

# Survey Finds U.S. Consumers Ready to Go Green

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by John Zarocostas

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More shoppers are opting for reusable bags.

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**GENEVA** — A high percentage of U.S. consumers are expected to convert to eco-friendly products across many industries, including 59 percent in apparel and 74 percent in health and beauty, according to a report by consultancy group Grail Research.

However, the report, called “The Green Revolution,” concludes price is the main reason why some consumers consider not buying green products, followed by a lack of many choices and

that they are not easily available.

For apparel, the most important feature for driving purchases of green goods, said the report, was the manufacturing of the product caused minimal harmful emissions and the packaging is made of recyclable material. For health and beauty, the most important factors are that the product is natural and not tested on animals.

The report, which polled shopper preferences across the U.S. this summer, found the vast majority of American consumers have bought green products, but only 9 percent said they chose to buy eco-friendly goods for most of their purchases.

The primary sources of information about green products and companies for consumers, according to the survey, were product labels, followed by word of mouth, TV advertisements, print media and Web sites.

The study found that, when respondents were asked about the first thing that comes to their minds when they think of green products, 83 percent said “made of recyclable material,” 77 percent said “energy-efficient uses,” 71 percent said “made of natural ingredients,” 61 percent said “nontoxicity” and “reduced greenhouse gas emissions,” and 47 percent said “green certifications.”

Textile and apparel industry experts said a trend is emerging toward more eco-friendly apparel, but noted it’s still in the early stages.

Munir Ahmad, executive director of the International Textiles & Clothing Bureau, said so far it’s still a niche market focused largely in high-end products.

Some big buyers already active in the eco-apparel segment include H&M, Marks & Spencer and Zara, he noted.

Ahmad said apparel makers respond when they come under pressure to adjust, and the lead is normally from big buyers. But until now, the average consumer has shown little interest in green apparel and goes by price, quality and design.

The biggest problem for the industry, Ahmad added, is the use of chemicals, but he noted the big chemical companies are now more conscious of their environmental impact.

Francesco Marchi, economic affairs director with the Brussels-based European Apparel & Textile Association, said, “The trend is there, partially.”

But so far it has been “marketing-inspired,” he said, and singled out the British apparel market, where there is a lot of interest in green products.

He said while there is some interest among older consumers who “have the power to buy,” the major move toward green apparel purchases is coming from the younger generation, which is generally more attentive to environmental issues.

Concerning the possibility of more stringent greenhouse emission-reduction targets in rich nations likely to come down the road, Marchi said they will hit the textile manufacturing industry, but less so than the steel or auto sectors.

The Euratex representative said, “If we do not see equivalent restriction by industries in China, India” and other emerging countries, “we are likely to see migration of textile production to countries where there are fewer controls and no specific carbon emission-reduction targets.”