IN 12 FOOT WIDTH ONLY

FACE YARNS: 100% ANTRON® NYLON*

Living Classics, carpets of Antron,® have all the performance properties only a premium Continuous Filament Nylon can offer.

**DURABILITY—TEXTURE RETENTION—MOTH-PROOF
MILDEW-PROOF—NON-ALLERGENIC**

**SPECIALLY DEVELOPED ANTRON®
REPELS STAINS—HIDES SOIL**

Most spills and stains disappear with a simple sponging of mild detergent and water. Normal vacuuming and occasional shampooing assures retention of the original luxury of carpets of Antron.®

**DENSE RUBBER CUSHION MEANS
GREATER COMFORT UNDER FOOT**

**WON'T SHRINK OR STRETCH — HUGS ANY FLAT
SURFACE—REDUCES BREAKAGE—QUIET—WARM
EASY INSTALLATION—NO PADDING NEEDED**

Elegantly practical for use in the busiest rooms in the home. Ideal for Kitchens, Family Rooms, Dining Areas, Children's Playrooms and Bedrooms.

*DuPont Registered Trademark

E. T. BARWICK MILLS, INC. / CHAMBLEE, GEORGIA

Royalweve
Tufted Carpets

QUALITY **ROYAL HIGHNESS**
 COLOR #397 · TAWNY RUST
 (slight color variance between dye lots)
 WIDTH 12'
 FACE YARN 100% Kodel® Polyester

California Styling

MAND CARPET MILLS • LOS ANGELES - CALIFORNIA

12-68 FLOOR 3M

RN 23040

PERFORMANCE TESTED AND APPROVED

IF PRODUCT OR PERFORMANCE DEFECTIVE
 ★
Good Housekeeping
 GUARANTEES
 REPLACEMENT OR REFUND TO CONSUMER

Guaranteed by
 Good Housekeeping

MAND CARPET MILLS / LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA

Appendix B, Figure 3

VITA

Sheryl Ruth Jackson

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CARE LABELING OF CARPETS AND RUGS: AVAILABILITY AND USE BY
SELECTED CARPET DEALERS AND HOMEMAKERS IN STILLWATER,
OKLAHOMA

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