

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

JANUARY 1956

FOR RELEASE
MARCH 8, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Data shown in this report are based on reports submitted by a reporting panel of over 11,000 establishments which are representative of all merchant wholesaler firms in the country (see note on page 6). The reporting panel is part of a probability sample recently developed by the Bureau of the Census to provide national dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories of merchant wholesalers by kind of business.

Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers in January 1956 declined seasonally by 9 percent from December but were 12 percent higher than in January 1955. Durable goods trades, in total, showed a decrease of 7 percent from the previous month sales but increased 17 percent over a year ago. Nondurable goods trades showed a sharper decline from December sales (10%) and a smaller gain (5%) over last January.

Most trades indicated declines from December sales. The largest decreases were noted for amusement and sporting goods (43%), jewelry (48%), and wine and distilled spirits (50%). Farm supplies, up 16 percent, indicated the largest increase. Compared with a year ago, lower sales were reported in only five trades--fresh fruits and vegetables (-2%), meat (-4%), piece goods (-4%), farm supplies (-11%), and inedible farm products (-12%). All other trades registered increases over year-ago sales. Substantial gains were shown for paper (25%), industrial machinery (27%), nonferrous metals (36%), coal (37%), waste materials (42%), iron and steel products (42%), and

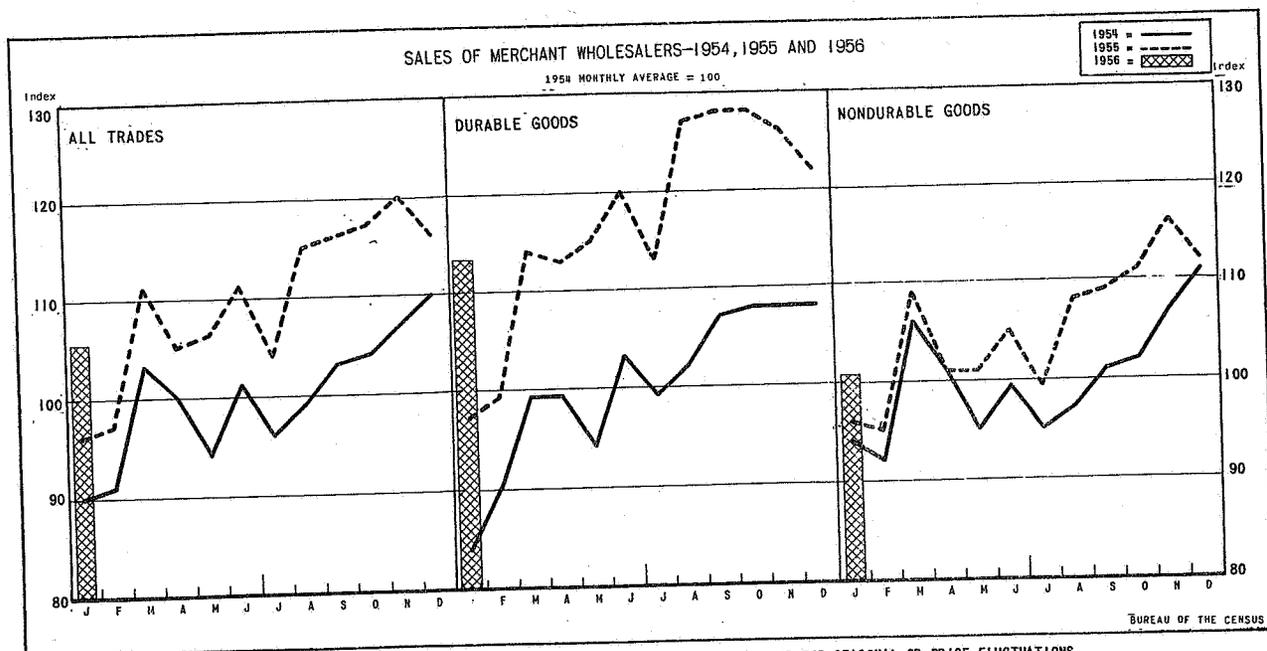
iron and steel scrap (83%)--the last trade showing the principal gain for the 12th consecutive month.

All geographic divisions showed sales declines from December, ranging from 3 percent in the West South Central Division to 16 percent in New England. Small increases over year-ago sales were noted in the East South Central Division (1%), the West North Central Division (3%), and in New England (7%). More substantial gains--between 10 and 17 percent--were indicated in the remaining six divisions, with the East North Central and the West South Central Divisions sharing the principal increase.

Inventories

January 31 inventories of wholesalers rose slightly (1%) over December 31 stocks, and were 8 percent above the year-ago level. The January stock-sales ratio of 131 percent was 15 points above the ratio of the previous month but 3 points lower than the January 1955 ratio.

Most trades indicated only small changes, generally upward, from previous month inventories. Coal, down 13 percent, and meat, up 11 percent, reported the largest inventory changes. Compared with a year ago, iron and steel scrap, down 17 percent, and inedible farm products, down 20 percent, noted the most substantial declines among the 5 trades reporting reduced stocks. All other trades had larger inventories than a year ago, with electrical appliances (22%), electrical equipment (21%), and home furnishings (21%), showing substantial increases.



DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS.
For sale by the Bureau of the Census: single copy--10¢, annual subscription--\$1.00

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
1954, 1955 AND 1956

1954 = —
1955 = - - -
1956 = ⊗ ⊗ ⊗

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100

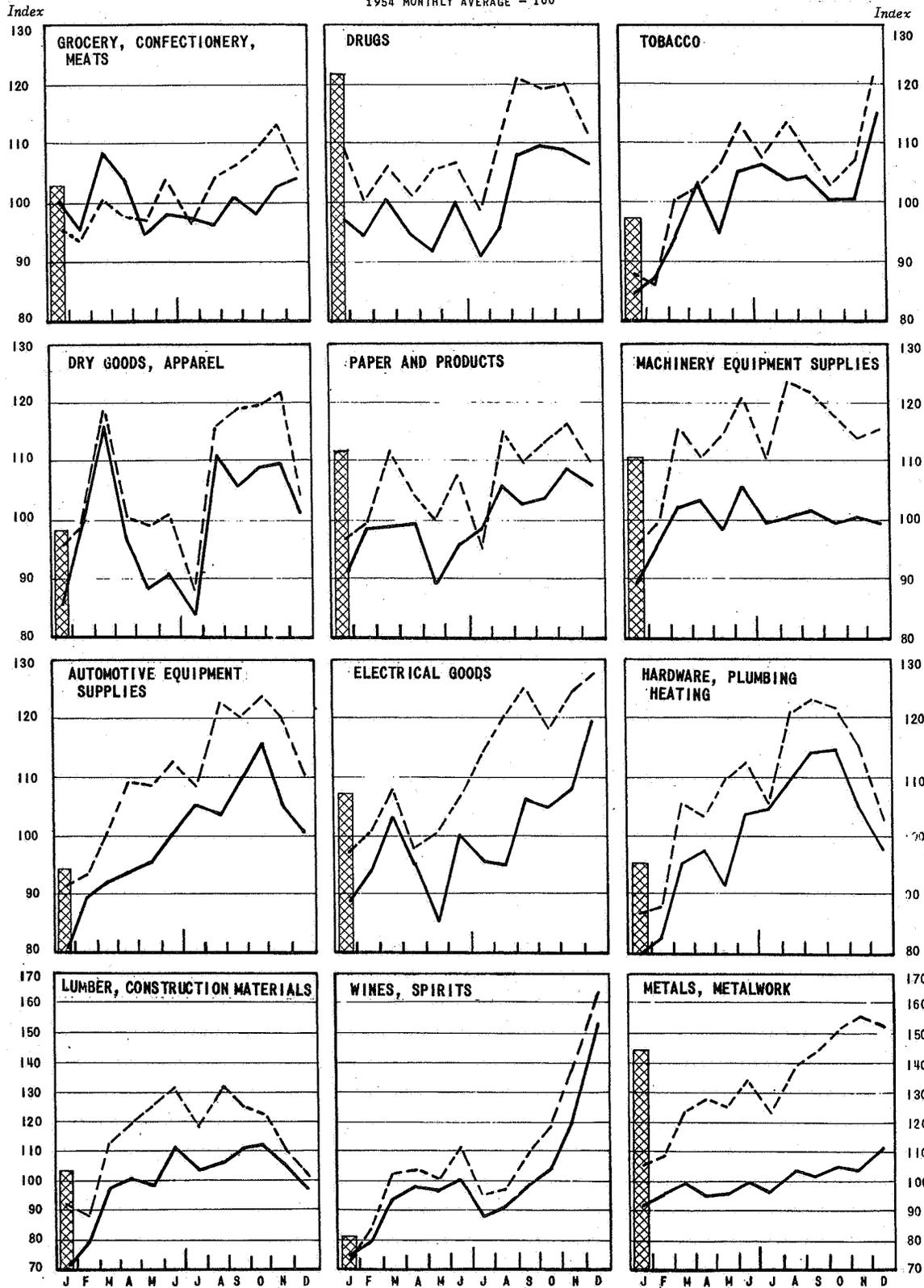


Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

JANUARY 1956

Kind of business	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month			Stock-sales ratios ¹		
	Percent change		Number of establishments reporting, Jan. 1956	(at cost)		Number of establishments reporting, Jan. 1956	(percent)		
	January 1956 from--			Percent change, Jan. 1956 from--			Jan. 1956	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955
	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955		Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955				
Merchant wholesalers.....	+12	-9	11,545	+8	+1	8,043	131	134	116
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+4	0	1,293	+6	0	1,004	89	86	90
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	0	780	+6	0	666	114	112	114
Nonaffiliated ²	+1	-1	586	+7	0	522	134	127	130
Voluntary groups.....	+9	-1	177	+1	-1	134	104	108	104
Retailer-cooperative.....	+12	+6	17	+11	+1	10	77	79	83
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	+1	272	+5	-3	187	81	78	91
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+7	-8	93	+17	+5	41	90	81	79
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	-4	-4	148	+8	+11	110	25	20	20
Edible farm products distributors.....	+7	-11	893	+2	+3	704	31	32	26
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+12	-12	577	+7	+2	477	31	33	26
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-2	-9	316	-8	+7	227	31	31	25
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+5	-40	518	+1	0	457	118	123	69
Beer distributors.....	+3	-14	134	-6	+8	119	60	64	46
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+6	-50	384	+3	-2	338	160	164	79
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+15	+5	693	+7	+3	464	156	157	159
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+15	+6	316	+7	+3	222	150	160	156
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+15	+2	226	+9	+2	161	162	136	159
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+13	+5	151	+5	+1	81	193	218	200
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	-18	281	+7	+3	162	66	68	54
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+3	-4	389	+7	+3	200	192	195	177
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+5	-16	101	+6	+4	54	194	213	164
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	-2	163	+5	+4	85	181	192	166
Piece goods converters.....	-4	+8	125	+11	+2	61	203	184	208
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+12	-14	344	+17	+4	185	185	170	148
Furniture wholesalers.....	+14	-11	111	+8	+1	65	166	171	140
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+10	-15	233	+21	+5	100	195	170	152
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+22	+3	461	+5	-1	269	112	131	115
Paper wholesalers.....	+25	+5	293	+5	0	195	101	123	104
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+4	-8	168	+6	-7	74	234	199	225
Inedible farm products merchants.....	-12	-7	284	-20	-4	198	132	146	120
Automotive wholesalers.....	+10	-10	672	+12	+1	458	200	190	180
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	+12	+4	66	+20	-5	57	104	112	95
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+9	-16	606	+10	+3	401	256	249	214
Electrical, electronic, appliance goods distributors..	+14	-16	895	+21	+3	770	153	144	126
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ³	+16	-15	573	+21	+1	536	153	150	126
Electrical appliances, TV and radio sets and parts, and electronic parts, equipment distributors.....	+11	-16	322	+22	+5	234	153	137	124
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+13	-9	605	+10	+4	416	248	258	214
Hardware wholesalers.....	+15	-14	241	+12	+7	184	275	282	223
Plumbing, heating goods distributors.....	+12	-3	364	+6	0	232	209	224	199
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+9	+4	565	+14	+2	399	149	140	149
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+5	+7	333	+14	+3	245	155	146	169
Construction materials distributors.....	+13	-5	232	+14	+1	154	138	129	117
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors ⁴	+19	-4	2,058	+14	+2	1,413	190	200	178
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment distributors.....	+21	-2	102	+17	+4	67	249	258	231
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+12	-15	151	+7	+1	99	146	165	133
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies houses.....	+27	-6	962	+9	0	724	165	198	144
Professional equipment, supplies houses ⁵	+7	-10	422	+4	+2	245	214	223	189
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+9	-8	79	+10	+1	44	189	176	175
Service establishment equipment, supplies houses.....	+7	-7	160	+11	+2	90	170	166	155
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+40	-5	282	+11	+2	191	128	169	125
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+42	-4	195	+12	+3	136	160	212	157
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+36	-5	87	+6	-2	55	49	66	47
Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+67	+4	293	-9	-4	175	37	73	41
Iron-steel scrap dealers.....	+83	+4	172	-17	-6	112	33	75	39
Waste materials dealers.....	+42	+4	121	+10	+1	63	47	68	46
Other merchant wholesalers ⁴	+16	-14	1,019	+4	0	598	129	138	113
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+12	-43	144	+4	+5	110	252	266	137
Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.....	+7	-15	133	+11	0	52	125	124	106
Coal wholesalers.....	+37	-4	230	+4	-13	117	39	52	45
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	-11	+16	222	-8	+1	167	149	148	170
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+7	-48	128	+5	+4	57	316	328	143

See page 6 for footnotes.

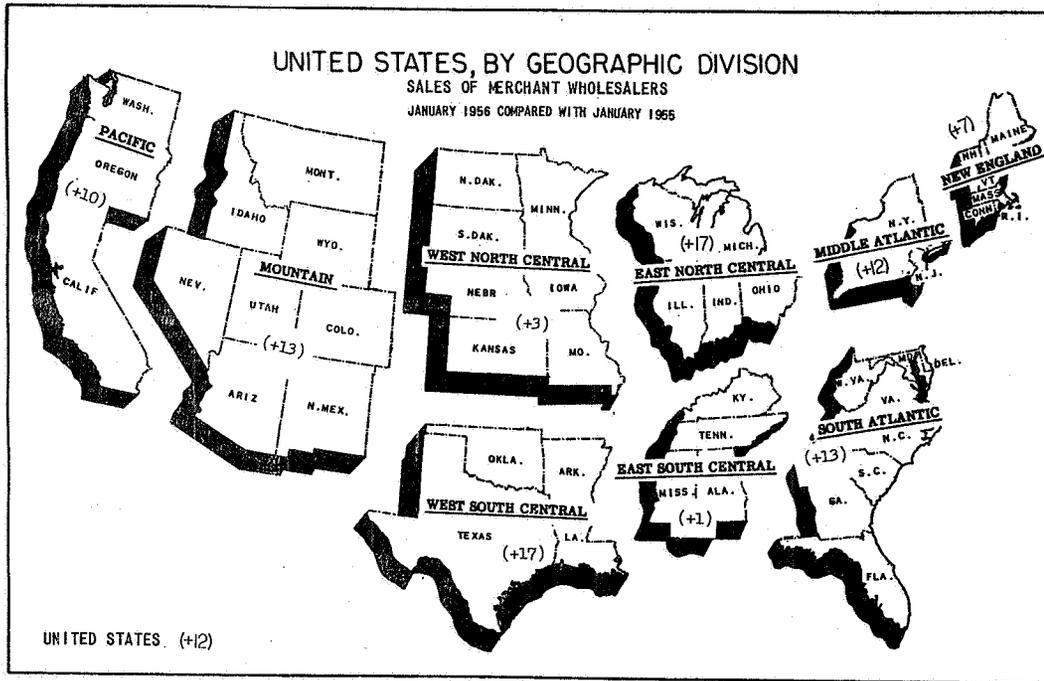


Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

Kind of business and geographic division (See map above)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month			Stock-sales ratios ¹		
	Percent change		Number of establishments reporting, Jan. 1956	(at cost)		Number of establishments reporting, Jan. 1956	(percent)		
	Jan. 1956 from--			Percent change, Jan. 1956 from--			Jan. 1956	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955
	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955	Jan. 1955	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955		
Merchant wholesalers, total ⁴	+12	-9	11,545	+8	+1	8,043	131	134	116
New England.....	+7	-16	586	-1	+1	329	114	117	97
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	-9	2,549	+7	-1	1,510	109	116	99
East North Central.....	+17	-10	2,205	+9	+1	1,616	112	120	99
West North Central.....	+3	-13	1,171	+10	+1	873	161	148	137
South Atlantic.....	+13	-6	1,222	+11	+5	849	144	145	127
East South Central.....	+1	-7	528	+5	+4	408	159	157	145
West South Central.....	+17	-3	1,404	+3	+1	1,131	157	180	148
Mountain.....	+13	-6	403	+14	+8	309	183	172	155
Pacific.....	+10	-7	1,477	+11	+1	1,018	142	133	127
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	0	780	+6	0	666	114	112	114
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	-1	84	+5	-1	72	102	106	106
East North Central.....	+10	-5	108	+8	-2	86	101	103	98
West North Central.....	+4	+2	119	+12	-4	111	96	88	104
South Atlantic.....	+1	-2	57	+12	+2	44	158	146	151
East South Central.....	-5	-4	45	-6	0	39	145	146	138
West South Central.....	+6	+4	153	+5	+4	131	104	104	102
Mountain.....	+19	+3	27	+13	+4	22	162	170	150
Pacific.....	+6	+9	175	+2	+2	152	96	94	100
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	+1	272	+5	-3	187	81	78	91
New England.....	+16	+5	14	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	+11	116	+2	-9	75	57	64	82
East North Central.....	+17	-14	39	+8	-2	31	76	84	67
West North Central.....	+4	-12	11	+15	+2	8	164	167	137
South Atlantic.....	+19	+5	19	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
East South Central.....	+1	0	33	+15	-2	25	113	112	119
West South Central.....	0	-6	37	+3	-4	29	90	68	91
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+12	-12	577	+7	+2	477	31	33	26
New England.....	+3	-9	17	-11	+4	14	24	30	21
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	-8	104	+9	+7	70	23	23	19
East North Central.....	+18	-14	119	+23	+3	91	30	30	26
West North Central.....	+21	-13	52	+12	-7	46	73	69	62
South Atlantic.....	+16	-12	103	-1	-5	95	22	25	20
East South Central.....	+11	-7	58	-6	+2	49	32	39	29
West South Central.....	+9	-19	114	-3	+7	102	35	39	27

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (See map, page 4)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		Number of establish- ments reporting Jan. 1956	Percent change, Jan. 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting Jan. 1956	Jan. 1956	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955
	Jan. 1956 from--			Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955				
	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955							
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-2	-9	316	-8	+7	227	31	31	25
New England.....	-7	-4	13	-3	+7	10	22	21	20
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	-14	39	+2	+16	21	19	19	14
East North Central.....	-9	-11	45	0	+17	30	32	26	22
West North Central.....	-4	-10	53	-6	0	46	32	33	30
South Atlantic.....	+1	-13	29	0	+6	17	40	41	34
South Central.....	+14	-8	32	+1	-9	21	39	48	37
Pacific.....	-3	-5	76	-16	+10	59	34	35	29
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+15	+6	316	+7	+3	222	150	160	156
New England.....	+23	-6	22	+9	+8	15	151	129	142
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	+3	75	+8	+6	42	151	149	150
East North Central.....	+15	+10	53	+6	+2	37	141	167	150
West North Central.....	+10	+5	22	+2	+1	18	164	183	170
South Atlantic.....	+14	+1	44	+9	+7	36	162	169	159
East South Central.....	+16	+2	13	+7	-2	11	170	184	177
West South Central.....	+17	+6	41	+7	+2	33	169	187	174
Mountain.....	+33	+20	16	+19	+15	11	168	174	191
Pacific.....	+15	+13	30	+6	+1	19	126	135	140
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	-18	281	+7	+3	162	66	68	54
New England.....	+5	-22	37	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	-22	43	+9	-3	24	95	97	74
East North Central.....	+4	-22	52	+13	+6	38	69	65	52
West North Central.....	-8	-29	23	-5	0	16	66	68	54
South Atlantic.....	+11	-15	28	+4	+7	18	70	73	51
South Central.....	+6	-6	44	+5	+6	25	61	63	55
Pacific.....	+4	-4	43	+1	+8	34	48	58	43
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+3	-4	389	+7	+3	200	192	195	177
New England.....	+4	+2	19	0	-8	8	122	126	161
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-3	261	+7	0	126	176	185	162
East North Central.....	+28	-22	27	+11	+10	17	169	195	120
West North Central.....	+9	+9	21	+20	+12	18	245	233	304
South Atlantic.....	+3	-18	22	+3	+7	12	227	238	143
South Central.....	+9	-16	15	+10	+14	7	288	264	327
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+12	-14	344	+17	+4	165	185	170	148
Middle Atlantic.....	+16	-12	98	+20	+1	45	164	146	140
East North Central.....	+9	-19	71	+17	+3	45	181	165	138
West North Central.....	+13	-8	23	+28	0	13	227	202	181
South Atlantic.....	+4	-21	41	+1	+5	19	245	216	180
South Central.....	+12	-15	43	+14	-4	20	250	222	193
Pacific.....	+12	-5	42	+20	+15	12	169	166	139
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+9	-16	606	+10	+3	401	256	249	214
Middle Atlantic.....	+21	-17	83	+13	-1	56	201	236	174
East North Central.....	+12	-19	101	+10	+3	68	202	192	162
West North Central.....	0	-18	66	+9	+4	19	343	298	258
South Atlantic.....	+2	-7	66	+7	+6	53	282	265	263
East South Central.....	+15	-1	75	+32	+14	73	337	326	278
West South Central.....	+10	0	74	+1	+3	71	286	294	297
Mountain.....	0	-14	49	+27	-1	44	334	237	283
Pacific.....	-3	-27	85	+4	+4	12	252	190	157
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ³	+16	-15	573	+21	+1	536	153	150	126
New England.....	+31	-25	35	+5	-8	32	121	164	101
Middle Atlantic.....	+17	-24	71	+3	-2	69	120	133	94
East North Central.....	+6	-22	153	+32	+2	143	164	139	128
West North Central.....	+5	-24	56	+19	+1	54	186	165	145
South Atlantic.....	+12	-12	90	+29	+5	80	166	154	133
East South Central.....	+13	-6	30	+26	+6	26	160	153	143
West South Central.....	+21	-5	62	+29	+4	59	198	151	201
Mountain.....	+5	-18	23	+8	-1	23	197	177	150
Pacific.....	+13	-9	53	+23	-1	50	138	126	110
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors..	+11	-16	322	+22	+5	234	153	137	124
New England.....	-7	-21	19	-3	+3	12	141	123	121
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	-20	74	+15	+2	39	122	126	98
East North Central.....	+17	-19	60	+30	+9	50	143	121	107
West North Central.....	-4	-22	36	+21	+8	32	199	156	144
South Atlantic.....	+16	-9	58	+33	+7	43	176	152	139
East South Central.....	+18	-6	8	+44	+16	6	159	159	146
West South Central.....	-10	-12	15	-10	+5	12	147	125	126
Pacific.....	+10	-12	44	+20	-4	33	168	149	149

See footnotes at bottom of page 6.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

JANUARY 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map, page 4)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		Number of establish- ments reporting, Jan. 1956	Percent change, Jan. 1956 from--		Number of establi- shments reporting, Jan. 1956	Jan. 1956	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955
	Jan. 1956 from--	Dec. 1955		Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955				
	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955	Jan. 1955	Dec. 1955	
Hardware wholesalers.....	+15	-14	241	+12	+7	184	275	282	223
Middle Atlantic.....	+19	-14	32	+16	+1	21	210	222	237
East North Central.....	+14	-19	38	+10	+11	29	263	266	197
West North Central.....	+22	-28	41	+26	+9	39	319	308	211
South Atlantic.....	+13	-17	33	+9	+6	20	369	390	261
East South Central.....	+11	-5	24	+4	+8	21	250	263	225
West South Central.....	+10	-6	28	+18	+10	13	224	220	187
Pacific.....	+13	-10	29	+7	+6	26	275	294	232
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+12	-3	364	+6	0	232	209	224	199
New England.....	+2	-11	14	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	-4	111	+6	+1	57	229	235	211
East North Central.....	+29	-2	61	+11	0	52	172	194	167
West North Central.....	+5	-5	30	+2	0	29	272	283	257
South Atlantic.....	+11	-13	58	-1	-8	38	191	228	165
South Central.....	+2	-3	45	+6	+3	31	261	218	239
Pacific.....	+8	+9	38	+2	-1	12	190	215	241
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	+9	+4	565	+14	+2	399	149	140	149
New England.....	0	-5	22	+3	+8	20	105	108	111
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-7	130	+9	+4	88	150	136	127
East North Central.....	+10	+4	136	+10	0	72	150	166	151
West North Central.....	+5	-7	44	+34	+1	28	177	135	145
South Atlantic.....	+21	+20	51	+41	+5	43	120	118	142
South Central.....	-2	+1	79	+3	-1	68	176	149	196
Pacific.....	+8	+5	87	+8	+3	66	146	118	167
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors..	+27	-6	962	+9	+2	724	165	198	144
New England.....	+12	+2	18	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+20	-2	72	-2	0	40	139	155	129
East North Central.....	+33	-8	116	+6	0	76	139	187	129
West North Central.....	+11	-7	83	+16	+7	72	147	127	118
South Atlantic.....	+14	0	46	+23	+1	35	161	149	141
South Central.....	+41	-10	486	+6	-1	412	179	252	153
Mountain.....	+13	-22	68	+27	+21	52	221	200	158
Pacific.....	+26	+14	73	+6	0	29	224	347	309

x Insufficient data to show separately.

