

25  
Cop. 1

BULLETIN ROOM  
LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY FARM

# The University of Minnesota

## AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DIVISION

### Special Bulletin No. 25

University Farm, St. Paul

April 1918

Published by the University of Minnesota, College of Agriculture, Extension Division, A. D. Wilson, Director, and distributed in furtherance of the purposes of the cooperative agricultural extension work provided for in the Act of Congress of May 8, 1914.

## CLOTHING CONSERVATION FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY

By Marion Weller, Division of Home Economics

The shortage in our wool supply is becoming serious. Our soldiers must be equipped and our civilian population must be clothed. Further, men and women must be released from the making of non-essentials to help in the production of war supplies for our army and the allies. Shipping must be released from the need of bringing wool from other countries. To this end the women of Minnesota are asked to cooperate in a campaign for clothing conservation in the home and community.

### THE "MORE SHEEP" CAMPAIGN

Uncle Sam tells us there must be twenty sheep back of every soldier in our army and navy. A fully equipped soldier uses 13 times as much wool as a civilian. With the 1916 consumption of wool as a basis, the civilian uses 8.17 pounds per year. It requires 106 pounds of wool to fully equip a soldier for service.

There are less than 50,000,000 sheep in this country. It is asserted that six out of seven farms in the United States have no sheep; that only enough wool is being raised to make one suit for each inhabitant every four years. We should raise 150,000,000 sheep to approximately meet the demands.

In the past we have relied upon other countries for 65 per cent of our wool. A campaign for the raising of more sheep, started a year or more ago, is beginning to show results. A report from the Department of Agriculture shows an increase of 1,284,000 sheep in 1917.

### WOOL SUBSTITUTES IN FABRICS

No other textile material can take the place of wool in cloth from which service, warmth, and protection against dampness and sudden changes of temperature are required. This makes it absolutely necessary to have wool for army equipment. The heavy felted-wool cotton blankets are practically as warm as wool blankets of the same weight for household use; but they can not do outdoor service such as is required of army blankets. The soldier's uniform, to be of the greatest service, must be all wool of the best grade.

The government is regulating the amount of substitution in cloth for both army and civilian consumption. It is recognized that the civilian population must be provided for as well as the army. Men's and boys' suitings and cloth for women's outer garments should be largely of wool to insure protection; and

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations. Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

a greater saving of wool will be effected by putting as high grade wool cloth as is obtainable into outdoor garments because of the longer service this cloth will give. For many purposes it is possible to substitute cotton, silk, artificial silk, or part-wool fabrics. No wool should be used for unnecessary accessories.

The most valuable substitute for new wool is the re-worked wool, or wool reclaimed from used articles of wool, partly worn garments and manufacturers' clippings, and wool waste from the mills. This material is fed into a machine consisting of a series of rollers covered with teeth that pull the cloth apart and deliver a fluffy mass of fiber. This product, which is known as shoddy, is first mixed with some new wool or cotton, re-carded, spun, and woven into cloth. More re-worked wool is necessarily being used in civilian fabrics than ever before, in some instances amounting to 75 per cent. The better grades of re-manufactured wool often give as good service or even better than some grades of new wool.

All wool rags should be sent through the rag dealers to the shoddy mills for re-manufacture. Every particle of old wool should be used again. Re-manufactured wool is still wool.

Many cotton-and-wool fabrics will wear as long as all-wool fabrics—in fact, the cotton fiber is stronger than the wool fiber. Underwear of cotton and wool is far more serviceable than all wool. A cotton and wool mixture will often give the protection and service that is required of a wool dress. The fabric that contains a large amount of cotton, however, wrinkles, and requires much care if subjected to hard wear and exposure.

#### STEPS TAKEN BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF DEFENSE

The National Council of Defense, recognizing that in the present emergency the country's resources must be used to full advantage in carrying on the war, has declared that economy in the use of wool is particularly necessary. Through their Commercial Economy Board they have issued to all manufacturers and makers of clothing and garments, the following recommendations:

1. That they avoid excessive multiplicity of styles, confining themselves to the number of models actually required by the trade.
2. That they avoid models having needless adornments, such as belts on coats, cuffs, unnecessary pleats.
3. That they use cloth in which re-worked wool and cotton are in part substituted for wool, and that they reduce the average weight of fabrics.
4. That they make models that require the least practical amount of cloth.
5. That they reduce the amount of cloth used for samples.
6. That they design fewer fabrics and confine their designs as much as possible to standard construction and standard colors, doing away with novelty fabrics.

Schools and colleges giving military training are asked to uniform students in clothing containing 25 per cent or more of wool substitutes.

It is estimated that this simplification of clothing, with greater standardization of quality, color, weave structure, and style, will save 40 per cent in material for men's clothing; and 25 per cent for women's clothing.

By eliminating their method of sending out samples, wholesale clothing manufacturers have estimated that enough wool will be saved to make uniforms for 67,600 soldiers. The present ruling, cutting off 6 inches from the length of the army overcoat, made it possible for manufacturers in Philadelphia to save enough cloth for 31,250 army overcoats on contracts for 750,000 coats.

#### WHAT WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO

1. By saving, collecting, and sending to the rag dealers all wool rags and worn-out wool garments that can no longer be re-made, the output of re-worked wool can be greatly increased.

