

VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS

According to the *Banco de México*, Mexico's central bank, US \$6 billion in auto parts were imported in 1992 and more than 80 percent of it was destined for vehicle assembly. Textile products are included in imports largely by their use in imported parts. For example, seats, headrests, armrests, convertible tops and other parts containing fabric are imported as parts in substantial quantities by Mexican vehicle manufacturers. Thus, fabric imported for automotive use is necessarily identified that way in the trade statistics.

The Mexican automotive industry is integrated with the operations of foreign multinationals, including the U.S. "big three", Nissan and Volkswagen. Six other companies manufacture diesel trucks and/or buses. The largest of these, *Kenmex*, holds almost half the Mexican market for diesel trucks.

Some analysts predict that by the year 2000, Mexico will have the world's fourth largest auto industry. However, this market appears to offer few opportunities for imported textiles. What demand there is for fabric is sourced domestically and supplied mostly by *Polyfil*. There is, however, some demand from the automotive industry for "engineered textiles".

FURNITURE MANUFACTURERS

Furniture manufacturers purchase a wide variety of yarns, broadwoven fabrics, coated fabrics, knitted fabrics, felts, waddings, nonwovens, braid and other ornamental trimmings. Large, home-furniture manufacturers in Mexico use 80 percent synthetic fabrics, 19 percent blends and one percent natural fabrics. According to one estimate, 30 percent of these textiles are locally made and 70 percent are imported. The larger companies buy direct from producers, but many also purchase from distributors.

Significant purchases of imported fabrics are made by *tapiceros*, furniture refinishers, and *cortineros*, curtain makers. There are also some very fancy boutiques for furniture and drapery fabrics such as *Rosela*. They usually buy from distributors because the lead times required to buy direct from manufactures are too long.

LEADING IMPORTERS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF FABRICS FOR APPAREL, FURNITURE AND HOME DECORATION

- Casa Armand
- Artell
- Casa Bayon
- Telas Junco
- Rosela
- Morel's

Source: United States Department of Commerce.

AGENTS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Many of the customers for imported fabric are small- to medium-sized companies with limited ability to purchase directly from manufacturers. They tend to buy from agents or distributors.

There are a number of independent fabric distributors. They usually specialize in imported fabrics because Mexican manufacturers sell mostly through their own agents. Six distributors account for half of the market for apparel, furniture and home decoration. They also sell directly to the public.