¹ Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for an identical group of firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.² Not affiliated with voluntary groups or cooperative groups.³ Includes general-line electrical goods, wiring supplies, construction materials and apparatus wholesalers.⁴ Totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Note: Firms reporting in this survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon sizes, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Sales and inventory figures reported for any firm are multiplied by this weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes and stock-sales ratios.

Data on reported dollar values, previously shown as a measure of coverage, are now omitted since the trend data are based on weighted values. The number of establishments in the sample, from which reports were received in time for tabulation, are shown as an indication of coverage.

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

FOR RELEASE
APRIL 6, 1956

FEBRUARY 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Data shown in this report are based on reports submitted by a reporting panel of over 11,000 establishments which are representative of all merchant wholesaler firms in the country (see note on page 6). The reporting panel is part of a probability sample recently developed by the Bureau of the Census to provide national dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories of merchant wholesalers by kind of business.

Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers in February 1956 rose 2 percent over January and were 15 percent higher than in February 1955. Durable goods trades, in total, increased 4 percent over the previous month but showed a more substantial increase of 20 percent over a year ago. Nondurable goods trades reported a smaller increase (1%) over January sales and a smaller gain (11%) over last February.

Most trades indicated small increases over January sales. Large increases, however, were noted for jewelry (12%), amusement, sporting goods (17%), home furnishings (19%), and farm supplies (24%). Decreases from the previous month were small, the largest decline (6%), being reported for drugs. Only two trades--farm supplies (-4%), and inedible farm products (-2%)--indicated lower sales in February than a year ago. All other trades reported increased sales with the larger gains being noted in the durable goods trades. Substantial gains were registered by grocery specialty-lines (23%), electrical equipment (23%), construction materials (25%), industrial machinery (27%), iron and steel products (33%), coal (35%), nonferrous metals (39%), waste materials (45%),

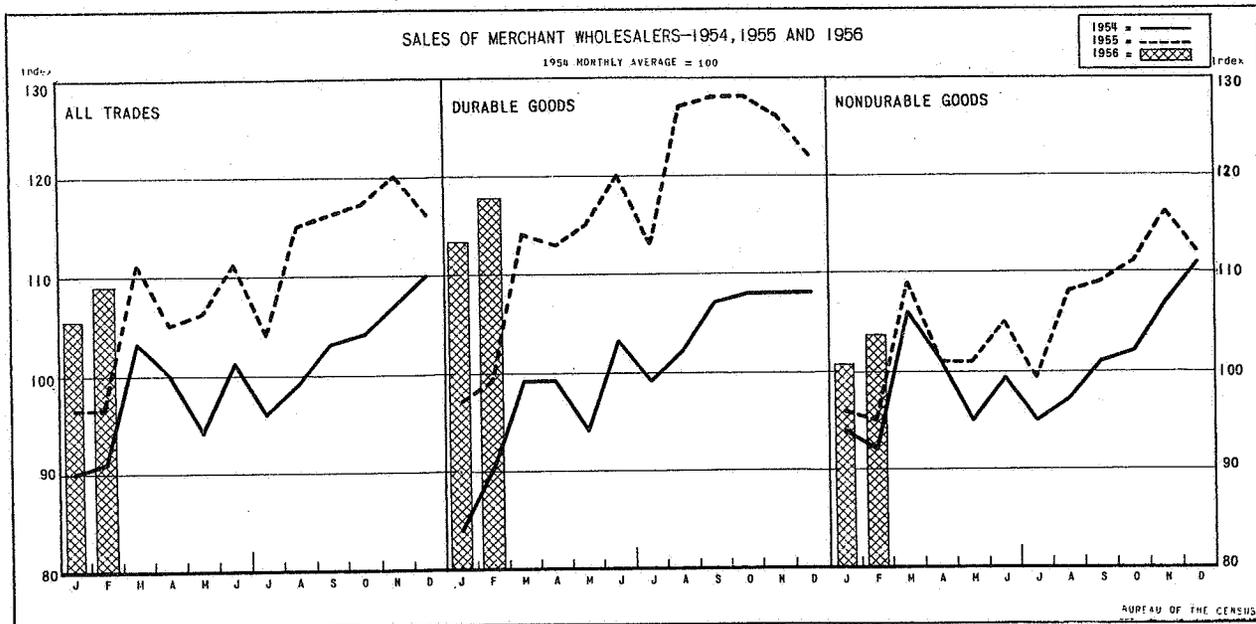
and iron and steel scrap (91%)--the last trade showing the principal gain for the thirteenth consecutive month.

All geographic divisions experienced small gains over the previous month and more substantial increases over sales a year ago. The Pacific Division indicated the largest gain (5%), over January, while New England registered the principal increase (20%), over last February.

Inventories

Inventories of wholesalers at the end of February rose slightly (1%) over January 31 stocks, and were 10 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. Nondurable goods trades, in total, indicated a slight (1%) decline in stocks, while durable goods trades showed a small increase (2%). Both groups reported heavier inventories than a year ago but the durable goods trades noted the larger increases. The February stock-sales ratio for all trades combined was 130 percent, 3 points below the ratio of the previous month and 5 points lower than the February 1955 ratio.

Most trades indicated only small changes, generally upward, from previous month inventories. However, the sharpest month-to-month changes were downward, being reported in farm supplies (-9%), coal (-16%), and iron and steel scrap (-16%). Motor-vehicles, with current stocks up 7 percent over the previous month and 34 percent above a year ago, indicated the principal increases over both periods. Only a few trades reported lower inventories than a year ago. Iron and steel scrap, down 21 percent, noted the sharpest reduction from stocks on hand last February.



DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS.
For sale by the Bureau of the Census: single copy--10¢, annual subscription--\$1.00

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
1954, 1955 AND 1956

1954 = —
1955 = - - -
1956 = X X X

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100

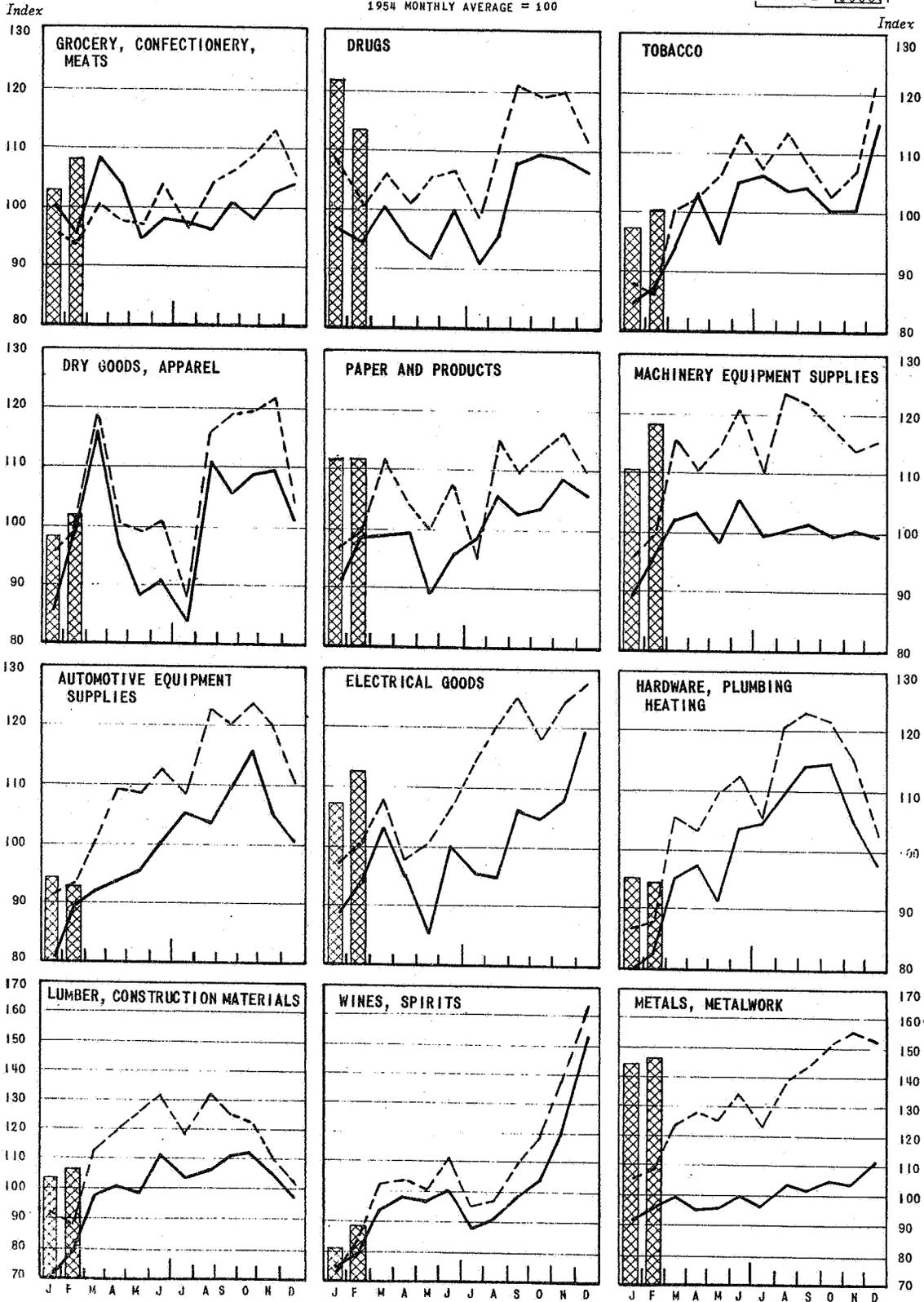


Table 1.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

Kind of business	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		2 mo. 1956 from 2 mo. 1955	Number of establish- ments reporting, Feb. 1956	Percent change, Feb. 1956 from—		Number of establish- ments reporting, Feb. 1956	Feb. 1956	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956
	Feb. 1956 from—	Jan. 1956			Feb. 1956	Jan. 1956				
	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	Feb. 1955	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	Feb. 1955	Feb. 1956	Jan. 1956	Jan. 1956	
Merchant wholesalers.....	+15	+2	+13	11,739	+10	+1	8,301	130	135	133
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+14	+2	+10	1,415	+6	+2	1,126	82	87	81
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+14	0	+10	843	+7	+1	736	109	116	107
Nonaffiliated ²	+13	-2	+8	655	+7	+1	593	121	125	118
Voluntary groups.....	+16	+3	+13	173	+7	+2	133	85	97	85
Retailer-cooperative.....	+13	+6	+13	15	+3	0	10	113	114	111
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+23	+7	+15	316	+4	+6	225	72	82	70
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+4	-1	+6	98	+6	+6	44	80	76	74
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+2	-3	-1	158	+9	-7	121	22	23	24
Edible farm products distributors.....	+7	-1	+8	876	+14	-2	655	31	31	32
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+9	-1	+11	560	+19	-2	441	31	29	32
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+4	0	+2	316	+4	-1	214	32	34	32
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+13	+8	+9	497	+6	-3	450	118	124	130
Beer distributors.....	+15	+8	+9	111	+3	+4	98	69	79	72
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+12	+8	+9	386	+7	-4	352	145	149	162
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+13	-2	+14	702	+7	-1	474	149	158	146
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	-6	+13	309	+9	0	220	167	171	158
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+18	+3	+16	232	+8	-3	157	94	104	101
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+10	+4	+11	161	0	-2	97	205	239	219
Tobacco distributors.....	+12	+3	+9	295	+7	+1	158	61	61	64
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+7	+4	+5	422	+9	0	206	209	193	213
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+6	+9	+5	102	+9	+2	45	191	195	206
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+7	+3	+8	191	+1	0	96	217	195	210
Piece goods converters.....	+9	-1	+2	129	+17	-2	65	217	188	225
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+14	+14	+14	320	+12	+4	185	175	183	197
Furniture wholesalers.....	+13	+2	+18	101	+15	+2	62	167	170	177
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+15	+19	+13	219	+11	+4	123	179	189	207
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+17	-1	+19	520	+7	-1	360	114	127	118
Paper wholesalers.....	+17	-2	+21	342	+7	-1	260	107	121	112
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+18	+1	+11	178	+9	-1	100	188	204	189
Inedible farm products merchants.....	-2	-5	-7	276	-10	-3	201	159	154	157
Automotive wholesalers.....	+4	-4	+7	634	+13	+2	442	216	194	204
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	+3	-5	+7	61	+34	+7	50	139	95	124
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+4	-3	+7	573	+9	+1	392	259	247	249
Electrical, electronic, appliance goods distributors..	+15	+3	+14	937	+21	+4	803	168	153	168
Electric equipment, supplies wholesalers ³	+23	+6	+18	588	+19	+5	558	158	156	161
Electrical appliances, TV and radio sets and parts, and electronic parts, equipment distributors.....	+7	0	+9	349	+24	+3	245	181	149	176
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+8	0	+10	612	+9	+4	425	271	265	265
Hardware wholesalers.....	+13	+4	+14	232	+10	+4	191	308	299	310
Plumbing, heating goods distributors.....	+4	-5	+8	380	+7	+4	234	210	209	195
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+12	+6	+10	570	+9	+2	388	151	152	155
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+6	+5	+6	334	+7	+2	243	172	172	174
Construction materials distributors.....	+25	+8	+19	236	+15	+2	145	105	101	113
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors ⁴	+24	+6	+21	2,025	+13	+1	1,440	177	203	190
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equip- ment distributors.....	+4	-1	+12	114	+6	+1	75	210	188	209
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+19	+8	+16	125	+16	+4	90	145	155	148
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies houses....	+27	+4	+27	933	+9	0	721	157	195	168
Professional equipment, supplies houses ⁴	+16	+6	+11	416	+2	0	250	200	224	215
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+12	+1	+10	77	-4	-1	39	151	174	158
Service establishment equipment, supplies houses....	+16	-1	+11	172	+6	+3	98	174	194	160
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+35	-1	+37	319	+22	+3	225	159	179	146
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+33	-5	+37	223	+22	+3	165	195	223	175
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+39	+6	+38	96	+19	+5	60	75	74	73
Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+73	+2	+70	299	-12	-9	199	32	61	35
Iron-steel scrap dealers.....	+91	+3	+87	168	-21	-16	118	22	58	27
Waste materials dealers.....	+45	0	+44	131	+4	-3	81	53	67	53
Other merchant wholesalers ⁴	+13	+4	+14	1,020	+7	-4	564	104	107	116
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+20	+17	+17	152	+20	-4	112	207	202	264
Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.....	+11	-2	+9	118	+21	-2	36	71	64	73
Coal wholesalers.....	+35	-5	+36	219	+18	-16	106	34	36	39
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	-4	+24	-7	219	-6	-9	152	96	97	134
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+2	+12	+4	127	+2	+2	51	213	215	214

See page 6 for footnotes.

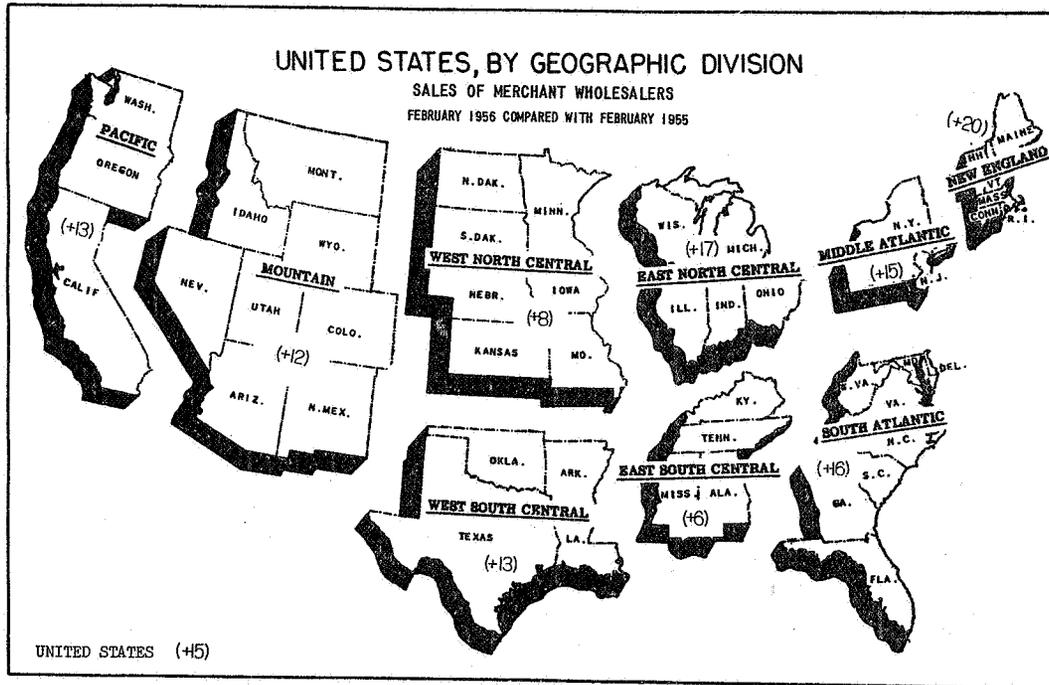


Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

FEBRUARY 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map above)	Sales			Number of establishments reporting, Feb. 1956	Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)			
	Percent change				Percent change, Feb. 1956 from--	Number of establishments reporting, Feb. 1956	Feb. 1956	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	
	Feb. 1956 from--		2 mo. 1956							Feb. 1955
	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	from 2 mo. 1955		Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956				
Merchant wholesalers, total ⁴	+15	+2	+13	11,739	+10	+1	8,301	130	135	133
New England.....	+20	+2	+12	565	+2	+1	319	120	137	119
Middle Atlantic.....	+15	+1	+14	2,591	+8	+3	1,531	107	113	106
East North Central.....	+17	+2	+17	2,338	+12	0	1,714	127	133	130
West North Central.....	+8	+3	+6	1,164	+6	0	887	150	153	155
South Atlantic.....	+16	+2	+15	1,261	+12	+3	896	153	153	155
East South Central.....	+6	+2	+3	512	+10	+3	396	151	149	154
West South Central.....	+13	+2	+14	1,429	+6	+3	1,171	156	173	154
Mountain.....	+12	+4	+11	433	+12	+4	353	203	192	198
Pacific.....	+13	+5	+13	1,446	+15	-5	1,034	118	114	130
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+14	0	+10	843	+7	+1	736	109	116	107
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	-5	+10	85	+10	+4	73	125	120	119
East North Central.....	+12	0	+11	120	+8	+6	97	115	119	109
West North Central.....	+12	+3	+8	143	+7	0	139	109	114	113
South Atlantic.....	+9	-2	+6	71	+2	-2	43	103	113	103
East South Central.....	+4	-5	-2	36	+5	+2	33	131	132	122
West South Central.....	+10	-3	+8	169	+10	+5	159	130	132	121
Mountain.....	+19	-10	+19	30	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Pacific.....	+26	+6	+17	178	+1	-8	159	65	85	72
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+23	+7	+15	316	+4	+6	225	72	82	70
New England.....	+21	-9	+19	19	-20	-4	11	95	153	93
Middle Atlantic.....	+39	+13	+22	153	+24	+21	88	61	61	53
East North Central.....	+9	-1	+14	41	-2	-4	34	83	98	85
West North Central.....	+4	+3	+4	14	-15	-19	10	115	133	173
South Atlantic.....	+11	+4	+13	30	+10	+10	24	135	139	128
South Central.....	+11	+8	+7	38	-10	-4	30	57	72	65
Pacific.....	+11	+2	+5	40	-27	-15	27	34	51	41
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+9	-1	+11	560	+19	-2	441	31	29	32
New England.....	+18	+2	+6	13	+17	+7	11	25	25	24
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-5	+6	106	+23	+1	64	20	18	19
East North Central.....	+11	-1	+15	109	+21	-3	80	35	33	37
West North Central.....	+13	+4	+17	45	+15	+2	40	88	79	90
South Atlantic.....	+6	0	+12	97	+19	-6	87	28	27	32
South Central.....	+13	+4	+12	61	+14	-4	48	24	23	26
Pacific.....	+11	0	+10	117	+21	-2	102	32	29	33

