1967 Family Living Outlook

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CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

The trend continues toward easy-care garments. Durable-press garment purchases which have already doubled in a year are expected to double again by 1970.

Large supplies of apparel will be available in the year ahead, and higher prices are indicated. Some shoe prices are expected to rise next spring as well as prices of some men’s suits.

A new fabric is on the way called Chameleon cloth. It is a printed fabric that can be given a second set of colors when the buyer becomes tired of the original colors. The color is changed by plunging the garment into hot water which contains a special powder obtained when the garment is purchased.

By next spring permanent labels, describing proper care, may be sewn by manufacturers into many dresses, slipcovers, and underwear.

A new system of sizing and fitting men’s shoes to reduce the number of sizes the retailer needs to stock is being tried out by a major shoe producer. The new system involves measurements of the girth of the ball of the foot, rather than its width, as well as the foot length. These shoes were carried in 450 retail outlets last August. The system is also planned to be used for women’s and children’s shoes.

Shoe prices are expected to advance 3 to 5 percent in spring shoe lines, mainly in children’s shoes and top-quality adult dress shoes. The price increase is attributed mainly to higher labor and production costs of tanners, shoe manufacturers, and retailers.

Leather substitutes are increasing; at present there are more than 25 with more on the way. All of the substitutes except one sell for less than leather. It is difficult to make good leather shoes for less than $7.00 retail, therefore, most of the substitutes are being found in the lower-priced shoes.

Several new, improved products from the tanning industry include:

• rubber-impregnated leather which will last 8 times longer than ordinary leather for soles and 2½ times longer than the major substitutes for leather soles.
• dye-fast leather
• waterproof and scuff-resistant leather
• multi-color leather
• crack-proof leather

Style changes will feature a more masculine look in both men’s and women’s shoes. More strap-type shoes and squared toes will be in the spring lines.

FOOD

Retail food prices are expected to average higher in 1967 than in 1966. Prices, though, are not expected to increase as much as in 1966. Beef prices are likely to be higher as a result of smaller beef supplies, especially after mid year. Increased supplies of pork, poultry, and eggs in 1967 are expected to mean lower prices for these items. Lower prices are also expected for citrus fruits.

Food no longer takes the largest share of the family budget. There has been a continual decline since 1947 in the proportion of disposable personal income spent for food. Housing, when defined to include the house, its operating expenses, furnishings and equipment, now takes the largest share of the family budget.

There has been a continuing trend for families to spend a larger proportion of the food money on food away from home. Expenditures by farm families for food away from home nearly doubled between 1955 and 1965. Many farm families also are relying less on home produced food than they did in 1955.
HOME FURNISHINGS AND EQUIPMENT

Some indicators point to a continued high level of demand for household durables in 1967. Higher incomes, low unemployment, a high level of new family formations, and many post World War II babies reaching marriageable age and being in the market for furniture and appliances are factors in the continued high demand expected for household durables.

So far there is no indication that the supply of household durables will be seriously affected by military requirements or shortages of skilled labor.

PRICES

The consumer can expect prices to be somewhat higher in 1967. Price rises in hard goods at the manufacturing and wholesale levels will be passed on to the consumer.

Increases predicted for furniture (both case goods and upholstered furniture) range from 1 percent to 5 percent with an average of about 4 percent. Reasons for the increase are higher production and material costs.

It is predicted that prices of major appliances will be up about 3 percent mainly as a result of increases in costs of such raw materials as copper, aluminum, and steel.

Soft-goods home furnishings items show no indication of price rises so far, but may be affected by rise in labor costs in 1967.

NEW PRODUCTS

Imagine a TV set that can be turned off and on, tuned and adjusted by a wave of the hand; a temperature-sensitive oven that cooks to perfection; a central air conditioning and heating system that senses room temperature and also controls air flow and humidity; a home computer that will automatically keep your bank account and household budget up to date, work out your tax return, keep stock of household supplies, and decide the best way to store food in the refrigerator. These products, and others similar to them, may soon be made possible with solid state systems — a space age development.

Solid state systems, recently introduced into the appliance and consumer electronics fields, will appear in 1967 appliance lines. Solid state systems are providing washing machines and small appliances with variable speed controls, clothes dryers with sensing devices that shut off the machine when the correct dryness is reached, dishwashers with devices that adjust time and cleaning power according to the job size, and gas ranges with ignition devices that make the pilot light obsolete.

In solid state systems the functions of many separate electro-mechanical operations are combined into electrical circuits. These circuits are incorporated into one solid chip of silicon. The chips, sometimes no longer than the head of a pin, can each perform the work of many vacuum tubes or transistors in electronic equipment or many electro-mechanical devices in appliances. Such systems make possible the reduction of weight and size of home electronic equipment and the electronic controls in appliances while increasing reliability and ease of operation. Deterioration with age is almost eliminated, and repair requirements are low. Some warranties on solid state products are for as long as 3 years. So far, production of home appliances and equipment using solid state is limited, but it is expected to increase substantially within the next few years.
Other developments are laser light beam for home appliances and electronic equipment to be in use in 5 to 10 years, thermo-electricity for producing heat or cold, and increased use of plastics. Plastics are now used for liners in refrigerators, refrigerator doors, washing machine tubs, and as a housing for air conditioners.

LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT
With top-of-the-line features appearing in many of the lower-priced washing machines, customers can expect good value in laundry equipment in 1967. Prices are generally comparable with those of the 1966 lines.

The biggest news in washers and dryers is the introduction of a durable-press cycle. The agitator and spin speeds have been slowed, and a cool-down cycle has been added before spinning to prevent setting-in of wrinkles.

A cool-down period is also present in the dryer. Some dryer models have a warning device to tell the user when the durable press cycle is finished, so she can hang or fold the garments immediately to avoid wrinkling.

VACUUM CLEANERS
The homemaker can now choose from five types of vacuums — upright, canister, lightweight, portable, and new shop-type vacuum. The shop-type vacuum is designed for heavy duty purposes — garages, patios, fireplaces, etc. The canister type will feature variable speeds for above-the-floor cleaning.

RANGES
Ranges with self-cleaning or easy-cleaning features will be on the market with prices low enough for many consumers. Removable teflon-coated panels for easy oven cleaning are being offered by gas range manufacturers to compete with the self-cleaning electric range ovens. Features found more frequently on 1967 ranges will include: lift-off oven doors, hinged and lift-off surface tops, oven and surface indicator lights, disposable oven bottoms, and plug-in surface units.

REFRIGERATORS
Improvements in existing features will be stressed rather than the addition of new ones. Several small units located at points of greatest use are expected to be on the market before 1970, to supplement or replace the larger unit.

FURNISHINGS
Textured fabrics, real or synthetic furs, shag, and deep piles will be shown in floor coverings and upholstery fabrics in 1967, especially for use with contemporary furniture styles. There is a movement away from broadloom to area rugs, making scatter rugs and braided rugs more popular.

The use of plastics in furniture is increasing as a result of wood shortages and the high cost of carving wood. Plastics are being used as finishes, veneers, laminates, and moldings. New methods of finishing and varnishing have resulted in products closely resembling natural woods. Advantages of plastic furniture are that it does not warp, break, scratch, or have the irregularities of wood. It is cheaper than wood and can bring good furniture within the price range of more consumers.

Durable press fabrics will be available in curtains, draperies, bedspreads, sheets, and tablecloths in 1967.

In floor coverings, all-weather carpeting is becoming very popular. The newest thing in resilient flooring is sheet-vinyl, room-sized rugs, inexpensive enough to change with the seasons or to use for special occasions.
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