

# Modified Soap Washes Clean in Hard Water

Soap can be modified to make it wash just as clean in hard water as in soft water. As evidence, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientist showed highly magnified photographs of washed fabric. The pictures were micrographs magnified 600

times with a scanning electron microscope. Those of fabric washed in hard water with ordinary soap showed heavy deposits of calcium and magnesium soap formed on the fibers. No such deposits were visible in comparable micrographs taken of fabric

washed in water of the same hardness but with soap containing a chemical called a lime-soap dispersing agent. The chemical prevents curd formation. The modified soap was developed in Philadelphia, Pa., at the Eastern Regional Research Center of USDA's

Agricultural Research Service. Research chemist Raymond G. Bistline showed the pictures, while speaking to members of the American Oil Chemists' Society who were meeting in Mexico City. Studies on the new soap were made by Mr. Bistline; Mrs. Susan M. Jones, who

took the pictures; Wilfred R. Noble and James K. Weil, under the supervision of Dr. Warner M. Linfield. The modification overcomes the only important limitation of soap, its relative inefficiency in hard water because of scum formation. Made from constantly replenishable

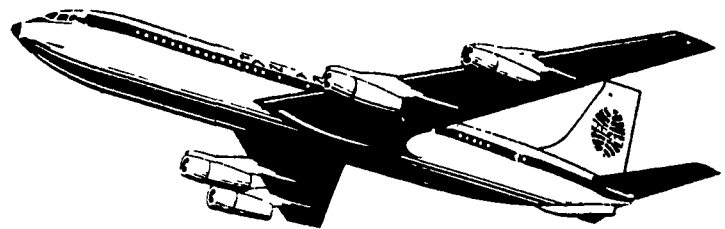
agricultural raw materials and both safe and biodegradable, the new soap may lessen the nation's dependence on detergents, most of which are made from petroleum and contain phosphates.

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