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

FEBRUARY 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (see map, page 4)	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		2 mo. 1956 from 2 mo. 1955	Number of establish- ments reporting Feb. 1956	Percent change, Feb. 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting Feb. 1956	Feb. 1956	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956
	Feb. 1956 from--	Jan. 1956			Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956				
	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	Feb. 1956	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956	
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+4	0	+2	316	+4	-1	214	32	34	32
New England.....	-6	+3	-6	16	-13	0	11	16	14	16
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	+2	+1	47	+7	+3	25	26	25	28
East North Central.....	-3	-3	-6	48	-19	-6	29	22	27	20
West North Central.....	+3	-3	-2	46	0	0	39	28	35	28
South Atlantic.....	+10	-6	+6	32	+10	-7	16	53	51	53
South Central.....	+13	+7	+13	34	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Pacific.....	+12	+6	+1	65	-14	-5	51	41	56	45
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	-6	+13	309	+9	0	220	167	171	158
New England.....	+6	-10	+15	19	-2	0	13	159	158	143
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-9	+6	72	+1	0	46	161	165	150
East North Central.....	+16	-7	+16	50	+2	+1	29	177	204	164
West North Central.....	+7	-12	+8	25	+5	+1	22	134	136	116
South Atlantic.....	+19	-5	+17	47	+20	+2	36	170	153	158
East South Central.....	+3	0	+9	14	+5	+1	12	214	208	214
West South Central.....	+19	-6	+18	34	+7	+2	28	193	215	176
Mountain.....	+1	-8	+17	16	+8	+4	13	207	188	182
Pacific.....	+24	0	+18	32	+9	-9	21	121	136	135
Tobacco distributors.....	+12	+3	+9	295	+7	+1	158	61	61	64
New England.....	+11	+7	+8	33	+2	+5	8	71	37	69
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	+5	+10	54	+12	-1	27	68	63	73
East North Central.....	+4	-2	+4	52	+12	+4	29	73	69	72
West North Central.....	+7	0	+1	22	+17	-3	13	66	61	66
South Atlantic.....	+29	+14	+22	31	+1	+3	22	58	76	69
South Central.....	+12	+4	+9	45	-7	-1	20	48	52	51
Pacific.....	+17	+1	+10	39	+10	-1	28	45	52	48
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+7	+4	+5	422	+9	0	206	209	193	213
New England.....	+19	+19	+12	24	+11	0	13	137	146	151
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	+1	+3	265	+9	0	114	216	191	214
East North Central.....	+2	+18	+12	47	-2	0	29	244	226	254
West North Central.....	+12	+7	+10	26	+22	+6	14	250	226	249
South Atlantic.....	+22	-1	+12	21	+3	+4	13	156	184	155
South Central.....	+1	+19	+5	14	+20	-4	10	255	217	287
Pacific.....	+10	+6	0	23	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+14	+14	+14	320	+12	+4	185	175	183	197
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	+14	+14	102	+5	+1	41	151	163	178
East North Central.....	+17	+13	+13	68	+17	+8	43	176	185	190
West North Central.....	+10	0	+12	19	+11	+2	16	240	248	236
South Atlantic.....	+18	+13	+12	33	+15	+2	18	287	309	255
South Central.....	+5	+15	+8	38	+13	+14	34	225	204	249
Pacific.....	+20	+17	+16	39	+15	-7	19	126	144	162
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+4	-3	+7	573	+9	+1	392	259	247	249
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	+3	+16	93	-1	+1	51	222	228	245
East North Central.....	-2	-9	+5	114	+11	+1	79	224	204	193
West North Central.....	+6	-6	+4	67	-5	-1	27	273	309	248
South Atlantic.....	+4	-3	+3	69	+12	+3	54	270	270	257
East South Central.....	+10	+6	+13	86	+21	-1	85	314	294	354
West South Central.....	+14	+1	+11	21	+11	+3	20	205	206	199
Mountain.....	-1	+3	0	56	+13	-1	53	321	311	331
Pacific.....	0	-1	-2	52	+16	-2	19	297	242	298
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ³	+23	+6	+18	588	+19	+5	558	158	156	161
New England.....	+26	+3	+28	37	+1	+7	33	117	142	111
Middle Atlantic.....	+32	+1	+25	73	-16	+6	65	139	138	131
East North Central.....	+19	+11	+14	165	+12	-1	155	175	179	193
West North Central.....	+8	+21	+6	55	+17	+9	53	206	182	228
South Atlantic.....	+24	+6	+17	84	+29	+16	83	168	162	164
East South Central.....	+6	+11	+10	35	+17	+5	34	168	153	178
West South Central.....	+19	-2	+20	66	+24	+12	62	145	137	129
Mountain.....	+21	+24	+13	22	+17	+5	22	196	148	231
Pacific.....	+22	+12	+16	51	+24	-3	51	146	144	168
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors..	-7	0	+9	349	+24	+3	245	181	149	176
New England.....	+31	+2	+19	30	+28	+9	21	127	132	116
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	-3	+11	70	+2	+5	41	182	180	173
East North Central.....	+9	+2	+12	78	+19	+4	61	190	137	197
West North Central.....	-15	-6	-10	26	+14	+3	23	189	141	168
South Atlantic.....	+5	-4	+10	56	+22	+1	32	193	166	185
East South Central.....	-9	+16	-1	12	+23	+8	8	176	133	180
West South Central.....	-1	-7	-3	24	+22	+7	19	220	179	192
Pacific.....	+6	+1	+8	46	+42	-9	37	150	118	167

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

FEBRUARY 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map, page 4)	Sales			Number of establishments reporting Feb. 1956	Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)			
	Percent change				Number of establishments reporting, Feb. 1956	Percent change Feb. 1956 from--		Feb. 1956	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956
	Feb. 1956 from--		2 mo. 1956 from 2 mo. 1955			Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956			
	Feb. 1955	Jan. 1956								
Hardware wholesalers.....	+13	+4	+14	232	+10	+4	191	308	299	310
Middle Atlantic.....	+18	-1	+18	36	+9	+4	27	295	325	295
East North Central.....	+18	+13	+16	43	+13	+9	36	278	298	288
West North Central.....	-2	+5	+12	17	+3	+6	17	323	306	320
South Atlantic.....	+11	0	+12	28	+6	+5	21	372	389	353
East South Central.....	+15	-3	+13	24	+7	+4	22	250	263	236
West South Central.....	+10	+1	+10	27	+14	+4	24	298	298	301
Mountain.....	+18	+11	+6	22	+18	+5	18	357	363	373
Pacific.....	+2	+1	+8	27	+14	-5	19	367	237	383
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+4	-5	+8	380	+7	+4	234	210	209	195
New England.....	+6	-1	+4	16	-5	+1	8	213	290	221
Middle Atlantic.....	+16	-6	+11	111	+12	0	48	239	266	228
East North Central.....	+16	-4	+23	57	+9	+3	37	206	223	195
West North Central.....	+4	-9	+4	32	-2	+8	29	216	244	192
South Atlantic.....	+3	+1	+7	59	+14	+14	45	265	252	243
South Central.....	-16	-12	-12	60	+1	+4	51	264	238	220
Pacific.....	-2	+1	+2	34	+17	-4	8	102	82	107
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	+12	+6	+10	570	+9	+2	388	151	152	155
New England.....	+5	-2	+1	17	+4	+9	17	193	204	175
Middle Atlantic.....	+20	+4	+11	116	0	-2	82	155	171	157
East North Central.....	+13	-2	+12	118	+13	+3	56	137	135	125
West North Central.....	+2	+5	+4	59	+10	+1	38	138	124	145
South Atlantic.....	+16	+8	+18	54	+23	-1	38	118	117	128
South Central.....	-5	+2	-4	77	-1	+7	55	190	199	186
Pacific.....	+15	+23	+12	109	+19	+1	83	144	137	186
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors..	+27	+4	+27	933	+9	0	721	157	195	168
Middle Atlantic.....	+27	+5	+23	55	+7	+2	34	98	142	111
East North Central.....	+26	+6	+30	101	+14	-1	77	166	184	177
West North Central.....	+32	+14	+19	62	+4	+5	50	191	240	211
South Atlantic.....	+37	+11	+25	43	+12	+3	38	137	190	154
South Central.....	+33	+3	+37	504	+5	+2	430	167	220	172
Mountain.....	+12	+16	+12	75	+10	+2	54	253	265	237
Pacific.....	+10	+3	+16	82	+19	-10	35	119	133	139

x Insufficient data to show separately.

¹ Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for an identical group of firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

² Not affiliated with voluntary groups or cooperative groups.

³ Includes general-line electrical goods, wiring supplies, construction materials and apparatus wholesalers.

⁴ Totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Note: Firms reporting in this survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon sizes, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Sales and inventory figures reported for any firm are multiplied by this weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes and stock-sales ratios.

Data on reported dollar values, previously shown as a measure of coverage, are now omitted since the trend data are based on weighted values. The number of establishments in the sample, from which reports were received in time for tabulation, are shown as an indication of coverage.

WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

MARCH 1956

 FOR RELEASE
 MAY 9, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

First Quarter Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers during the first quarter 1956 were 10 percent ahead of the first quarter 1955. Durable goods trades, in total, were up 17 percent over first quarter 1955 sales, as compared with an increase of only 6 percent by non-durable goods trades during the same period.

All durable goods trades were ahead of first quarter 1955 sales but five nondurable goods trades--fresh fruit, vegetables (-1%), meats (-2%), piece goods converters (-1%), inedible farm products (-7%) and farm supplies (-8%)--noted declines. Iron and steel scrap, up 69 percent, registered the principal gain. Other substantial increases were in waste materials (36%), iron and steel products (33%), non-ferrous metals (31%), and industrial machinery, equipment (23%). Among the nondurable goods trades, the larger gains were reported by coal (34%), paper (14%), drugs (12%), and grocery specialty-lines (12%).

All geographic divisions shared in the increased sales during the first quarter of 1956. The East North Central Division, up 14 percent, recorded the principal gain over first quarter 1955 while the East South Central Division showed the smallest increase, 3 percent.

March Sales

March 1956 sales of merchant wholesalers were up 7 percent over February and 6 percent higher than sales in March 1955. Five trades indicated lower sales than a month earlier, the sharpest decline (9%) being noted in coal. All other trades reported higher sales, the principal increase (20%) being shared by farm supplies and wine, distilled spirits. Most trades were also up compared with a year ago, substantial increases being registered by iron and steel scrap (42%), coal (30%), and iron and steel products (27%). However, nine trades experienced declines from sales a year ago, the largest decrease (8%), being in farm supplies.

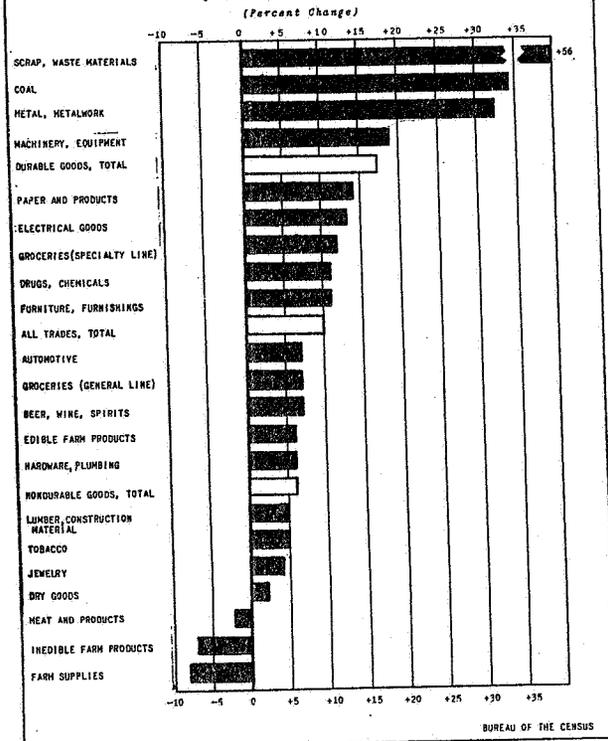
March 1956 sales in all geographic divisions were from 4 to 11 percent above February sales. Compared with March a year ago, sales gains were experienced in all but one geographic division--the West North Central which was at about the same level as last March.

Inventories

Inventories of wholesalers at the end of March rose 2 percent over the February 29 level, but were 11 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. The March stock-sales ratio of 121 percent was 8 points below the ratio of the previous month, but 6 points above the March 1955 ratio.

Most trades showed small inventory changes from the previous month. However, compared with a year ago, inventory changes were more substantial, and generally upward. Among those showing large inventory gains since last March were motor-vehicles (21%), electrical appliances (21%), retailer-cooper-

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS--SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
 1st QUARTER 1956 COMPARED WITH 1955



ative grocers (19%), electrical equipment (18%), home furnishings (17%), dry goods (17%), waste materials (16%), and iron, steel products (15%). Jewelry and inedible farm products, each down 6 percent, shared the principal decline from year-ago stocks. Coal, up 14 percent over last March, reported the principal decline from February 29 stocks with a seasonal decrease of 18 percent.

While the South Atlantic Division showed no change from previous month inventories, all other divisions indicated small increases between 1 and 3 percent. All divisions indicated increases over year-ago inventories, the smallest increase (3%) being reported for New England and the largest (15%) for the East South Central Division.

General

Data shown in this report are based on reports submitted by a reporting panel of over 11,000 establishments which are representative of all merchant wholesaler firms in the country (see note on page 6). Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month, nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

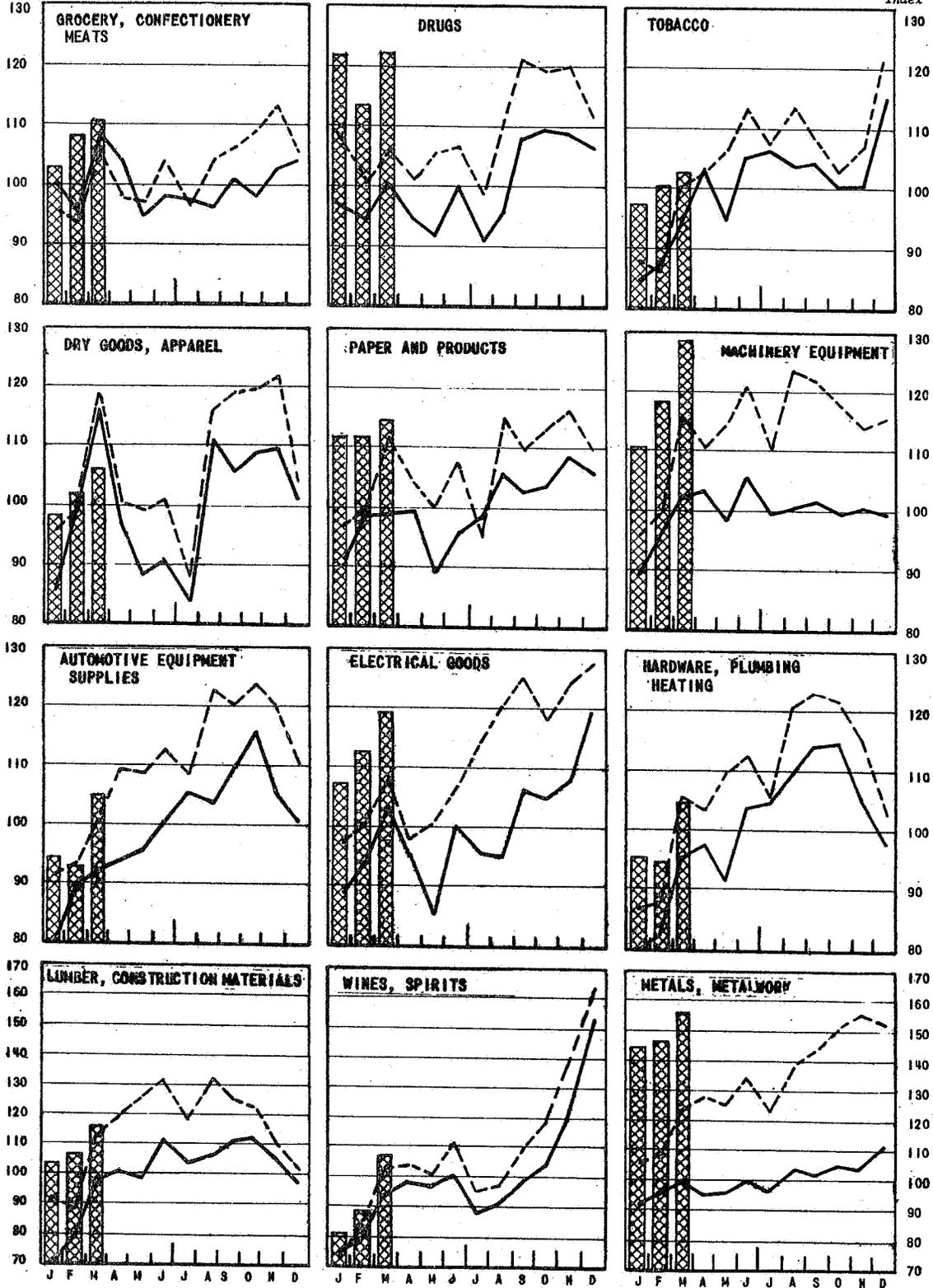
SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
1954, 1955 AND 1956

1954 = ———
1955 = - - - -
1956 = ☒☒☒☒

Index

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100

Index



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS

Table 1.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KINDS OF BUSINESS

MARCH 1956

Kind of business	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change			Number of establish- ments reporting Mar. 1956	Percent change, Mar. 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting Mar. 1956	Mar. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956
	Mar. 1956 from--		3 mo. 1956 from 3 mo. 1955		Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956				
	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956								
Merchant wholesalers.....	+6	+7	+10	11,895	+11	+2	8,456	121	115	129
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+2	+2	+7	1,365	+10	+3	1,072	89	83	89
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	+3	+7	823	+8	+3	714	109	103	109
Nonaffiliated ²	+2	+5	+6	624	+6	+1	563	119	116	125
Voluntary groups.....	+5	+2	+10	174	+6	+3	132	100	99	100
Retailer-cooperative.....	+2	-2	+8	25	+19	+9	19	94	76	82
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	-1	+12	297	+12	0	202	90	84	92
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+3	+14	+5	90	+8	-4	42	75	77	91
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	-5	-1	-2	155	+7	+1	114	26	23	25
Edible farm products distributors.....	+3	+11	+6	858	+8	0	646	28	28	33
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+7	+7	+10	553	+11	0	433	28	28	31
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-4	+17	-1	305	+4	0	213	30	29	37
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+4	+17	+7	497	+1	+5	314	100	107	110
Beer distributors.....	+1	+12	+5	112	+2	+9	102	61	62	64
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+5	+20	+8	385	0	+3	212	129	139	144
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+6	+8	+11	949	+7	+1	659	134	127	143
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)....	+11	+6	+12	331	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	-2	+9	+9	455	+4	+1	396	98	84	107
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+4	+14	+8	163	+9	+3	103	177	160	189
Tobacco distributors.....	-1	+3	+5	286	+4	-2	169	54	52	56
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-3	+1	+2	390	+11	0	186	174	151	176
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	-3	+4	+2	97	-1	-1	51	166	157	168
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)	-1	+1	+5	169	+17	+1	78	169	138	169
Piece goods converters.....	-6	-1	-1	124	+15	0	57	199	163	203
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+4	+7	+11	311	+17	+1	184	189	169	202
Furniture wholesalers.....	+2	+10	+12	108	+16	+1	64	180	155	187
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+5	+6	+10	203	+17	0	120	193	175	209
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+3	+4	+14	483	+11	+1	317	123	109	127
Paper wholesalers.....	+1	+4	+14	313	+12	+1	246	121	104	123
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+13	+7	+11	170	-1	-2	71	153	174	172
Inedible farm products merchants.....	-5	+1	-7	264	-6	-8	186	115	127	138
Automotive wholesalers.....	+9	+9	+7	651	+12	0	469	172	166	184
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	+10	+3	+8	71	+21	+2	49	95	90	94
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+8	+12	+7	580	+9	0	420	224	222	252
Electrical, electronic, appliance goods distributors	+11	+7	+13	903	+19	+7	806	158	145	158
Electric equipment, supplies wholesalers ⁴	+20	+8	+19	579	+18	+8	552	154	153	153
Electrical appliances, TV and radio sets and parts, and electronic parts, equipment distributors.....	+1	+6	+6	324	+21	+7	254	163	136	166
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	0	+9	+6	604	+10	+3	445	234	214	252
Hardware wholesalers.....	+1	+11	+9	216	+9	+3	181	256	237	281
Plumbing, heating goods distributors.....	-1	+6	+4	388	+10	+4	264	205	185	215
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	-2	+11	+5	582	+12	+1	406	122	107	133
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-2	+10	+3	351	+11	+1	267	124	110	137
Construction materials distributors.....	-1	+12	+11	231	+14	+1	139	117	100	125
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors ⁵	+15	+8	+19	2,117	+15	+1	1,591	163	154	176
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equip- ment distributors.....	+1	+16	+7	130	+5	+8	104	120	112	146
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+8	+10	+12	152	+13	-4	100	156	142	174
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies houses..	+17	+1	+23	946	+12	0	743	142	144	146
Professional equipment, supplies houses ⁶	+16	+8	+13	421	+5	+2	330	184	206	195
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+11	+1	+11	67	+8	+2	37	161	168	161
Service establishment equipment, supplies houses..	+16	+12	+13	175	+5	+1	99	149	172	165
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+25	+5	+32	320	+15	+3	221	137	150	139
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+27	+6	+33	222	+15	+3	164	154	173	155
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+21	+1	+31	98	+12	+3	57	74	74	77
Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+34	+4	+56	302	+16	+3	197	45	46	44
Iron-steel scrap dealers.....	+42	+2	+69	163	+14	+6	108	33	40	33
Waste materials dealers.....	+23	+7	+36	139	+16	+1	89	64	55	61
Other merchant wholesalers ⁵	+3	+9	+10	1,013	+8	-1	588	102	94	114
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	-2	+3	+9	145	+11	+5	104	202	167	197
Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.....	+8	+1	+9	121	+3	-3	38	129	109	121
Coal wholesalers.....	+30	-9	+34	191	+14	-18	103	32	35	34
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	-8	+20	-8	226	-2	-8	149	77	71	103
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+4	+4	+4	141	-6	+2	62	273	320	315

See page 6 for footnotes.

