



A package of Oscar Mayer cold cuts. A pair of Nine West boots. A Whirlpool washing machine. By the fall, people will most likely be paying more for each of them, as rising prices hit most consumer goods, say retailers, food companies and manufacturers of consumer products.

Cotton prices are near their highest level in more than a decade, after adjusting for inflation, and leather and polyester costs are jumping as well. Copper recently hit its highest level in about 40 years, and iron ore, used for steel, is fetching extremely high prices. Prices for corn, sugar, wheat, beef, pork and coffee are soaring. Labor overseas is becoming more expensive, meanwhile, and so are the utility bills to keep a factory running.

“There are cost pressures from virtually everywhere,” said Wesley R. Card, the chief executive of the Jones Group, whose brands include Nine West and Anne Klein. After trying to keep retail prices flat or even lower during the recession, Jones says prices for its brands will climb 15 to 20 percent by autumn.

When commodity prices started to rise last summer, many manufacturers and retailers absorbed the costs, worried that shoppers would not pay higher prices during the competitive holiday season or while the economy was still fragile.

Many big companies, including Kraft, Polo Ralph Lauren and Hanes, say they cannot hold off any longer and must raise prices to protect some profits.

Whether shoppers will pay is unclear. “Consumers are not exactly in the frame of mind or economic circumstances to say ‘Oh, pay whatever they ask,’ ” said Joshua Shapiro, chief United States economist at MFR Inc. “There’s going to be pushback.”

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