2. By re-making all unused wool garments, either for themselves or others, and by using up all wool materials on hand, the attics and storerooms of the homes will be cleared out, and an enormous saving of wool will be effected.

3. By adopting simple, conservative styles, especially in suits, coats, hats, and shoes, models that can be worn without remaking as long as the material lasts, women will not only effect economy of labor and materials for themselves, but will save wool, and will help to correct the evil effects of the seasonal and irregular labor conditions that exist in factories where women's clothing is made, conditions that are a direct result of the rapidly changing styles.

### ECONOMY IN CHOOSING THE WARDROBE

The woman who possesses a few carefully selected, well-made garments, of material and style that will look well as long as the garments hold together, always appears well dressed. The following suggestions are made for planning and buying the clothing:

1. Take stock of all the available clothing in the house—in other words make a careful clothing inventory—once a year.

2. On the basis of income and past expenditure, make a clothing budget, that is, a detailed plan of anticipated clothing expenditure for the coming year—if possible for the next three years. Determine what percentage of the income is going into clothing.

3. Plan to purchase essentials only, carefully omitting all unnecessary articles.

4. Choose those fabrics and garments that will give back for the material and labor expended, the greatest amount of satisfaction and value.

5. Wherever possible or advisable, instead of buying all-wool materials, buy those which are made in part or altogether of other textile fibers, such as cotton, silk, and artificial silk, thus releasing wool for the war needs, for which there is no substitute. At present no substitute for wool is so satisfactory as silk.

6. In choosing designs for garments, select those that require the least practical amount of cloth.

7. Limit the number of colors worn. Choose, therefore, standard colors, those that are becoming, and those that will harmonize with the rest of the wardrobe. Avoid the novelty colors that appear each season. They are extravagant because they never harmonize with anything else.

8. Select materials with reference to the weave structure. The standard twill and panama weaves are durable. Novelty weaves should be avoided. They are usually less serviceable and more expensive.

9. Put good materials into the garments designed for service. Put less expensive materials into garments that receive only occasional wear.

10. Buy clothing that is conservative in style—that is, garments that are good in color and line; that give to the figure a simple silhouette; that are appropriate for the use to which they are to be put; that are suited to the individual. Such garments can be worn, without making over, as long as the material lasts. Suits, coats, hats, and dresses, especially, should be purchased with these points in mind.

11. Learn to know the standard fabrics and the purposes they best serve.<sup>1</sup>

### REMODELING WORN GARMENTS

It is most desirable that all-wool materials be utilized to the limit of their usefulness. The scarcity and high cost of new material make it the patriotic

<sup>1</sup> Send to Office of Publications, University Farm, St. Paul, for Special Bulletin 15—Textiles: What every woman should know.

duty of every woman to assist in this particular form of conservation. The making over for next winter of clothing previously worn and discarded should be regarded as a part of the clothing problem of every home and every school.

The invoicing of the wardrobe may bring to light cotton or silk garments that can be used again to advantage, but before beginning to re-make them, it is well to consider whether the material has wearing quality that will make it worth while to put the necessary time and labor into them.

Whether the work of making over is done at home, in school classes, or in connection with organized relief work, all material should be thoroly disinfected before being worked on, thus protecting the workers against the spread of colds, tonsilitis, and other diseases.

The following suggestions are offered:

1. Because it is, often more work to re-make a worn garment than it is to make a new one, it is well to remember that by re-making the old garment the price of new material is saved and that there is conservation of material that might otherwise be wasted.

2. It is not a saving of anything to make over garments that have neither wearing quality nor attractiveness.

3. Material should be ripped, cleaned,<sup>2</sup> and pressed; and a careful plan made for the cutting, so as to do as little piecing as possible.

4. A combination of two different materials may be made, provided the result is attractive.

5. The pattern should be selected with reference to the size and shape of the pieces of cloth. One-piece patterns are not adapted to made-over garments.

6. A list of possible make-over problems includes:

- a. Boy's or girl's wool suits or coats from dresses, skirts, coats, or men's suits.

- b. Russian blouse or child's dress from a white skirt.

- c. Blouses, petticoats, or aprons, from summer dresses.

- d. Children's skirts from white petticoats.

- e. Little dresses, aprons, or shirt waists from lower part of men's shirts.

- f. Petticoats from silk dresses.

- g. Corset covers from white waists.

- h. One-piece dress from light weight suit or coat.

## HINTS TO THE WOMAN WHO SEWS

1. A one-piece pattern means economy in time and labor, but not in material.

2. War-time patterns, requiring a minimum of material, are published by different pattern companies. Select such as have good lines and follow carefully the directions for placing the parts on cloth. The *simple* pattern is an aid to clothing conservation.

3. A wide fabric cuts to better advantage than a narrow one. If choice lies between a wide and a narrow fabric of the same quality, it is economy to buy the wide one.

4. All cotton fabrics should be shrunk before making up. Let the material lie in hot water, then partly dry, and press on the wrong side while still damp.

5. Always set the color in wash materials by soaking in a pail of water containing a handful of salt. If the material is blue, a solution of sugar of lead and water will give better results.

<sup>2</sup> Lang, H. S. and Whittelsey, Anna H. Removal of stains from clothing and other textiles. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bull. 861. Washington, D. C.