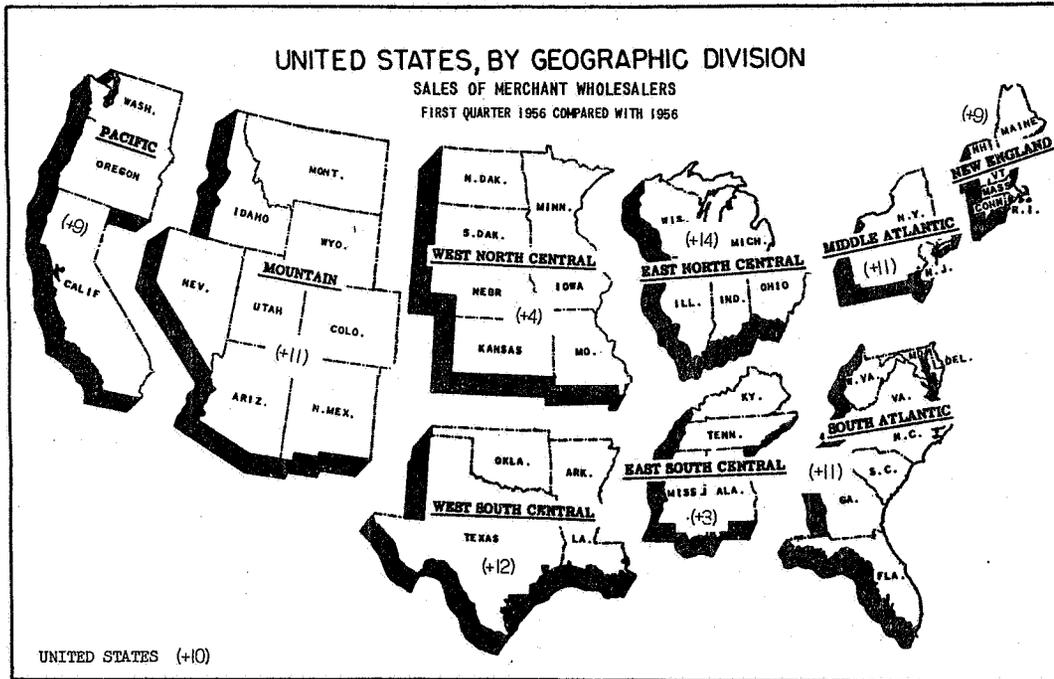


Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
MARCH 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map above)	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change			Number of establish- ments reporting, Mar. 1956	Percent change, Mar. 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting, Mar. 1956	Mar. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956
	Mar. 1956 from--		3 mo. 1956 from 3 mo. 1955		Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956				
	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956								
Merchant wholesalers, total ⁴	+6	+7	+10	11,895	+11	+2	8,456	121	115	129
New England.....	+3	+4	+9	564	+3	+2	342	129	128	135
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	+5	+11	2,614	+10	+2	1,481	104	96	109
East North Central.....	+9	+7	+14	2,272	+12	+1	1,625	103	102	109
West North Central.....	0	+8	+4	1,138	+11	+2	891	145	131	158
South Atlantic.....	+5	+6	+11	1,172	+9	0	877	136	130	146
East South Central.....	+4	+7	+3	751	+15	+1	621	154	141	165
West South Central.....	+9	+10	+12	1,466	+12	+1	1,188	146	142	159
Mountain.....	+9	+11	+11	455	+12	+3	375	155	150	167
Pacific.....	+4	+9	+9	1,463	+11	+3	1,056	121	111	128
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	+3	+7	823	+8	+3	714	109	103	109
Middle Atlantic.....	0	0	+6	85	+4	+2	76	114	102	108
East North Central.....	0	-1	+7	101	+12	+3	79	121	107	116
West North Central.....	+3	+3	+7	137	+9	-1	133	109	102	115
South Atlantic.....	-2	+4	+3	62	+8	+1	45	110	100	116
East South Central.....	-6	+10	-4	57	+3	0	45	130	119	145
West South Central.....	+5	+3	+7	158	+17	+5	142	112	103	107
Mountain.....	+18	+3	+18	40	+9	+1	40	93	101	95
Pacific.....	+17	+5	+17	173	+6	+9	151	74	82	72
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+6	-1	+12	297	+12	0	202	90	84	92
New England.....	+14	+7	+18	19	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-1	+16	116	+7	0	78	59	62	66
East North Central.....	+6	+5	+11	48	+9	+1	28	83	87	86
West North Central.....	+16	-2	+7	11	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
South Atlantic.....	+6	+5	+10	29	+10	-4	21	137	131	142
South Central.....	+16	+8	+10	33	+6	+3	29	110	123	113
Pacific.....	+6	-9	+6	39	+22	-3	29	102	81	98
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+7	+7	+10	553	+11	0	433	28	28	31
New England.....	+22	+12	+8	15	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	+9	+7	98	+16	+7	53	19	18	20
East North Central.....	+4	+3	+11	117	+9	+2	93	26	26	27
West North Central.....	+20	+17	+18	37	-1	-17	33	45	63	73
South Atlantic.....	+3	+17	+10	99	+17	+12	92	33	27	35
South Central.....	+1	+2	+10	56	+8	-2	45	36	32	36
Pacific.....	+9	+7	+10	115	+12	+1	92	37	35	41

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (see map, page 4)	Sales			Number of establishments reporting Mar. 1956	Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		3 mo. 1956 from 3 mo. 1955		Percent change, Mar. 1956 from--		Number of establishments reporting Mar. 1956	Mar. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956
	Mar. 1956 from--	Feb. 1956		Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956					
	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956		
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-4	+17	-1	305	+4	0	213	30	29	37
Middle Atlantic.....	-9	+16	-2	35	0	-5	21	22	22	26
East North Central.....	-2	+20	-5	40	-2	+2	26	25	23	32
West North Central.....	-7	+4	-4	47	+15	+3	40	26	23	33
South Atlantic.....	-13	+6	-2	31	+6	+8	12	24	28	32
South Central.....	+2	+24	+7	42	+21	-2	24	40	33	51
Pacific.....	-3	+24	0	64	+2	+2	53	35	35	42
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	+6	+12	331	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
New England.....	+7	+4	+13	17						
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+8	+6	67						
East North Central.....	+10	+4	+14	62						
West North Central.....	+8	+4	+8	22						
South Atlantic.....	+16	+4	+17	42						
East South Central.....	+12	+12	+11	19						
West South Central.....	+13	+6	+16	51						
Mountain.....	+9	+4	+14	18						
Pacific.....	+15	+11	+17	33	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Tobacco distributors.....	-1	+3	+5	286	+4	-2	169	54	52	56
New England.....	-7	+7	+4	34	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	0	+7	+6	50	+15	-1	27	54	53	57
East North Central.....	0	+6	+3	45	-4	-7	32	42	42	46
West North Central.....	-3	0	-1	29	+1	+1	24	67	63	66
South Atlantic.....	-2	-2	+12	31	+2	+1	26	58	57	55
South Central.....	-7	-7	+3	45	+7	+3	22	71	61	64
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-3	+1	+2	390	+11	0	186	174	151	176
New England.....	+9	+3	+11	13	+5	+4	9	137	149	137
Middle Atlantic.....	-4	0	0	265	+12	0	109	176	151	172
East North Central.....	-5	+9	+6	26	+14	+1	14	143	131	157
West North Central.....	-1	+2	+6	23	+13	+4	14	232	198	221
South Atlantic.....	-1	+3	+6	26	-4	-4	16	146	129	158
South Central.....	-1	+12	+1	21	+16	-2	15	184	133	209
Pacific.....	-12	+3	-2	13	+11	+2	7	266	179	271
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+4	+7	+11	311	+17	+1	184	189	169	202
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+7	+12	90	+26	-1	36	147	141	155
East North Central.....	+8	+10	+11	67	+18	-2	45	204	184	241
West North Central.....	-9	+19	+7	19	+7	+5	15	248	227	283
South Atlantic.....	+4	+1	+9	28	+5	+7	14	226	224	205
South Central.....	+5	+7	+6	44	+21	+4	40	204	169	205
Pacific.....	-5	+5	+8	40	+12	+1	15	159	113	150
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+8	+12	+7	580	+9	0	420	224	222	252
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	+10	+14	87	-1	-3	58	161	201	194
East North Central.....	-2	+15	+2	107	+11	-2	74	218	192	246
West North Central.....	0	+6	+3	55	+1	+3	20	289	260	301
South Atlantic.....	+8	+16	+4	53	+19	+1	39	217	194	254
East South Central.....	+18	+13	+15	81	+11	-1	81	219	233	249
West South Central.....	+23	+15	+16	44	+14	-2	36	280	292	338
Mountain.....	+14	+6	+6	47	+13	+1	42	222	221	219
Pacific.....	+3	+8	0	92	+10	+3	58	217	205	225
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ⁴	+20	+8	+19	579	+18	+8	552	154	153	153
New England.....	+6	-5	+23	33	+3	+4	33	135	148	123
Middle Atlantic.....	+28	+11	+26	68	+25	+16	62	163	141	159
East North Central.....	+24	+10	+17	161	+13	+7	151	125	138	129
West North Central.....	+23	+12	+14	64	+12	+6	61	165	184	175
South Atlantic.....	+16	+5	+17	84	+23	+6	81	177	163	162
East South Central.....	+19	+2	+14	38	+21	+6	36	164	165	153
West South Central.....	+10	+12	+17	60	+23	+4	57	184	172	199
Mountain.....	+2	+4	+10	21	+25	+14	21	174	142	158
Pacific.....	+13	+13	+15	50	+19	+9	50	147	147	152
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors..	+1	+6	+6	324	+21	+7	254	163	136	166
New England.....	-10	+8	+8	16	+32	-7	14	135	79	142
Middle Atlantic.....	+14	+10	+12	81	+16	+9	49	138	138	145
East North Central.....	-6	+3	+6	69	+41	+4	60	168	114	171
West North Central.....	-4	-2	-8	36	+12	+6	29	190	162	179
South Atlantic.....	+1	+7	+7	43	+14	+7	39	193	173	196
East South Central.....	-4	-6	-2	11	+13	+7	8	203	171	185
West South Central.....	-1	+7	-2	20	+8	+5	15	186	173	197
Pacific.....	-2	+10	+5	43	+24	+14	35	143	107	136

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (See map, page 4)	MARCH 1956									
	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change			Number of establishments reporting Mar. 1956	Percent change Mar. 1956 from--		Number of establishments reporting Mar. 1956	Mar. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956
	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956	3 mo. 1956 from 3 mo. 1955		Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956				
Hardware wholesalers.....	+1	+11	+9	216	+9	+3	181	256	237	281
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	+11	+15	37	+15	+2	21	215	208	236
East North Central.....	+5	+7	+12	34	+15	+3	31	263	240	284
West North Central.....	-6	+13	+5	22	+5	+4	21	314	280	343
South Atlantic.....	-6	+16	+6	25	+12	-1	19	221	162	272
East South Central.....	-2	+11	+7	27	+7	+4	26	271	249	285
West South Central.....	+8	+9	+9	20	+11	+2	16	188	195	199
Mountain.....	-6	+10	+3	10	+11	+3	10	364	309	388
Pacific.....	-1	+13	+4	34	+3	+1	31	267	261	301
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	-1	+6	+4	388	+10	+4	264	205	185	215
New England.....	+4	+3	+4	24	+4	+1	17	240	238	250
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	+1	+8	111	+12	+8	54	201	201	205
East North Central.....	-1	+1	+15	49	+9	+11	42	166	152	150
West North Central.....	+1	+22	+2	35	-1	+7	34	252	228	286
South Atlantic.....	-1	+2	+4	60	+10	-1	50	177	166	194
East South Central.....	-1	+10	-7	56	+20	0	45	240	188	257
South Central.....	-1	+18	+1	41	+16	+3	14	201	167	253
Pacific.....	-1	+18	+1	41	+16	+3	14	201	167	253
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	-2	+11	+5	582	+12	+1	406	122	107	133
New England.....	-10	-8	-4	26	+7	+4	21	152	93	134
Middle Atlantic.....	-4	-1	+5	112	+5	-1	73	118	107	109
East North Central.....	+14	+15	+13	138	+12	0	78	92	95	105
West North Central.....	-8	+8	0	35	+1	-1	21	169	171	197
South Atlantic.....	0	+11	+11	48	+34	+5	36	147	95	156
East South Central.....	0	+21	-11	78	+10	-3	60	153	111	190
South Central.....	-19	+21	-11	78	+10	-3	60	153	111	190
Pacific.....	-5	+17	+5	102	+11	+3	76	101	95	117
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors..	+17	+1	+23	946	+12	0	743	142	144	146
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	+2	+18	86	+8	0	56	112	109	119
East North Central.....	+21	+2	+26	108	+12	-1	94	128	142	131
West North Central.....	+7	+8	+16	59	+8	+2	49	172	155	183
South Atlantic.....	0	-17	+18	42	+21	-4	37	201	133	178
East South Central.....	+30	-2	+34	485	+14	+1	410	136	153	131
South Central.....	+30	-2	+34	485	+14	+1	410	136	153	131
Mountain.....	+23	+20	+16	74	+12	-5	57	189	209	230
Pacific.....	+9	+5	+13	80	+10	+1	35	218	171	224

x Insufficient data to show separately.

¹ Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for an identical group of firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

² Not affiliated with voluntary groups or cooperative groups.

³ Data withheld because of incomplete reporting of inventories at time of publication. These data will be included April 1956 bulletin.

⁴ Includes general-line electrical goods, wiring supplies, construction materials and apparatus wholesalers.

⁵ Totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Note: Firms reporting in this survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon sizes, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Sales and inventory figures reported for any firm are multiplied by this weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes and stock-sales ratios.

Data on reported dollar values, previously shown as a measure of coverage, are now omitted since the trend data are based on weighted values. The number of establishments in the sample, from which reports were received in time for tabulation, are shown as an indication of coverage.

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

APRIL 1956

FOR RELEASE
June 8, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Data shown in this report are based on reports submitted by a reporting panel of over 11,000 establishments which are representative of all merchant wholesaler firms in the country (see note on page 6). The reporting panel is part of a probability sample recently developed by the Bureau of the Census to provide national dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories of merchant wholesalers by kind of business.

Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers in April 1956 fell 3 percent below March but were 8 percent above April 1955. Durable goods trades in total, declined slightly (1%) from March but were up 13 percent over April a year ago. Nondurable goods trades reported a larger decline (5%) from March sales and a smaller gain (4%) over last April.

Most trades indicated small declines from March sales, but 10 trades showed increases. The more significant gains were reported for automotive equipment (3%), lumber, millwork (3%), plumbing, heating (6%), commercial equipment (6%), air conditioning, commercial refrigeration (9%) and construction materials (12%). Compared with a year ago, substantial increases were noted for most trades, led by electrical equipment (22%), iron and steel products (22%), coal (40%) and iron and steel scrap (45%). Among the few trades whose April sales were lower than a

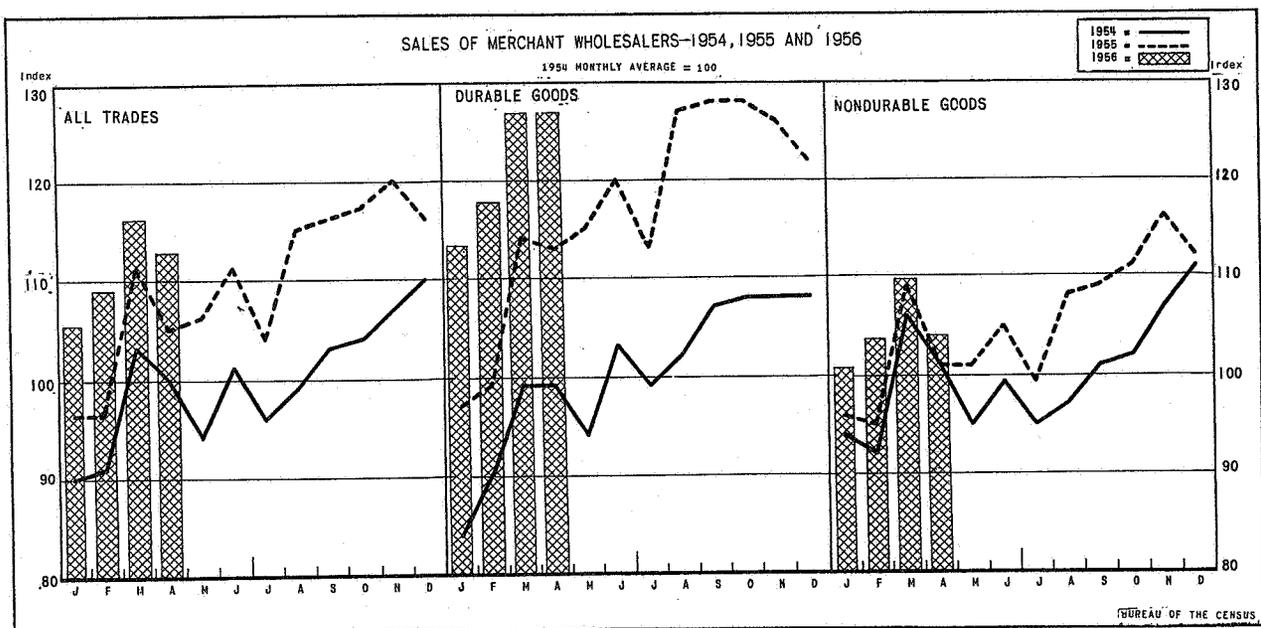
year ago, were meat (6%), fresh fruit and vegetables (7%), motor-vehicles (7%), piece goods converters (9%) and farm supplies (10%).

By geographic division, changes from previous month sales were slight, and mostly downward, the largest being a drop of 7 percent in the South Atlantic Division. All geographic divisions showed increases over year ago sales, the East North Central Division leading (12%).

Inventories

Inventories of wholesalers at the end of April showed a slight increase (1%) over March 30 stocks, and were 13 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. Nondurable goods noted a slight (1%) decline from previous months stocks, while durable goods showed a small (2%) increase. Both groups indicated heavier inventories than a year ago, however, nondurable goods showed a smaller increase (8%) than durable goods (15%). The April stock-sales ratio of 127 percent was 5 points above the March ratio and 5 points above the ratio for April 1955.

Most trades indicated slight changes from previous month inventories, inedible farm products (-10%) indicating the most significant decline, and beer (+9%) the largest increase. Compared with year-ago inventories, substantial increases were registered in many trades with only four showing small declines. The principal increases were in durable goods trades, plumbing and heating goods (21%), motor-vehicles (22%) and electrical equipment and supplies (26%).



DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS.
For sale by the Bureau of the Census: single copy--10¢, annual subscription--\$1.00

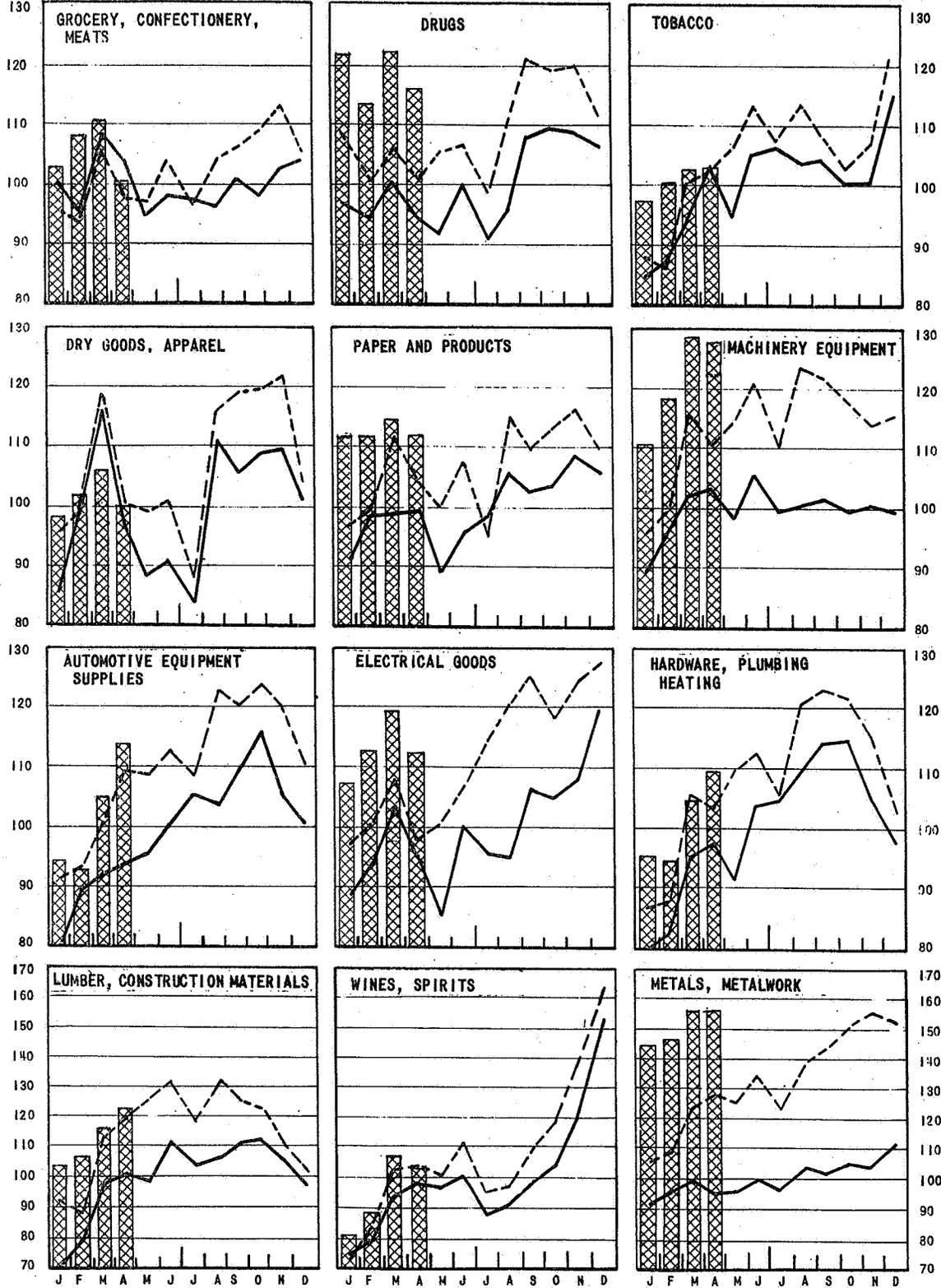
SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
1954, 1955 AND 1956

