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Leather begins as a by-product of the meat industry. Hides are sold to tanneries to be converted into products, such as shoes, belts, clothing, or in the case of Spinneybeck, the hides are tanned and dyed for use as upholstery material, rugs or tiles.

Tanning Process

Upholstery Material, Rugs and Leather Tiles

The tanning, dyeing and finishing processes completed at our tannery in Italy meet or exceed all of the stringent environmental requirements outlined by the government. Water that is used during the tanning and dyeing processes is constantly collected, filtered and purified. All salts used in the tanning process are removed from the water and the dyeing processes are designed so that all the dyestuffs are completely absorbed into the hides.

Our leather tiles are 100% full grain, vegetable tanned cowhides. During the tanning process, the neck and shoulders are cut away and processed for the shoe industry. All excess leather from the flank and other trimmings from the hides are processed into a leather composite backing material. This backer is then glued to the vegetable tanned leather. The recycled leather backer is 3.5 mm and the leather tiles when completed are 7 mm thick. Thus, Spinneybeck leather tiles contain 50% post-industrial recyclable material. In addition, the glue used in the bonded leather backer and the glue that adheres the leather upper to the backer are water-based and contain no volatile organic compounds (VOC's).

GREENGUARD Certification

Spinneybeck is the first leather company to complete the comprehensive GREENGUARD Certification Program. GREENGUARD Environmental Institute, working in conjunction with an independent indoor air quality laboratory (Air Quality Science), tested Spinneybeck leathers for possible off-gassing. Our entire collection of leathers has been certified to contain no volatile organic compounds (VOC's). GREENGUARD provides the only guide to certifying low emitting interior products and building materials and is recognized by LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Life Cycle of Leather

Leather has a life cycle that is substantially longer than that of other upholstery material and it is one

hundred percent post-consumer recyclable. Old leather is simply ground up and converted into bonded leather which is used for the backer on belts and stay material for all types of products. Scraps from the tannery and scraps from our own sampling department are sold and converted into this bonded leather material.

Samples and older color books returned from clients are donated to design schools for their libraries and for design projects. In addition, samples are given to charitable organizations for use in small craft projects.

Reduced Product Maintenance

Upholstery leather, leather rugs and tiles are easily cleaned and maintained. Upholstery leather and rugs should be dusted regularly; leather tiles should be swept or vacuumed regularly. Minor spots on these products can be washed off using lukewarm water and a mild soap such as Ivory flakes. Water also replenishes the moisture content in the leather. Leather should never be cleaned with abrasive solvents, alcohol, or wax-based products. Cleaning products that are available from Spinneybeck contain no volatile organic compounds (VOC's).

Spinneybeck Environmental Practices

Spinneybeck continually evaluates our business practices to determine how to best support the environment. We have made arrangements with our tannery in Italy to package leather in boxes that can be reused for shipment to our clients. As a result of this program, 95% of packaging materials received from the tannery are recovered for subsequent use. If leather hides are rolled and shipped on cardboard tubes, we request that the tubes be returned at our expense, so they may be used on future orders. A service is employed to collect and recycle extra cardboard, packaging material, and wooden pallets. In addition, we recycle all paper products used in our facility.

All our literature and collateral material can be found on our web-site at www.spinneybeck.com and is now available in a CD-ROM format.