1954 ———
1955 - - -
1956 ■■■

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100

Index

Index



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KINDS OF BUSINESS

APRIL 1956

Kind of business	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change			Number of establish- ments reporting Apr. 1956	Percent change, Apr. 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting Apr. 1956	Apr. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956
	Apr. 1956 from--	4 mo. 1956 from 4 mo.			Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956				
		Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956							
Merchant wholesalers.....	+8	-3	+10	11,549	+13	+1	8,322	127	122	122
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	0	-7	+6	1,318	+9	-1	1,032	91	83	85
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	-2	-6	+6	790	+6	-2	664	110	107	106
Nonaffiliated ²	+3	-5	+4	611	+5	-1	520	130	123	125
Voluntary groups.....	+9	-2	+10	158	+7	-1	128	93	94	92
Retailer-cooperative.....	+8	-14	+8	21	+8	-8	16	92	93	89
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-2	-12	+8	291	+15	+1	202	97	80	84
Confectionery wholesalers.....	-1	-6	+3	87	-1	+2	49	74	75	68
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	-6	-1	-3	150	+12	+5	117	33	27	32
Edible farm products distributors.....	-2	0	+4	869	+6	+3	665	26	27	26
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+3	-2	+8	542	+7	+4	430	32	34	30
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-7	+1	-3	327	+4	0	235	19	18	19
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+1	-4	+5	507	+8	+5	448	105	103	96
Beer distributors.....	-3	-2	+3	131	0	+9	112	59	58	54
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+4	-5	+7	376	+10	+4	336	137	136	124
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+12	-4	+11	689	+9	+2	462	137	140	132
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines) ³	+15	-7	+13	305	+8	+3	215	165	174	153
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+9	-1	+9	223	+16	+1	165	78	75	80
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+1	+2	+6	161	+5	+2	82	164	159	166
Tobacco distributors.....	+2	-2	+4	280	+11	-1	159	61	57	60
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	0	-8	+1	409	+11	+1	188	227	196	205
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	-3	-11	+1	93	+5	+1	40	248	202	194
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)	+9	-8	+6	197	+14	+2	97	234	218	212
Piece goods converters.....	-9	-4	-3	119	+11	-2	51	197	164	201
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+12	-4	+11	320	+13	+2	192	158	142	148
Furniture wholesalers.....	+7	0	+10	118	+8	-1	66	148	125	156
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+16	-7	+11	202	+15	+3	126	163	151	145
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+14	-6	+14	487	+11	+3	328	102	105	93
Paper wholesalers.....	+14	-7	+14	317	+14	+3	246	95	96	86
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+13	-5	+12	170	-1	+1	82	180	199	167
Inedible farm products merchants.....	+9	-11	-3	291	+6	-10	217	120	119	114
Automotive wholesalers.....	+3	+1	+6	687	+12	+2	489	203	180	198
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-7	-4	+4	74	+22	+2	57	131	94	125
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+8	+3	+7	613	+10	+2	432	245	235	242
Electrical, electronic, appliance goods distributors	+15	-5	+13	893	+22	+3	815	181	169	163
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ⁴	+22	0	+20	573	+26	+3	546	167	159	158
Electrical appliances, TV and radio sets and parts, and electronic parts, equipment distributors.....	+6	-11	+6	320	+19	+4	269	199	182	169
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+11	+3	+8	605	+11	0	437	233	234	236
Hardware wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+8	225	+6	-1	183	243	245	240
Plumbing, heating goods distributors.....	+19	+6	+7	380	+21	+1	254	221	217	231
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+2	+6	+4	557	+15	-1	361	124	108	134
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+1	+3	+2	328	+15	-2	230	139	122	146
Construction materials distributors.....	+3	+2	+9	229	+14	0	131	92	78	106
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors ⁵	+17	-2	+18	2,079	+15	+1	1,558	165	173	166
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equip- ment distributors.....	+9	+9	+8	125	+3	+5	80	157	153	159
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+18	+6	+14	134	+9	+1	95	133	144	147
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies houses..	+19	-6	+22	950	+14	0	755	166	180	159
Professional equipment, supplies houses ⁶	+5	-6	+11	437	+6	+3	336	209	210	192
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+2	-3	+8	79	+8	+7	44	184	179	168
Service establishment equipment, supplies houses..	+1	-6	+10	160	+7	+3	86	160	175	146
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+19	0	+29	296	+18	+1	213	129	139	132
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+22	0	+30	201	+19	+1	150	169	185	170
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+14	-1	+26	95	+13	-1	63	65	70	63
Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+35	-1	+50	302	-1	-5	207	44	54	43
Iron-steel scrap dealers.....	+45	-1	+63	169	-3	-4	116	32	44	29
Waste materials dealers.....	+18	-2	+31	133	+1	-5	91	66	75	69
Other merchant wholesalers ⁵	+12	-3	+10	960	+12	-4	551	105	100	103
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+8	143	+13	+4	93	173	156	174
Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.....	+4	-8	+7	119	+15	-2	32	142	112	132
Coal wholesalers.....	+40	-2	+35	187	-4	-1	101	31	45	32
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	-10	-9	-8	211	+14	-8	144	96	79	92
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+8	-7	+5	123	+3	-1	60	301	286	284

See page 6 for footnotes.

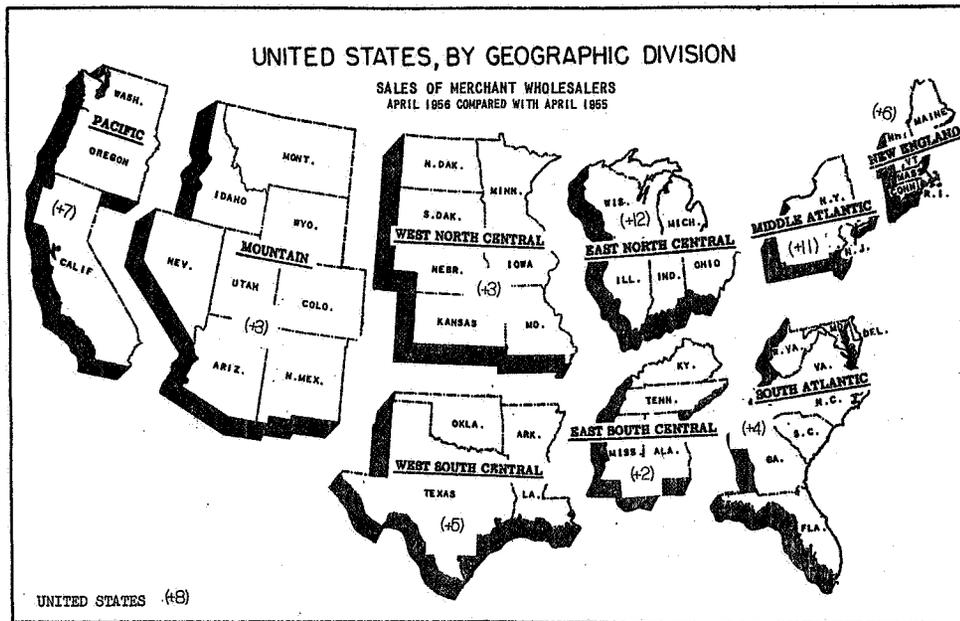


Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
APRIL 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map above)	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		4 mo. 1956 from 4 mo. 1955	Number of establish- ments reporting, Apr. 1956	Percent change, Apr. 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting Apr. 1956	Apr. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956
	Apr. 1956 from--	Mar. 1956			Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956				
	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956	Apr. 1955	Apr. 1956	Mar. 1956	
Merchant wholesalers, total ⁴	+8	-3	+10	11,549	+13	+1	8,322	127	122	122
New England.....	+6	0	+8	589	+9	+3	361	124	123	120
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	-3	+11	2,595	+13	+1	1,557	107	106	103
East North Central.....	+12	-2	+13	2,163	+15	+1	1,611	114	111	111
West North Central.....	+3	-5	+4	1,169	+17	-2	905	145	131	139
South Atlantic.....	+4	-7	+9	1,166	+12	0	877	144	136	131
East South Central.....	+2	-4	+3	512	+8	-2	398	141	137	142
West South Central.....	+5	-3	+10	1,445	+9	+1	1,206	154	149	145
Mountain.....	+3	+1	+8	422	+2	0	350	158	152	159
Pacific.....	+7	-3	+9	1,488	+15	+1	1,057	139	124	134
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	-6	+6	790	+6	-2	664	110	107	106
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	-7	+7	82	+1	-3	72	112	118	110
East North Central.....	+8	-3	+7	100	+7	-5	76	97	99	98
West North Central.....	+8	-8	+7	139	+1	-6	132	100	99	97
South Atlantic.....	0	-5	+2	58	+4	-1	44	134	130	130
East South Central.....	-12	-4	-6	46	+6	-3	40	115	94	112
West South Central.....	0	-4	+5	158	+5	0	144	134	129	127
Mountain.....	+19	-11	+18	35	+14	-4	28	108	106	95
Pacific.....	+10	-9	+16	165	+8	0	124	92	97	91
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-2	-12	+8	291	+15	+1	202	97	80	84
New England.....	+2	-1	+13	16	+26	+4	9	89	53	85
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-14	+13	121	+7	-2	82	77	71	70
East North Central.....	0	-12	+8	34	+36	-4	28	82	60	74
West North Central.....	-12	-22	+3	17	+11	0	9	152	120	112
South Atlantic.....	+1	-3	+8	22	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
South Central.....	-6	-5	+6	40	+34	+24	30	156	100	96
Pacific.....	-3	-16	+4	38	+25	0	30	64	53	62
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+3	-2	+8	542	+7	+4	430	32	34	30
New England.....	-9	-11	+4	18	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	-2	+6	91	+2	+2	54	21	22	20
East North Central.....	+11	0	+11	103	+9	+10	82	29	32	27
West North Central.....	+14	-2	+17	44	+5	+14	34	79	79	82
South Atlantic.....	-4	-3	+6	104	+20	+4	97	39	33	37
South Central.....	-1	+2	+7	57	+5	0	47	24	20	25
Pacific.....	+1	-3	+8	111	+16	+2	90	40	34	39
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-7	+1	-3	327	+4	0	235	19	18	19
Middle Atlantic.....	-14	-7	-6	46	+1	-7	23	14	11	13
East North Central.....	-9	+3	-6	35	-1	+1	24	11	12	11
West North Central.....	-13	-2	-8	56	+13	-9	45	21	12	23
South Atlantic.....	0	-2	-1	28	-3	+8	16	20	23	18
South Central.....	0	+3	+5	45	+20	+1	34	32	29	33
Pacific.....	+4	+12	+2	77	-5	-8	61	16	18	18

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

APRIL 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map, page 4)	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		4 mo. 1956 from 4 mo. 1955	Number of establish- ments reporting Apr. 1956	Percent change, Apr. 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting Apr. 1956	Apr. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956
	Apr. 1956 from--	Mar. 1956			Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956				
	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956	Apr. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956	
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines) ³	+15	-7	+13	305	+8	+3	215	165	174	153
New England.....	+7	-2	+12	20	+3	0	13	159	168	154
Middle Atlantic.....	+20	-8	+9	65	+2	-1	41	140	157	141
East North Central.....	+14	-2	+14	56	+15	0	34	158	165	150
West North Central.....	+9	-7	+8	23	+5	+7	21	156	162	129
South Atlantic.....	+18	-4	+17	46	+8	+1	35	178	194	168
East South Central.....	+13	-8	+11	15	+6	+4	12	185	200	161
West South Central.....	+20	-5	+17	40	+11	+2	32	198	213	185
Mountain.....	+15	-6	+14	14	+5	+4	11	208	241	187
Pacific.....	+11	-8	+16	26	+19	+8	16	156	140	135
Tobacco distributors.....	+2	-2	+4	280	+11	-1	159	61	57	60
New England.....	+2	0	+3	31	+9	-1	10	71	63	68
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-1	+5	55	+16	+3	34	98	51	56
East North Central.....	+2	-3	+2	43	+11	-6	27	56	49	55
West North Central.....	-5	-7	-2	22	+15	+1	14	50	34	48
South Atlantic.....	-4	-5	+7	29	+4	-7	20	55	63	52
East South Central.....	+3	+2	+3	45	+9	-2	21	72	70	81
South Central.....	+10	-3	+10	39	+4	+7	28	62	66	56
Pacific.....	0	-8	+1	409	+11	+1	188	227	196	205
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+7	+1	+10	20	+20	+3	8	258	223	268
New England.....	-2	-6	0	261	+4	-1	112	193	182	189
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	-8	+6	34	+20	+1	17	200	173	179
East North Central.....	-8	-19	+3	21	+23	-1	12	336	250	224
West North Central.....	-5	-2	+6	15	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
South Atlantic.....	+11	-2	+6	26	+9	+3	14	219	182	175
East South Central.....	-8	-16	-2	31	+13	+6	17	358	311	281
South Central.....	+3	-14	0	26						
Pacific.....	+12	-4	+11	320	+13	+2	192	158	142	148
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+14	-4	+13	99	+14	-1	43	129	112	121
Middle Atlantic.....	+15	-4	+12	67	+7	+6	36	128	111	115
East North Central.....	-14	0	+3	20	+1	-1	18	216	169	204
West North Central.....	-7	-12	+5	35	+18	+1	24	247	189	207
South Atlantic.....	+7	-9	+6	43	+7	-4	36	187	188	210
East South Central.....	+17	-1	+9	32	+23	+7	18	160	159	153
South Central.....										
Pacific.....	+8	+3	+7	613	+10	+2	432	245	235	242
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+15	-2	+14	86	+7	+3	56	287	307	277
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	+2	+4	104	+18	+2	74	200	161	193
East North Central.....	-1	+8	+2	65	-12	+2	22	327	378	342
West North Central.....	0	-5	+3	62	+14	+4	49	269	250	250
South Atlantic.....	+13	+5	+15	76	+9	+4	70	200	221	220
East South Central.....	+8	-3	+15	60	+15	+1	59	333	333	323
West South Central.....	+7	+16	+6	46	+10	+5	41	278	248	322
Mountain.....	+8	+1	+3	99	+4	+2	55	217	230	219
Pacific.....	+22	0	+20	573	+26	+3	546	167	159	158
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ⁴	+38	+2	+26	33	+11	0	32	152	176	161
New England.....	+42	+10	+30	68	+32	-2	60	129	137	134
Middle Atlantic.....	+23	-2	+19	157	+18	+7	146	162	164	144
East North Central.....	+16	+5	+15	55	+26	-1	52	164	151	165
West North Central.....	+11	-4	+15	89	+26	0	88	180	175	177
South Atlantic.....	+16	+1	+15	38	+19	+8	35	201	202	200
East South Central.....	+4	-12	+15	61	+26	+6	61	217	178	181
West South Central.....	-3	+6	+7	21	+18	+4	21	171	141	174
Mountain.....	+15	-6	+15	51	+38	+3	51	180	150	165
Pacific.....	+6	-11	+6	320	+19	+4	269	199	182	169
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors.....	+15	-5	+9	14	+6	+9	10	126	141	111
New England.....	+11	-13	+12	67	+20	+8	49	177	173	135
Middle Atlantic.....	+14	-8	+7	66	+24	+3	59	222	200	200
East North Central.....	-2	-16	-7	33	+7	+4	26	227	191	180
West North Central.....	-5	-17	+5	44	+14	+5	37	186	170	146
South Atlantic.....	-6	-9	-3	15	+21	0	15	268	201	245
East South Central.....	+3	-8	-1	25	+10	+2	22	181	157	161
West South Central.....	+3	-8	+4	50	+16	+3	45	181	193	164
Mountain.....										
Pacific.....	+5	+1	+8	225	+6	-1	183	243	245	240
Hardware wholesalers.....	+4	+13	+12	29	+12	+4	19	168	162	168
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	-5	+10	37	+9	-1	34	247	240	241
East North Central.....	0	-1	+3	28	+8	-5	26	279	257	281
West North Central.....	+4	-2	+5	31	0	-1	21	279	290	271
South Atlantic.....	0	-1	+5	23	0	-5	22	246	244	256
East South Central.....	+5	-16	+8	24	+10	0	21	229	224	188
West South Central.....	+11	+4	+5	11	+8	+4	10	287	287	285
Mountain.....	+15	+6	+7	35	+1	+1	26	236	283	250
Pacific.....	+19	+6	+7	380	+21	+1	254	221	217	231
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+11	+13	+6	19	+7	+1	13	362	391	455
New England.....	+24	+8	+14	129	+24	0	66	217	220	241
Middle Atlantic.....	+27	+10	+17	50	+16	+1	41	211	208	226
East North Central.....	0	+3	+2	34	+12	+1	29	243	210	241
West North Central.....	+9	0	+5	60	+23	+3	47	233	200	227
South Atlantic.....	+9	+2	-4	43	+12	+9	39	203	226	191
East South Central.....	+4	-2	+1	34	+26	+1	10	160	142	163

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

APRIL 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map, page 4)	Sales			Number of establishments reporting, Apr. 1956	Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		4 mo. 1956 from 4 mo. 1955		Percent change, Apr. 1956 from--		Number of establishments reporting, Apr. 1956	Apr. 1956	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1956
	Apr. 1956 from--	Mar. 1956			Apr. 1956	Mar. 1956				
	Apr. 1955	Mar. 1955			Apr. 1955	Mar. 1955				
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	+2	+6	+4	557	+15	-1	361	124	108	134
New England.....	-6	+7	-5	31	+6	+1	24	176	161	187
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	+20	+6	115	+17	-3	88	124	112	138
East North Central.....	+4	+9	+10	118	+20	+7	57	109	97	118
West North Central.....	-7	+9	-2	40	+11	-3	23	115	75	128
South Atlantic.....	0	-1	+8	58	+19	-3	31	81	71	88
South Central.....	-14	-8	-12	71	+14	-2	52	162	130	161
Pacific.....	+9	0	+7	108	+15	-5	72	114	103	122
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors..	+19	-6	+22	950	+14	0	755	166	180	159
New England.....	+13	+6	+20	15	+23	+10	7	244	188	231
Middle Atlantic.....	+21	-13	+19	73	+8	+4	51	148	190	141
East North Central.....	+20	-6	+22	105	+24	+1	83	162	161	139
West North Central.....	+5	+12	+12	74	-1	-3	52	182	175	162
South Atlantic.....	+34	+2	+22	51	+23	0	45	153	171	155
South Central.....	+18	-5	+30	482	+2	0	402	142	165	135
Pacific.....	+15	+8	+14	81	+25	-5	62	214	244	245

x Insufficient data to show separately.

¹ Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for an identical group of firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

² Not affiliated with voluntary groups or cooperative groups.

³ See below for March 1956 data.

⁴ Includes general-line electrical goods, wiring supplies, construction materials and apparatus wholesalers.

⁵ Totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Note: Firms reporting in this survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Sales and inventory figures reported for any firm are multiplied by this weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes and stock-sales ratios.

Data on reported dollar values, previously shown as a measure of coverage, are now omitted since the trend data are based on weighted values. The number of establishments in the sample, from which reports were received in time for tabulation, are shown as an indication of coverage.

ADDENDUM TO THE MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT: MARCH 1956

Sales and Inventories of Drug Wholesalers

(Data on inventories of drug wholesalers presented here were withheld from the March 1956 report because of incomplete reporting of inventories at time of publication.)

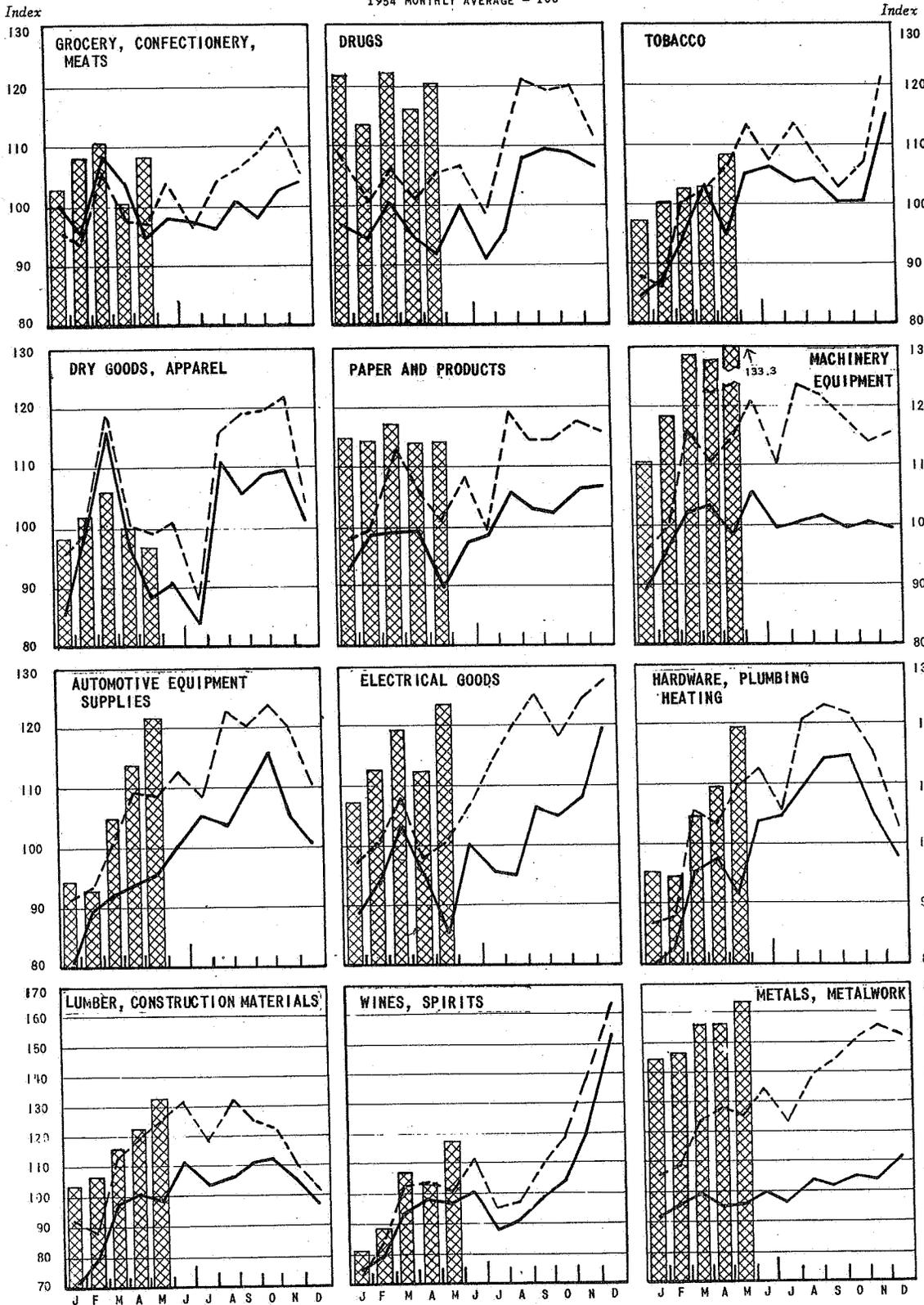
Kind of business and geographic division (see map, page 4)	Sales			Number of establishments reporting, Mar. 1956	Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		3 mo. 1956 from 3 mo. 1955		Percent change, Mar. 1956 from--		Number of establishments reporting, Mar. 1956	Mar. 1956	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1956
	Mar. 1956 from--	Feb. 1956			Mar. 1956	Feb. 1956				
	Mar. 1955	Feb. 1955			Mar. 1955	Feb. 1955				
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	+6	+12	331	+7	+1	235	158	160	167
New England.....	+7	+4	+13	17	+7	0	11	147	147	156
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+8	+6	67	+1	0	37	134	140	144
East North Central.....	+10	+4	+14	62	+15	-2	38	157	150	166
West North Central.....	+8	+4	+8	22	+8	-3	20	159	159	171
South Atlantic.....	+16	+4	+17	42	+7	0	34	150	161	156
East South Central.....	+12	+12	+11	19	+5	-3	14	174	182	200
West South Central.....	+13	+6	+16	51	+3	0	35	182	191	193
Mountain.....	+9	+4	+14	18	+1	-1	16	190	196	200
Pacific.....	+15	+11	+17	33	+13	+11	30	147	150	145

¹ Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for an identical group of firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. No adjustment is made in these calculations for the mark-up of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS
1954, 1955 AND 1956

1954 = ———
1955 = - - - -
1956 = ⊗ ⊗ ⊗

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KINDS OF BUSINESS

MAY 1956

Kind of business	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change			Number of establish- ments reporting May 1956	Percent change, May 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting May 1956	May 1956	May 1955	Apr. 1956
	May 1956 from--		5 mo. 1956 from 5 mo. 1955		May 1955	Apr. 1956				
	May 1955	Apr. 1956								
United States, total.....	+14	+9	+11	11,729	+10	0	8,377	120	124	131
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+14	+12	+7	1,310	+9	0	992	87	89	99
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+14	+9	+8	795	+5	0	661	103	114	115
Nonaffiliated ²	+10	+8	+5	597	+2	0	507	125	134	139
Voluntary groups.....	+20	+8	+12	180	+6	0	143	93	105	100
Retailer-cooperative.....	+16	+11	+10	18	+21	+6	11	68	72	78
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+21	+17	+11	276	+19	0	185	88	86	104
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+5	+8	+3	90	+16	+1	44	88	79	97
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+5	+14	-2	149	+13	+1	102	32	22	36
Edible farm products distributors.....	+9	+10	+5	989	+10	+3	683	31	31	33
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+9	+7	+8	675	+10	+4	468	35	34	36
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+8	+17	0	314	+9	-1	215	23	23	26
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+12	+18	+7	516	+6	+3	453	90	98	103
Beer distributors.....	+5	+23	+3	138	0	+8	124	50	52	57
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+18	+15	+9	378	+8	+1	329	122	137	137
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+13	+4	+11	686	+9	-1	451	134	144	140
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)....	+15	+3	+13	307	+9	-1	211	152	166	161
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+12	+5	+10	224	+10	+4	153	80	84	80
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+6	+5	+6	155	+12	-3	87	165	163	180
Tobacco distributors.....	+6	+8	+5	277	+5	+1	161	63	66	67
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-2	0	+1	394	+9	+2	187	247	212	242
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	-1	+3	0	100	+8	+3	59	233	243	264
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)	+7	0	+6	172	+14	+2	79	225	173	215
Piece goods converters.....	-14	-4	-5	122	+7	+1	49	270	218	251
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+11	+3	+11	341	+13	-2	197	191	187	195
Furniture wholesalers.....	+11	+6	+10	110	+13	0	63	178	183	176
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+12	+1	+11	231	+13	-2	134	196	189	203
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+17	+3	+14	494	+4	-1	341	117	130	122
Paper wholesalers.....	+18	+4	+15	327	+4	-2	262	109	120	115
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+13	-1	+12	167	+4	+4	79	201	229	191
Inedible farm products merchants.....	+24	+17	+2	272	-7	-17	155	92	125	104
Automotive wholesalers.....	+8	+6	+6	665	+6	0	500	185	185	199
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-7	+6	+1	64	+10	-4	55	108	90	122
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+14	+7	+9	601	+5	+1	445	223	244	235
Electrical, electronic, appliance goods distributors	+21	+12	+15	950	+15	-2	848	163	169	186
Electric equipment, supplies wholesalers ⁴	+27	+13	+21	629	+20	+1	600	150	157	169
Electrical appliances, TV and radio sets and parts and electronic parts, equipment distributors.....	+13	+9	+7	321	+9	-5	248	184	189	215
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+8	+9	+8	604	+11	0	443	229	222	248
Hardware wholesalers.....	+7	+7	+8	236	+11	0	192	246	230	260
Plumbing, heating goods distributors.....	+11	+11	+8	368	+11	0	251	203	206	227
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+7	+11	+5	570	+15	0	392	120	112	135
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+6	+10	+3	328	+16	0	235	135	127	148
Construction materials distributors.....	+8	+14	+9	242	+13	-1	157	99	88	116
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors ⁵	+16	+5	+18	2,114	+14	+1	1,560	160	165	167
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equip- ment distributors.....	+3	+2	+6	115	+1	+1	87	184	192	173
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+13	+4	+14	155	+6	0	99	142	154	148
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies houses..	+24	+7	+22	984	+10	+1	760	135	156	145
Professional equipment, supplies houses ⁶	+14	+5	+11	417	+9	+3	316	198	218	202
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+18	+4	+10	78	+14	+2	46	166	188	168
Service establishment equipment, supplies houses..	+5	+2	+9	162	+13	+1	85	167	154	171
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+26	+7	+28	291	+20	0	224	123	131	132
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+24	+3	+29	205	+19	0	155	153	164	163
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+29	+13	+27	86	+25	-3	69	63	61	70
Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+41	+9	+48	279	+4	-6	183	39	52	48
Iron-steel scrap dealers.....	+54	+13	+61	154	0	-4	109	36	54	44
Waste materials dealers.....	+18	+2	+28	125	+17	-11	74	50	46	58
Other merchant wholesalers ⁷	+19	+4	+12	977	+7	0	607	103	102	106
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+13	+4	+9	141	+11	+1	107	211	203	208
Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.....	+25	+10	+11	136	+8	-2	64	86	130	119
Coal wholesalers.....	+28	+6	+33	201	+15	+11	119	30	33	29
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+7	-2	-5	209	+5	-14	147	74	72	83
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+9	-8	+6	133	-1	+1	55	287	337	288

See page 6 for footnotes.



Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

Kind of business and geographic division (See map above)	MAY 1956				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)			
	Sales			Number of establishments reporting May 1956	Percent change, May 1956 from--		Number of establishments reporting, May 1956	May 1956	May 1955	Apr. 1956
	Percent change		5 mo. 1956 from 5 mo. 1955		May 1956 from--	Apr. 1956				
	May 1955	Apr. 1956								
Merchant wholesalers, total ⁴	+14	+9	+11	11,729	+10	0	8,377	120	124	131
New England.....	+17	+12	+10	578	+3	0	332	104	106	137
Middle Atlantic.....	+15	+9	+12	2,570	+11	-1	1,494	105	109	116
East North Central.....	+15	+9	+14	2,222	+10	0	1,659	102	106	112
West North Central.....	+13	+12	+6	1,184	+9	+1	925	140	138	146
South Atlantic.....	+14	+8	+10	1,246	+11	-2	917	142	143	158
East South Central.....	+14	+11	+5	546	+10	-2	433	138	150	159
West South Central.....	+15	+6	+11	1,446	+6	-1	1,175	140	155	145
Mountain.....	+9	+9	+8	420	+7	0	334	152	152	172
Pacific.....	+15	+5	+10	1,517	+17	+2	1,108	130	131	136
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+14	+9	+8	795	+5	0	661	103	114	115
Middle Atlantic.....	+18	+7	+9	81	+7	-1	72	100	104	111
East North Central.....	+11	+11	+8	104	+2	+3	83	92	97	97
West North Central.....	+17	+8	+9	132	+5	+4	124	85	92	87
South Atlantic.....	+6	+8	+3	57	+4	-3	45	157	156	175
East South Central.....	+4	+9	-4	45	+1	-2	40	132	135	148
West South Central.....	+19	+6	+8	150	+15	+2	128	103	105	106
Mountain.....	+24	+8	+20	40	0	-3	30	145	186	170
Pacific.....	+20	+10	+16	175	+8	+1	132	73	110	105
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+21	+17	+11	276	+19	0	185	88	86	104
New England.....	+24	+19	+15	13	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+24	+15	+15	117	+18	-1	71	60	69	71
East North Central.....	+20	+18	+11	41	+15	-2	33	77	84	95
West North Central.....	+13	+23	+5	11	+19	-5	9	147	135	194
South Atlantic.....	+14	+19	+8	19	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
South Central.....	+22	+14	+9	34	+9	+1	23	152	201	188
Pacific.....	+16	+19	+6	37	+22	0	30	99	64	111
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+9	+7	+8	675	+10	+4	468	35	34	36
New England.....	+32	+6	+13	18	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	+5	+5	117	+3	+5	64	26	27	26
East North Central.....	+9	+8	+2	145	+2	+6	95	34	37	35
West North Central.....	+10	+11	+15	52	+20	+4	43	72	57	76
South Atlantic.....	+11	+7	+8	117	+16	+5	96	26	25	27
South Central.....	+13	+7	+8	81	+11	+2	50	38	30	40
Pacific.....	+7	+5	+8	134	+7	+11	99	39	39	37

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 4)	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change			Number of establish- ments reporting, May 1956	Percent change, May 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting, May 1956	May 1956	May 1955	Apr. 1956
	May 1956 from--		5 mo. 1956 from		May 1956 from--	Apr. 1956				
	May 1955	Apr. 1956	5 mo. 1955		May 1955	Apr. 1956				
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+8	+17	0	314	+9	-1	215	23	23	26
New England.....	+2	+33	+4	13	+1	-7	10	17	16	24
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	+21	-3	38	+17	-3	16	16	16	19
East North Central.....	+11	+16	-2	44	+16	+6	28	21	19	22
West North Central.....	+11	+10	-3	53	+6	-4	46	20	22	23
South Atlantic.....	-4	+3	-2	29	-4	+3	16	32	35	33
East South Central.....	+9	+15	+5	31	+21	-15	20	36	36	46
South Central.....	+4	+24	+2	77	+1	0	56	25	28	29
Pacific.....										
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+15	+3	+13	307	+9	-1	211	152	166	161
New England.....	+12	+8	+12	22	+6	-3	16	119	142	135
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	+1	+10	76	+5	0	42	141	161	150
East North Central.....	+16	+4	+14	51	+8	0	34	149	171	163
West North Central.....	+20	+3	+10	23	+5	+1	20	164	188	165
South Atlantic.....	+18	+3	+17	44	+4	-4	35	160	177	170
East South Central.....	+16	+4	+12	14	+15	-1	11	185	185	196
West South Central.....	+16	+5	+16	33	+11	-1	25	172	179	182
Mountain.....	+28	+4	+16	15	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
South Central.....	+12	+2	+15	29	+15	-3	18	142	140	145
Pacific.....										
Tobacco distributors.....	+6	+8	+5	277	+5	+1	161	63	66	67
New England.....	-6	+2	+1	37	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	+8	+5	44	+6	-1	26	72	79	76
East North Central.....	+4	+10	+3	54	+7	+5	40	66	62	70
West North Central.....	+13	+11	+1	21	-4	-2	16	56	64	63
South Atlantic.....	+17	+7	+9	28	+3	-5	19	67	78	80
East South Central.....	+9	+9	+4	39	+6	-2	19	59	62	66
South Central.....	+6	+3	+9	43	+2	+4	33	58	68	55
Pacific.....										
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-2	0	+1	394	+9	+2	187	247	212	242
New England.....	+7	+8	+10	16	+11	-4	5	195	199	277
Middle Atlantic.....	-4	-2	-1	255	+3	+1	110	223	208	214
East North Central.....	+16	+10	+8	27	+12	-2	14	198	196	221
West North Central.....	-3	-1	+2	22	+39	+11	17	384	274	348
South Atlantic.....	+7	-10	+6	24	+17	+5	14	330	237	261
East South Central.....	+6	+14	0	25	+10	+4	12	311	300	333
West South Central.....	-4	-3	-1	23	+11	+2	13	280	245	296
Mountain.....										
South Central.....										
Pacific.....										
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+11	+3	+11	341	+13	-2	197	191	187	195
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	+2	+12	94	+15	-2	45	210	187	212
East North Central.....	+12	+2	+12	69	+7	-1	40	159	165	163
West North Central.....	-5	-2	+1	22	+2	-3	16	175	237	177
South Atlantic.....	+2	+9	+4	42	+21	-4	20	229	211	257
East South Central.....	+9	+6	+7	44	+5	-2	33	227	234	252
South Central.....	+14	-1	+10	42	+23	+3	22	174	176	162
Pacific.....										
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+14	+7	+9	601	+5	+1	445	223	244	235
Middle Atlantic.....	+21	+14	+16	82	+10	0	57	174	186	203
East North Central.....	+16	+5	+6	104	+11	+1	79	212	228	210
West North Central.....	+5	+1	+3	61	+4	-1	28	232	266	241
South Atlantic.....	+12	+12	+5	65	-4	-1	51	233	265	260
East South Central.....	+23	-1	+16	74	+5	+3	73	281	337	273
West South Central.....	+16	+5	+15	77	+5	+1	75	242	270	249
Mountain.....	+4	+4	+6	50	+1	+2	43	261	271	264
South Central.....	+10	+3	+4	81	+16	-4	35	240	253	267
Pacific.....										
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ²	+27	+13	+21	629	+20	+1	600	150	157	169
New England.....	+39	+30	+29	36	+14	+2	33	109	134	141
Middle Atlantic.....	+38	+7	+32	70	+12	+1	69	123	139	131
East North Central.....	+16	+19	+18	155	+23	+4	145	165	163	193
West North Central.....	+18	+7	+15	59	+14	+2	57	168	175	174
South Atlantic.....	+22	+13	+17	117	+24	-5	111	162	158	194
East South Central.....	+18	+19	+15	41	+37	-1	39	161	141	191
West South Central.....	+32	+21	+18	68	+19	-1	65	200	224	240
Mountain.....	+21	+16	+10	28	+20	+3	28	169	170	190
South Central.....	+34	+6	+18	55	+26	0	53	140	140	152
Pacific.....										
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors..	+13	+9	+7	321	+9	-5	248	184	189	215
New England.....	+10	0	+10	19	-8	-1	10	153	155	160
Middle Atlantic.....	+20	+16	+13	69	+8	-1	45	144	191	184
East North Central.....	+16	+7	+9	62	+22	-3	56	178	167	204
West North Central.....	0	+14	-6	37	-4	-9	25	211	213	249
South Atlantic.....	+8	+3	+5	56	+23	-6	47	253	215	286
East South Central.....	-1	+18	-3	8	-2	-7	7	186	184	246
West South Central.....	-5	+15	-1	16	-16	0	14	184	198	207
Mountain.....										
South Central.....										
Pacific.....	+7	+1	+5	45	+7	-7	35	191	192	181

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (see map, page 4)	MAY 1956										
	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)			
	Percent change			Number of establish- ments reporting May 1956	Percent change, May 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting May 1956	May 1956	May 1955	Apr. 1956	
	May 1956 from--	Apr. 1956	5 mo. 1956 from 5 mo. 1955		May 1955	Apr. 1956					
Hardware wholesalers.....	+7	+7	+8	236	+11	0	192	246	230	260	
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	+6	+11	32	+16	0	20	228	211	247	
East North Central.....	+1	+1	+8	39	+13	0	35	231	207	237	
West North Central.....	+8	+7	+5	43	+9	+1	41	267	250	264	
South Atlantic.....	+15	+16	+8	34	+12	-3	19	291	286	359	
East South Central.....	+10	+10	+6	24	+8	+6	22	253	250	256	
West South Central.....	+10	+16	+8	18	+8	-3	15	198	216	244	
Mountain.....	+8	-2	+6	11	+13	0	9	351	339	370	
Pacific.....	+5	0	+6	30	+8	+2	26	235	238	242	
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+11	+11	+8	368	+11	0	251	203	206	227	
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	+14	+13	109	+17	-1	59	199	201	233	
East North Central.....	+22	+12	+18	62	+15	-1	37	183	185	206	
West North Central.....	+10	+7	+3	30	+8	+4	29	256	260	262	
South Atlantic.....	+11	+14	+6	38	+7	+4	49	181	183	199	
South Central.....	-4	+3	-4	53	+5	-3	37	239	225	251	
Pacific.....	-1	+5	+1	36	+8	-2	10	212	207	234	
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	+7	+11	+5	570	+15	0	392	120	112	135	
New England.....	+3	+28	-2	23	+2	-9	19	86	84	113	
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+16	+6	139	+9	-3	93	101	98	124	
East North Central.....	0	+6	+8	125	+15	+1	64	141	116	149	
West North Central.....	+3	+7	-1	45	+27	0	30	125	104	133	
South Atlantic.....	+30	+16	+12	52	+31	-1	39	96	106	113	
South Central.....	+2	+12	-10	75	+8	-1	65	143	137	163	
Pacific.....	+13	+4	+8	95	+14	+4	68	128	130	130	
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors	+24	+7	+22	984	+10	+1	760	135	156	145	
New England.....	+21	+3	+20	19	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	
Middle Atlantic.....	+20	+4	+19	77	+22	+1	42	120	111	120	
East North Central.....	+32	+7	+23	116	+11	+1	79	115	142	130	
West North Central.....	+12	-1	+12	86	+2	0	75	119	132	117	
South Atlantic.....	+26	+6	+23	47	+16	0	38	137	150	141	
South Central.....	+32	+12	+31	494	+6	0	406	140	184	156	
Pacific.....	+11	+2	+13	76	+9	0	60	209	259	248	

x Insufficient data to show separately.

¹ Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for an identical group of firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

² Not affiliated with voluntary groups or cooperative groups.

³ Includes general-line electrical goods, wiring supplies, construction materials and apparatus wholesalers.

⁴ Totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Note: Firms reporting in this survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Sales and inventory figures reported for any firm are multiplied by this weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes and stock-sales ratios.

Data on reported dollar values, previously shown as a measure of coverage, are now omitted since the trend data are based on weighted values. The number of establishments in the sample, from which reports were received in time for tabulation are shown as an indication of coverage.

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

JUNE 1956

FOR RELEASE
AUGUST 9, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

First Half-year Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers during the first six months of 1956 were 10 percent higher than in the first half of 1955. Durable goods trades, in total, noted an increase of 14 percent in sales during this period as compared with a gain of 7 percent by non-durable goods trades.

Most trades were ahead of first half 1955 sales. However, two durable goods trades--motor-vehicles and lumber, millwork--and one nondurable goods trade--clothing, furnishings--showed no change, while three other nondurable goods trades--meat (2%), farm supplies (5%), and piece goods (6%)--noted declines. Iron and steel scrap, with sales up 57 percent over first half 1955, registered the principal gain. Other large increases in the durable goods trades were in iron and steel products (27%), nonferrous metals (25%), waste materials (24%), electrical equipment (22%), and industrial machinery, equipment (21%). Among the nondurable goods trades, the larger gains were reported by coal (32%), drugs (13%), and paper (13%).

All geographic divisions shared in the increased sales during the first half of 1956. The east North Central Division, up 12 percent, recorded the principal gain over first half 1955, while the West North Central and East South Central Divisions shared the smallest increase, 6 percent.

June Sales

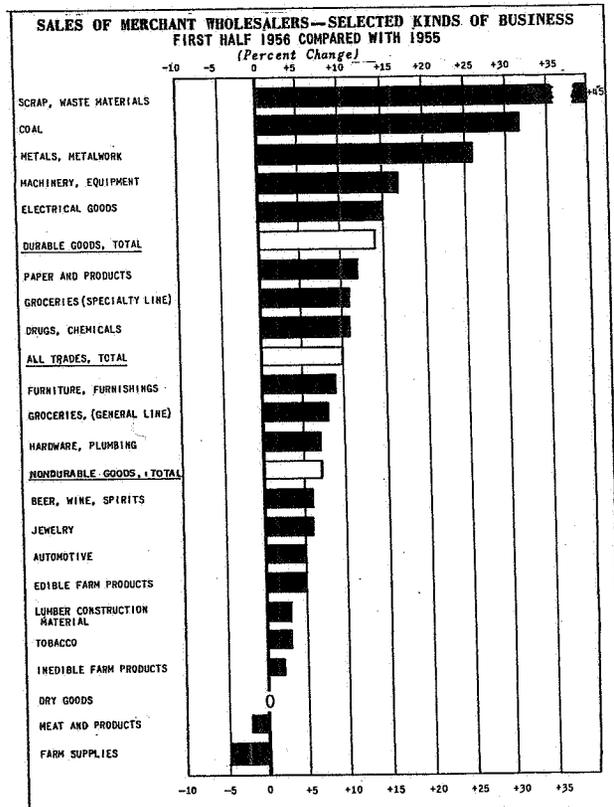
June 1956 sales of merchant wholesalers, contrary to their usual seasonal pattern, declined 3 percent from May 1956 sales but were 6 percent higher than sales in June 1955. Although most trades reported moderate changes in sales from a month earlier, two trades--inedible farm products (20%) and farm supplies (28%)--noted sharp declines. Compared with a year ago, substantial increases were registered by iron and steel scrap (38%), coal (26%), and electrical equipment, supplies (24%). Piece goods, with sales off 11 percent, noted the largest decrease among the ten trades which experienced declines from sales a year ago.

Although June 1956 sales in the New England and Mountain Divisions were slightly (1%) higher than in May, all other divisions showed small declines, the largest of these (6%) occurring in the West North Central Division. However, June 1956 sales in all geographic divisions ranged from 5 to 10 percent above year-ago sales.

Inventories

Inventories of wholesalers at the end of June were down slightly (1%) from the May 31 level, but were 10 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. The June 1956 stock-sales ratio of 120 percent was 2 points above the May ratio and 5 points above the ratio for June 1955.

Most trade groups showed only small changes from their May 31 inventory levels. Sharpest changes noted were an increase of 24 percent for coal and a decline of 11 percent by inedible farm products.



Compared with a year ago, substantial inventory gains were noted for iron, steel products (32%), nonferrous metals (24%), construction materials (24%), and amusement, sporting goods (20%). Declines were reported for dairy, poultry products (2%), beer (3%), paint, varnish (5%), jewelry (5%), inedible farm products (7%), and iron and steel scrap (7%).

General

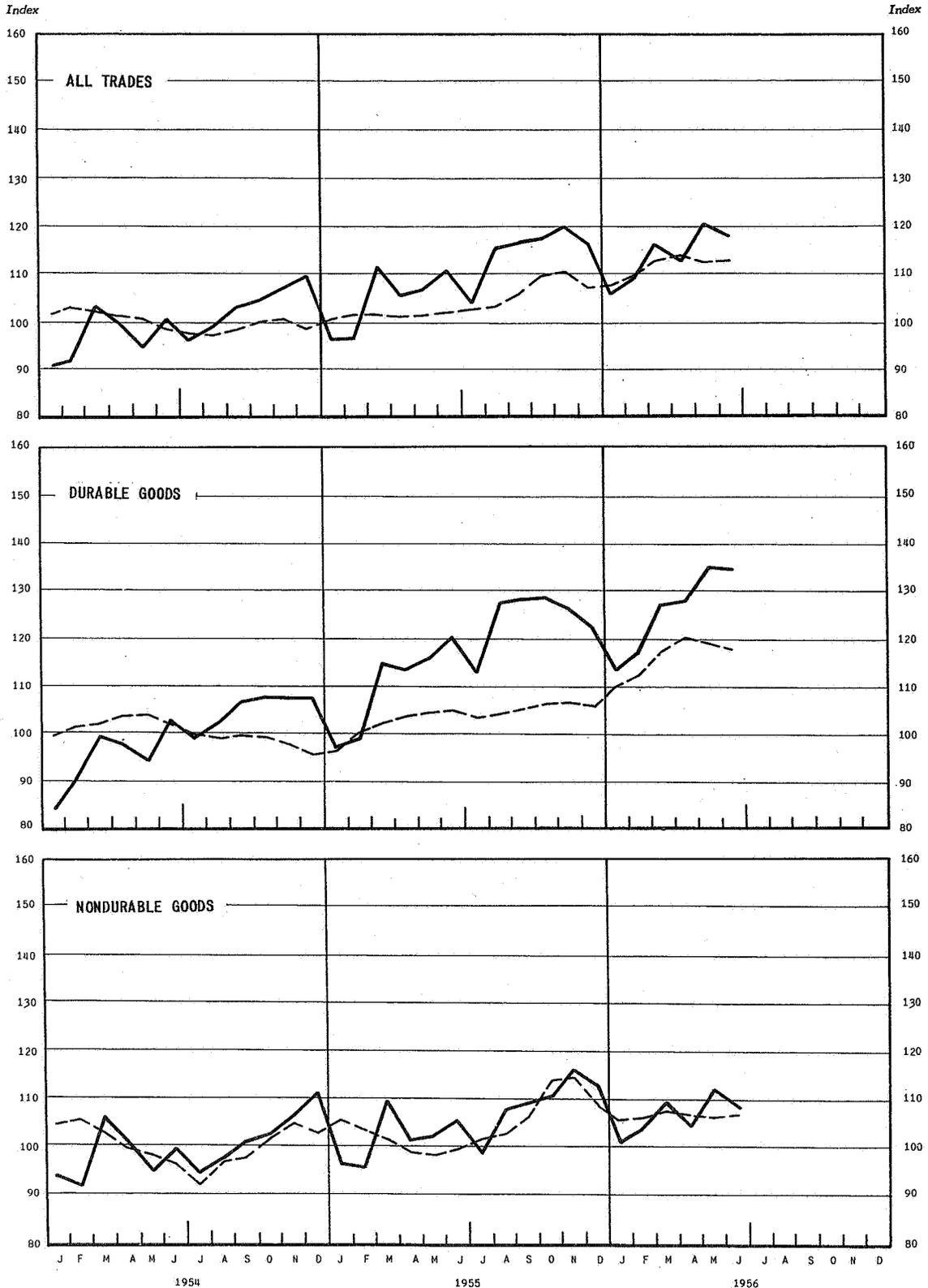
Data shown in this report are based on reports submitted by a reporting panel of over 11,000 establishments which are representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country (see note on page 6). Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month, nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

Each month, approximately one week prior to the publication of this report, an advance release is issued containing percentage changes in sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios for the 17 major trade groups covered by this report. This advance release is available upon request.

SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS
1954, 1955 AND 1956

SALES = ———
INVENTORIES = - - - -

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

JUNE 1956

Kind of business	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change			Number of establish- ments reporting June 1956	Percent change, June 1956 from--		Number of establish- ments reporting June 1956	June 1956	June 1955	May 1956
	June 1956 from--		6 mo. 1956 from 6 mo. 1955		June 1955	May 1956				
	June 1955	May 1956								
United States, total.....	+6	-3	+10	11,651	+10	-1	8,357	120	115	118
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+6	-1	+7	1,360	+11	0	1,011	78	74	72
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+7	-2	+8	807	+10	-1	625	105	104	106
Nonaffiliated ²	+6	-3	+5	635	+13	-1	497	111	109	113
Voluntary groups.....	+4	-1	+11	157	+4	0	118	91	94	90
Retailer-cooperative.....	+15	0	+10	15	+4	-7	10	99	107	108
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+10	+1	+11	300	+14	+1	213	76	72	76
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+1	-4	+2	96	+7	0	53	74	64	70
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	-1	-4	-2	157	+6	+1	120	23	19	22
Edible farm products distributors.....	+7	+3	+5	844	+3	+1	673	26	28	27
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+2	-3	+7	527	-2	+1	458	31	33	29
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+14	+11	+2	317	+19	-3	215	18	19	24
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+1	-5	+6	491	+8	0	431	106	100	98
Beer distributors.....	+7	+4	+4	107	-3	+3	94	61	63	57
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	-2	-10	+7	384	+12	-2	337	141	123	126
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+7	-3	+11	710	+5	-1	468	140	153	136
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)....	+13	-4	+13	312	+7	-1	227	157	175	152
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+3	-1	+8	239	+5	+1	154	94	97	92
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	-4	-5	+4	159	-5	-1	87	166	172	171
Tobacco distributors.....	-2	-3	+3	283	+5	+1	117	54	51	52
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-3	-3	0	411	+12	-2	206	231	190	233
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	-4	-5	0	95	+9	-3	47	216	190	211
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)	+3	-1	+6	183	+15	-1	95	232	198	243
Piece goods converters.....	-11	-2	-6	133	+12	-4	64	248	179	248
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	0	-9	+9	320	+9	-3	186	162	143	156
Furniture wholesalers.....	+5	-7	+10	102	+6	-1	61	161	143	164
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	-2	-10	+9	218	+10	-4	125	162	143	152
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+6	-2	+12	504	+13	+5	336	125	114	116
Paper wholesalers.....	+6	-2	+13	331	+13	+5	248	118	108	109
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+6	-2	+11	173	+12	+3	88	214	206	202
Inedible farm products merchants.....	+5	-20	+2	239	-7	-11	178	111	131	95
Automotive wholesalers.....	+1	-1	+5	660	+5	-1	462	190	174	188
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-6	-5	0	57	+2	-5	47	117	100	117
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+8	603	+6	-1	415	230	220	230
Electrical, electronic, appliance goods distributors	+17	+4	+15	979	+11	-4	880	151	158	167
Electric equipment, supplies wholesalers ⁴	+24	+4	+22	636	+15	-6	609	134	146	149
Electrical appliances, TV and radio set and parts, and electronic parts, equipment distributors.....	+8	+4	+7	343	+6	-1	271	176	173	193
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+7	610	+7	-1	459	225	226	229
Hardware wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+7	228	+6	-1	194	250	254	253
Plumbing, heating goods distributors.....	+4	+2	+7	382	+9	-1	265	192	184	198
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	-4	+1	+3	584	+7	-2	395	112	98	114
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-9	-1	0	341	+4	-3	246	136	117	135
Construction materials distributors.....	+6	+4	+8	243	+24	0	149	70	56	72
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors ⁵	+10	-3	+17	2,071	+18	+2	1,566	154	145	145
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equip- ment distributors.....	+17	+7	+8	134	+4	-1	97	125	124	135
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+6	-4	+13	119	+13	-2	82	139	135	137
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies houses..	+15	-2	+21	963	+11	+2	758	136	138	131
Professional equipment, supplies houses ⁵	+5	+1	+10	419	+11	+1	322	202	192	201
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+7	-2	+9	81	+16	+1	45	166	140	156
Service establishment equipment, supplies houses..	+12	-2	+9	169	+10	+1	97	159	168	148
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+17	0	+26	312	+31	+2	211	148	131	147
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+17	+1	+27	224	+32	+1	158	174	155	175
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+18	-3	+25	88	+24	+2	53	65	60	62
Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+25	-13	+45	301	+1	-2	195	37	47	33
Iron-steel scrap dealers.....	+38	-12	+57	168	-7	-4	119	27	42	26
Waste materials dealers.....	+5	-17	+24	133	+14	+2	76	63	58	51
Other merchant wholesalers ⁵	+9	-6	+11	972	+12	+1	583	103	95	93
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+10	+4	+10	155	+20	+2	108	188	175	184
Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.....	+9	-4	+10	115	+4	+3	36	87	102	83
Coal wholesalers.....	+26	-3	+32	195	+7	+24	106	41	47	33
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	-1	-28	-5	211	+17	+5	155	103	86	71
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+5	-1	+6	115	-5	+1	48	247	254	211

See page 6 for footnotes.

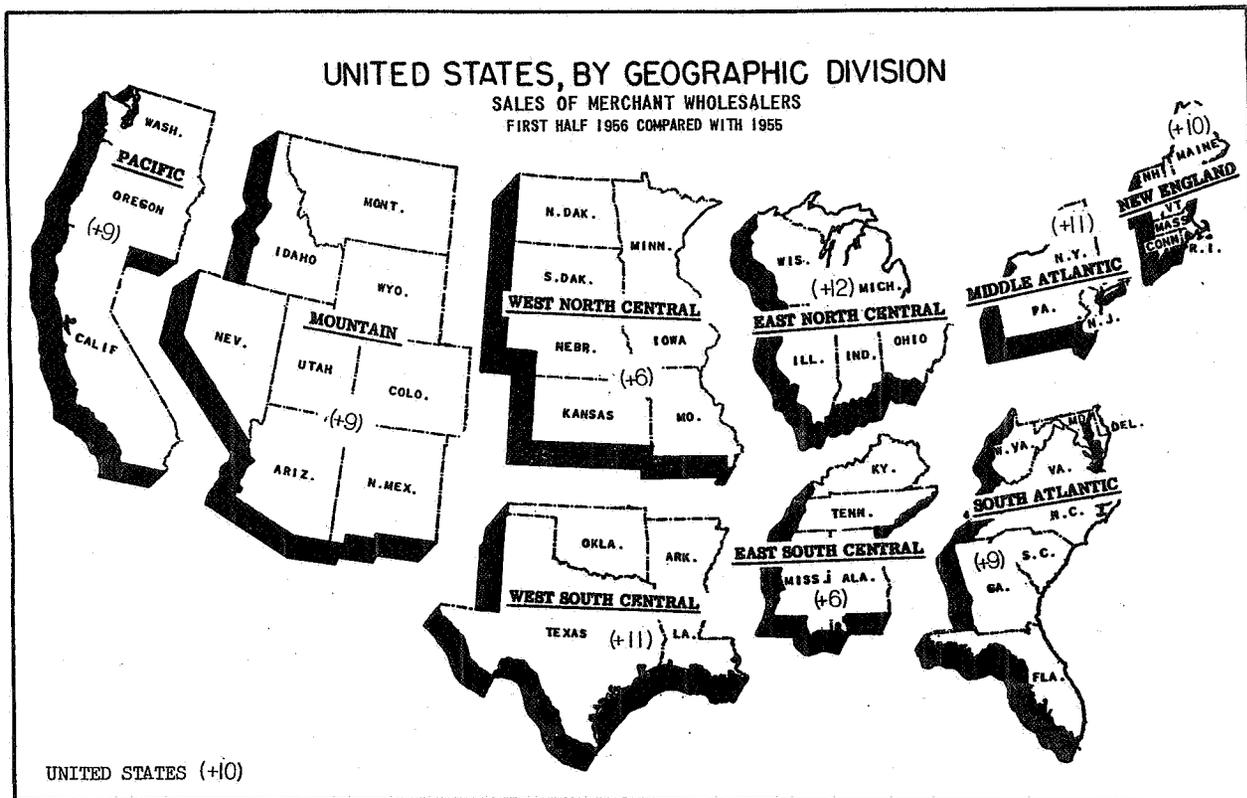


Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

Kind of business and geographic division (see map above)	Sales				Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)			Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)		
	Percent change		Number of establish- ments reporting June 1956	Percent change, June 1956 from—		Number of estab- lishments reporting June 1956	June 1956	June 1955	May 1956	
	June 1955	May 1956		June 1955	May 1956					
	June 1955	May 1956	6 mo. 1956 from 6 mo. 1955	June 1955	May 1956	June 1955	June 1955	May 1956		
Merchant wholesalers, total ⁴	+6	-3	+10	11,651	+10	-1	8,397	120	115	118
New England.....	+10	+1	+10	563	+7	+1	338	110	110	113
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	-3	+11	2,566	+9	0	1,500	105	98	102
East North Central.....	+6	-2	+12	2,303	+11	-1	1,736	114	107	113
West North Central.....	+9	-6	+6	1,150	+9	-2	925	132	131	124
South Atlantic.....	+6	-4	+9	1,241	+14	-1	924	141	131	139
East South Central.....	+10	-5	+6	506	+7	-2	399	133	143	129
West South Central.....	+6	-4	+11	1,392	+8	-2	1,138	130	133	130
Mountain.....	+9	+1	+9	428	+12	-2	347	153	148	157
Pacific.....	+5	-1	+9	1,502	+15	0	1,050	121	115	118
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+7	-2	+8	807	+10	-1	625	105	104	106
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-4	+8	79	+14	0	67	116	109	117
East North Central.....	+9	+1	+8	112	-1	+1	80	105	121	108
West North Central.....	+8	-2	+9	142	+11	-1	127	106	101	104
South Atlantic.....	-5	-6	+1	70	+2	-1	40	115	115	111
East South Central.....	+8	-5	-3	37	+9	-2	34	120	118	114
West South Central.....	+10	0	+8	155	+17	-3	133	110	107	115
Mountain.....	+3	-14	+19	30	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Pacific.....	+16	+3	+16	171	+28	0	123	78	76	84
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+10	+1	+11	300	+17	+1	213	76	72	76
New England.....	+7	-12	+13	17	+21	+4	10	85	65	81
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	-4	+14	130	+18	+8	87	70	60	60
East North Central.....	+8	+6	+10	39	+4	-5	31	74	79	84
West North Central.....	+34	+14	+8	10	+9	-2	9	118	131	131
South Atlantic.....	-1	+8	+6	27	+25	-1	21	113	92	127
South Central.....	+1	-10	+8	36	-4	+2	27	90	81	75
Pacific.....	+19	+17	+8	40	+4	-18	27	44	60	69
Dairy, poultry products distributors.....	+2	-3	+7	527	-2	+1	458	31	33	29
New England.....	+7	+6	+13	13	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	-5	-2	+3	96	-5	+10	68	25	26	22
East North Central.....	0	-4	+2	97	-18	-1	82	35	41	33
West North Central.....	0	+1	+12	43	-1	0	40	98	100	86
South Atlantic.....	-1	-6	+7	93	+12	-10	89	23	21	25
South Central.....	+10	-9	+9	56	+10	-4	51	18	17	17
Pacific.....	+8	+3	+8	119	+20	+4	108	30	31	30

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 4)	Sales			Number of establish- ments reporting, June 1956	Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)			
	Percent change		6 mo. 1956 from 6 mo. 1955		Percent change, June 1956 from--		June 1956	June 1955	May 1956	
	June 1956 from--				June 1955	May 1956				
	June 1955	May 1956								
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+14	+11	+2	317	+19	-3	215	18	19	24
New England.....	+33	+23	+10	16	+16	-18	11	6	6	9
Middle Atlantic.....	+14	+9	0	44	+9	-4	24	16	17	22
East North Central.....	+13	+19	+1	49	+16	-4	33	13	12	17
West North Central.....	+36	+11	+1	46	+16	+13	38	16	21	15
South Atlantic.....	+6	-3	0	35	+9	-2	18	20	24	28
South Central.....	+16	-6	+7	34	+53	+1	18	37	33	35
Pacific.....	+12	+41	+3	67	-5	-12	51	24	31	47
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+13	-4	+13	312	+7	-1	227	157	175	152
New England.....	+6	0	+11	20	+14	+6	16	158	145	147
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	-2	+10	74	+4	+1	47	145	174	141
East North Central.....	+19	-7	+15	52	+3	-5	33	138	176	136
West North Central.....	+5	-6	+10	24	+4	+2	22	141	141	129
South Atlantic.....	+16	-2	+17	46	+11	0	35	166	175	167
East South Central.....	+21	-2	+14	14	+1	0	12	178	216	175
West South Central.....	+12	-11	+16	34	+9	-3	29	196	202	180
Mountain.....	-2	0	+14	16	+12	0	12	212	219	204
Pacific.....	+15	-4	+15	32	+18	-1	21	160	148	154
Tobacco distributors.....	-2	-3	+3	283	+5	+1	117	54	51	52
New England.....	+3	0	+1	32	-3	+11	8	60	34	55
Middle Atlantic.....	-2	-4	+3	52	-4	0	13	62	58	59
East North Central.....	-6	+2	+1	47	+8	0	27	58	55	60
West North Central.....	-3	+2	0	22	+5	+3	15	55	46	56
South Atlantic.....	+5	-4	+8	30	+1	-7	21	61	60	62
South Central.....	-1	-3	+3	40	+7	+5	17	45	44	41
Pacific.....	-4	-11	+6	41	+3	+8	7	41	45	31
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-3	-3	0	411	+12	-2	206	231	190	233
New England.....	+1	-10	+8	25	+28	+4	12	184	143	196
Middle Atlantic.....	-7	-1	-2	257	+10	-3	120	238	185	237
East North Central.....	-7	-8	+5	37	-6	-6	17	190	181	189
West North Central.....	-1	-4	+1	26	+34	+2	17	346	222	344
South Atlantic.....	+4	-10	+6	21	-5	-2	15	191	213	174
South Central.....	+5	-14	0	15	+22	+4	9	329	278	284
Pacific.....	+16	-5	+2	28	+33	-9	14	186	176	226
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	0	-9	+9	320	+9	-3	186	162	143	156
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-10	+11	109	+15	0	46	150	111	133
East North Central.....	+2	-5	+10	66	+16	-7	43	142	132	147
West North Central.....	-8	-19	0	19	+14	-4	16	232	179	200
South Atlantic.....	-6	-14	+3	33	+1	-1	16	266	277	248
South Central.....	+4	-13	+6	33	+1	-1	30	209	219	184
Pacific.....	+1	-7	+9	39	+7	-5	19	151	145	155
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+8	603	+6	-1	415	230	220	230
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	+5	+13	90	+7	+1	45	217	183	223
East North Central.....	+5	+3	+6	114	+7	-3	80	175	159	175
West North Central.....	+11	0	+5	68	-5	-1	28	224	247	236
South Atlantic.....	+3	-1	+4	71	+14	+2	51	256	248	242
East South Central.....	+6	+6	+14	88	+9	+2	87	298	297	308
West South Central.....	+18	-1	+15	19	+14	+3	18	189	188	176
Mountain.....	+4	+1	+5	57	+14	0	54	279	252	280
Pacific.....	-3	-6	+3	80	0	0	47	280	277	278
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers ³	+24	+4	+22	636	+15	-6	609	134	146	149
New England.....	+37	+8	+31	37	+10	-7	33	98	135	110
Middle Atlantic.....	+22	+1	+30	71	+9	-4	65	111	129	122
East North Central.....	+19	+5	+18	168	+10	-10	157	148	160	176
West North Central.....	+41	+9	+19	58	+11	-16	56	135	184	176
South Atlantic.....	+26	+9	+19	111	+23	+2	110	147	145	157
East South Central.....	+39	+4	+18	41	+40	-8	40	160	164	182
West South Central.....	+22	-2	+19	70	+16	-6	68	130	140	136
Mountain.....	+12	-10	+11	27	+20	-5	27	180	131	141
Pacific.....	+21	+6	+18	53	+35	-2	53	139	134	149
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors..	+8	+4	+7	343	+6	-1	271	176	173	193
New England.....	+10	-3	+10	31	+18	-2	24	147	123	169
Middle Atlantic.....	+18	+12	+14	68	+7	+2	45	160	175	186
East North Central.....	+10	+10	+9	75	+16	0	66	188	171	218
West North Central.....	+12	+2	-3	25	-3	-5	21	184	217	201
South Atlantic.....	+2	-4	+5	51	+8	-4	37	227	194	221
East South Central.....	0	-6	-3	11	-3	+3	11	179	177	163
West South Central.....	+3	0	0	23	-10	+1	20	157	190	156
Pacific.....	+2	0	+4	52	+5	-4	43	163	165	168

See page 6 for footnotes.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (see map, page 4)	Sales			Number of establishments reporting June 1956	Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios ¹ (percent)			
	Percent change		6 mo. 1956 from 6 mo. 1955		Percent change, June 1956 from--		Number of establishments reporting June 1956	June 1956	June 1955	May 1956
	June 1956 from--				June 1955	May 1956				
	June 1955	May 1956								
Hardware wholesalers.....	+5	+1	+7	228	+6	-1	194	250	254	253
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	+5	+11	35	+1	-2	29	205	237	223
East North Central.....	+7	0	+8	42	+11	-1	36	239	221	250
West North Central.....	+3	+5	+5	17	-4	-2	17	252	272	270
South Atlantic.....	+8	-3	+8	26	+6	-1	19	297	314	285
East South Central.....	+3	-5	+6	24	+7	0	22	243	246	233
West South Central.....	+13	-3	+9	25	+20	+4	22	275	252	254
Mountain.....	+13	+5	+8	22	+7	-3	22	269	279	289
Pacific.....	-1	+3	+5	28	-2	+1	24	251	257	261
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+4	+2	+7	382	+9	-1	265	192	184	198
New England.....	+8	+7	+8	14	0	+1	7	253	347	280
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	+4	+12	113	+14	-1	56	226	199	257
East North Central.....	+12	+4	+17	62	+15	-1	53	189	173	194
West North Central.....	-3	-1	+2	32	-4	-1	30	167	169	164
South Atlantic.....	-3	-1	+4	59	+13	-1	52	231	193	232
South Central.....	-7	-1	-4	56	-1	-1	48	186	195	195
Pacific.....	+2	+4	+1	35	+9	-4	10	138	136	137
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	-4	+1	+3	584	+7	-2	395	112	98	114
New England.....	-8	-3	-3	17	+10	0	15	168	138	166
Middle Atlantic.....	-2	-1	+5	114	+2	-3	83	116	107	119
East North Central.....	-9	+5	+4	136	+11	-3	67	89	68	97
West North Central.....	-1	+11	-1	60	+7	-3	41	108	114	128
South Atlantic.....	-7	-11	+7	52	+17	-2	37	113	91	99
South Central.....	-12	-12	-10	76	+12	0	62	184	147	158
Pacific.....	0	0	+6	109	+8	-2	71	96	86	91
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors	+15	-2	+21	963	+11	+2	758	136	138	131
New England.....	+49	+28	+22	11	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+25	-1	+20	57	+11	+10	33	104	136	91
East North Central.....	+1	-7	+21	103	+15	0	80	178	161	161
West North Central.....	+22	0	+13	66	+2	-2	51	166	195	168
South Atlantic.....	+24	+4	+23	47	+7	+2	42	120	159	123
South Central.....	+13	+2	+27	519	+7	0	429	133	140	140
Mountain.....	+7	-9	+10	74	+17	+1	52	169	124	154
Pacific.....	+7	-13	+12	86	+14	+7	68	126	124	99

x Insufficient data to show separately.

¹ Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for an identical group of firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

² Not affiliated with voluntary groups or cooperative groups.

³ Includes general-line electrical goods, wiring supplies, construction materials and apparatus wholesalers.

⁴ Totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Note: Firms reporting in this survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one(1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

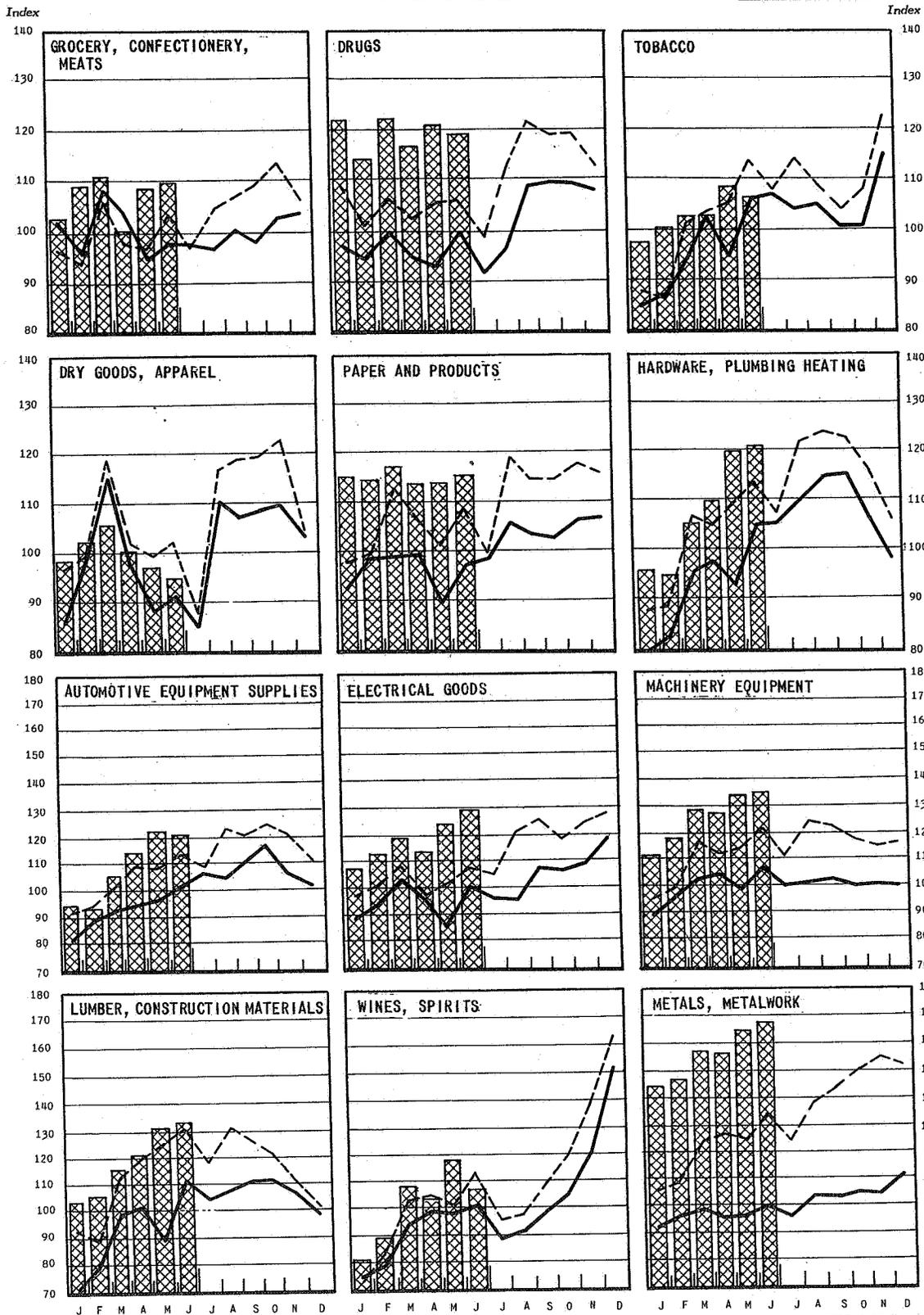
Sales and inventory figures reported for any firm are multiplied by this weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes and stock-sales ratios.

Data on reported dollar values, previously shown as a measure of coverage, are now omitted since the trend data are based on weighted values. The number of establishments in the sample, from which reports were received in time for tabulation are shown as an indication of coverage.

SALES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS—KINDS OF BUSINESS
1954, 1955 AND 1956

1954 MONTHLY AVERAGE = 100

1954 = ———
1955 = - - - -
1956 = [cross-hatched]



BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

DATA IN THIS REPORT ARE NOT ADJUSTED FOR NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE MONTH NOR FOR SEASONAL OR PRICE FLUCTUATIONS

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

JULY 1956

FOR RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 12, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Effective with the July 1956 survey, the Bureau of the Census has revised the sample of merchant wholesalers on which this report is based to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. A description of the revised sample, coverage, terminology and kinds of business classifications shown in this report are included on pages 2, 6, and 7.

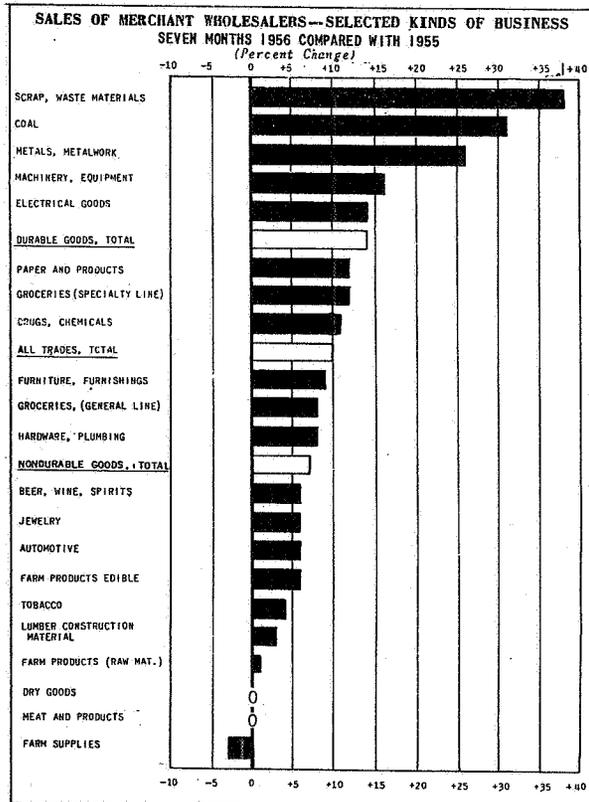
Sales

July 1956 sales of merchant wholesalers were down 6 percent from June but were 8 percent higher than July sales a year ago. Cumulative sales for the first 7 months of 1956 were 10 percent higher than sales in the comparable period of 1955.

Durable goods trades, in total, showed a 9 percent decline below June sales, while nondurable goods reported a somewhat smaller decrease (4%). Both trade groups indicated the same increase (8%) compared with sales a year ago. However, in comparing 7 months 1956 sales with 1955, the durable goods trades noted the larger gain (14%) compared with an increase of 7 percent indicated by the nondurable goods trades.

Farm products (raw materials) merchants, contrary to other wholesalers, reported a sharp increase (19%) over June sales and a decline of 5 percent from July sales a year ago. Five other trades indicated small increases (from 1 to 4 percent) over the previous month but each noted higher sales than a year ago. Motor vehicle distributors reported a 26 percent decline below June sales and were also 8 percent below July 1955. Iron and steel scrap dealers--undoubtedly affected by the steel strike--reported the sharpest decline (32%) from previous month sales but were up 5 percent over last July. For the first time since December 1954, iron and steel scrap dealers did not reflect the principal gain over year-ago sales. Iron and steel products distributors, up 23 percent, and nonferrous materials distributors, with an increase of 32 percent, recorded the largest gains over July 1955 sales. Other significant year-ago gains were noted by fresh fruit and vegetable wholesalers (19%), industrial chemical wholesalers (19%), clothing and furnishings wholesalers (18%), professional equipment and supply houses (19%), and surgical and medical supply houses (22%).

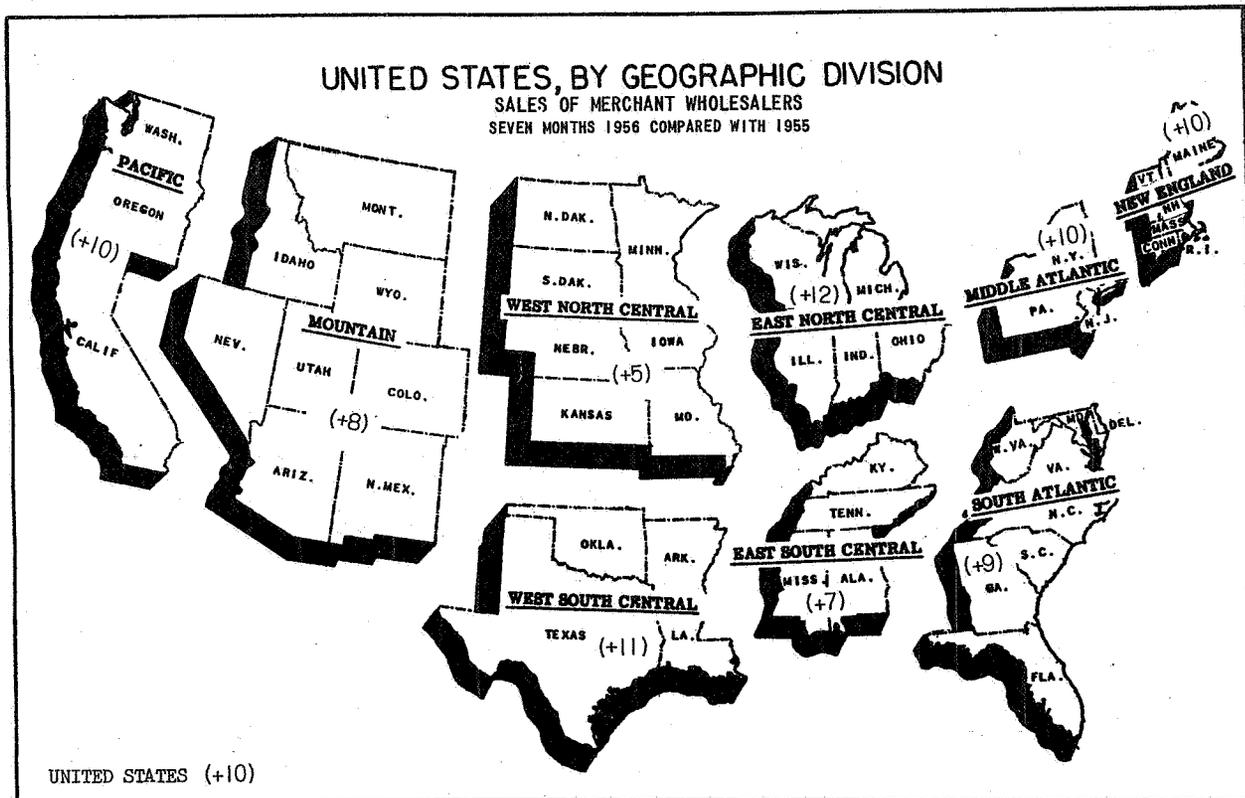
The West North Central Division, up 6 percent over June sales, showed the only increase over the previous month but indicated no change from July sales a year ago. All other divisions indicated sales declines below June but noted gains over last year. The Middle Atlantic Division reported the largest decrease (11%) below June but noted an increase of 8 percent over July 1955. The West South Central Division, which experienced the smallest decline (1%) from sales a month earlier, recorded the principal gain (13%) over sales a year ago.



Inventories

Wholesalers inventories at the end of July were at the same level as a month earlier but were 11 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. The July 1956 stock-sales ratio of 122 percent was 7 points above the June ratio and 2 points above the ratio for July 1955.

Farm products (raw materials) merchants, with inventories up 42 percent since June, reported an increase much larger than their usual seasonal increase. Most trades showed only small changes from previous month inventories but other large increases were noted by iron and steel scrap dealers (9%), piece goods converters (13%), and coal wholesalers (15%). Iron and steel products distributors with inventories down (9%), fresh fruit and vegetable wholesalers down 11 percent indicated the sharpest decline from stock on hand a month earlier. Nonferrous material distributors reported the heaviest increase (40%) over year-ago inventories. Farm products (raw materials) merchants with stocks up 30 percent, and electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers, up 25 percent, also indicated large increases over July 31, 1955 inventories.



DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, TERMINOLOGY AND KINDS OF BUSINESS

Scope of the Survey.--Wholesale trade includes several types of establishments: merchant wholesalers; manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; assemblers of farm products; and agents, brokers and commercial merchants. This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade. However, all kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are described in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual developed by the Federal Bureau of the Budget, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and baling waste materials. Firms which operate retail and manufacturing establishments in addition to their wholesale establishments report only for their merchant wholesale establishments. (See page 6 for a description of each kind of business classification shown in this report.)

Sample design.--Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the sample was revised to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. Over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) are included in this sample which was drawn from lists of all merchant wholesalers (about 165,000 establishments) in the 1954 Census of Business. The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month.

In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms. This month, about 88 percent of this number of firm submitted their reports in time for the trend tabulations. The number of establishments reporting, previously shown as a measure of coverage, will no longer be shown since the trend comparisons are based on weighted values (see below). However, information on the number of establishments reporting for a trade and the number selected in the sample will be provided on request.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) the distribution of firms within the trade by sales-size, (c) the degree of reliability desired in the data, and

(d) whether geographic division trends were to be shown for the trade. This sample has been designed to develop monthly dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories by kind of business with a sampling variability for each trade of approximately 5 percent at the one sigma level. The sampling variability of the percentage changes based on this sample is expected to be somewhat lower. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Percentage changes.--For each firm reporting, data are available for each of the three months (current, previous, and year ago) for which comparisons are made. Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes of sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios. Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included. Sales trends shown in this report reflect the operation of firms selected in the sample which were in business in each of the three months compared.

Inventory, end-of-month represents stock, at cost value, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month. Inventory trends are based on reports from only those firms which included data for all three periods compared. The number of firms reporting inventories is generally smaller than the number reporting sales. Some firms cannot submit inventory data in time for tabulation but furnish sales figures only.

Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

JULY 1956

Kind of business	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		7 mo. 1956 from 7 mo. 1955	Percent change, July 1956 from--		July 1956	July 1955	June 1956
	July 1956 from--			July 1955	June 1956			
	July 1955	June 1956						
United States, total.....	+8	-6	+10	+11	0	122	120	115
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+10	-1	+8	+4	-2	69	71	71
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+10	-2	+8	+7	-4	97	101	101
Voluntary groups.....	+13	+1	+11	+11	-3	85	90	90
Retailer-cooperative.....	+12	-6	+10	+16	-10	72	72	76
Nonaffiliated.....	+7	-2	+6	+4	-3	111	114	116
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+10	-2	+12	+8	+1	64	66	65
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+9	-6	+3	+9	+5	106	108	96
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+8	+2	0	+6	-4	25	21	28
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+14	-6	+6	-4	-6	22	28	22
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	0	-2	+7	-11	+3	37	45	32
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+19	-7	+5	+3	-11	17	21	18
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+9	-5	+6	+6	0	114	114	109
Beer distributors.....	+10	+1	+5	+19	+7	60	51	57
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+8	-10	+7	+3	-3	164	171	151
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+13	-7	+11	+11	+1	148	154	135
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+12	-5	+13	+10	+1	169	174	157
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+19	-10	+9	+15	+1	99	104	88
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+8	-11	+5	+6	-2	132	150	124
Tobacco distributors.....	+6	0	+4	+7	0	62	62	63
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+1	-7	0	+11	+5	254	226	222
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+18	-2	+2	+16	+3	220	242	227
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	-6	-7	+4	+14	+4	275	220	222
Piece goods converters.....	-10	-16	-6	-2	+13	267	219	217
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+6	-14	+9	+8	-1	212	184	184
Furniture wholesalers.....	+7	-13	+10	+11	+1	209	210	180
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+5	-14	+8	+6	-2	213	213	185
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+14	-7	+12	+12	-2	124	130	119
Paper wholesalers.....	+15	-6	+13	+12	-2	117	121	113
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+9	-10	+10	+7	-2	199	235	181
Farm products merchants (raw material).....	-5	+19	+1	+30	+42	108	78	90
Automotive wholesalers.....	+9	-7	+6	+5	-1	193	204	184
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-8	-26	-1	-4	-1	135	134	96
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+12	-2	+9	+6	-1	204	219	207
Electrical, electronic, appliance goods distributors.....	+6	-7	+14	+21	+1	160	139	147
Electric equipment, supplies wholesalers.....	+12	-8	+20	+25	+1	144	132	134
Electrical appliances, TV and radio sets and parts, and electronic parts, equipment distributors.....	0	-5	+6	+17	+2	179	147	163
Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+10	-2	+8	+5	-3	207	217	210
Hardware wholesalers.....	+10	-3	+8	+7	-2	242	255	243
Plumbing, heating goods distributors.....	+10	0	+8	+4	-3	179	189	184
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+3	-4	+3	+13	-1	98	86	96
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-1	-7	0	+12	-1	146	125	139
Construction materials distributors.....	+7	-1	+8	+15	-2	60	54	61
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+10	-13	+16	+15	-2	166	161	149
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment distributors.....	+7	-16	+8	+13	-4	152	136	132
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+11	-10	+12	+17	-1	173	166	156
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies houses.....	+5	-17	+19	+11	-3	144	136	128
Professional equipment, supplies houses.....	+19	+3	+11	+6	0	180	205	186
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+22	-1	+11	+8	0	148	176	155
Service establishment equipment, supplies houses.....	+17	-10	+10	+11	-2	130	137	124
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+26	-8	+26	+13	-8	145	159	144
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+23	-4	+26	+9	-9	162	184	171
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+32	-16	+26	+40	+2	93	84	71
Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+2	-25	+38	+4	+6	55	51	38
Iron-steel scrap dealers.....	+5	-32	+50	-3	+9	50	52	31
Waste materials dealers.....	-3	-10	+20	+15	+2	62	49	52
Other merchant wholesalers.....	+7	-9	+11	+7	-1	107	110	99
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+13	+4	+10	+8	0	198	207	197
Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.....	+15	-1	+11	+14	+3	136	129	120
Coal wholesalers.....	+15	-18	+31	-6	+15	78	111	63
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+17	-11	-3	+8	-1	136	147	120
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+5	-4	+6	+10	+2	342	336	277

Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

JULY 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end- of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		7 mo. 1956 from 7 mo. 1955	Percent change, July 1956 from--		July 1956	July 1955	June 1956
	July 1956 from--			July 1955	June 1956			
	July 1955	June 1956						
Merchant wholesalers, total.....	+8	-6	+10	+11	0	122	120	115
New England.....	+9	-5	+10	+11	-1	111	111	106
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	-11	+10	+11	0	115	113	102
East North Central.....	+8	-8	+12	+12	-1	121	116	112
West North Central.....	0	+6	+5	+7	+1	115	113	125
South Atlantic.....	+9	-6	+9	+13	+1	139	132	129
East South Central.....	+11	-4	+7	+17	+5	154	144	144
West South Central.....	+13	-1	+11	+13	+5	121	129	116
Mountain.....	+3	-8	+8	+11	-2	137	131	129
Pacific.....	+11	-2	+10	+10	-2	118	123	119
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+10	-2	+8	+7	-4	97	101	101
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	-6	+8	+9	-4	103	107	103
East North Central.....	+11	-2	+9	+10	-5	89	89	94
West North Central.....	+6	+2	+9	+2	-1	87	91	92
South Atlantic.....	+5	+1	+2	+11	+4	119	118	123
East South Central.....	+14	+4	-1	+9	+1	112	115	115
West South Central.....	+13	+1	+9	-9	-11	111	127	113
Mountain.....	+11	-10	+17	+6	-5	88	93	83
Pacific.....	+10	+1	+16	+17	-5	77	76	87
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+10	-2	+12	+8	+1	64	62	65
New England.....	+13	-7	+13	+26	-10	115	101	123
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	-2	+14	+9	+4	67	67	67
East North Central.....	+7	-4	+10	+15	0	69	64	68
West North Central.....	+3	-7	+7	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
South Atlantic.....	0	-1	+5	-10	-5	68	75	64
South Central.....	+4	+3	+7	+5	+9	72	81	78
Pacific.....	+14	0	+10	-4	-4	31	37	32
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+19	-7	+5	+3	-11	17	21	18
New England.....	+9	+3	+10	+4	-2	48	53	49
Middle Atlantic.....	+17	-6	+3	+3	-14	8	8	9
East North Central.....	+26	-7	+5	+6	-12	12	14	14
South Atlantic.....	+22	-15	+5	+14	-8	25	31	23
South Central.....	+7	-9	+7	0	-15	26	31	27
Pacific.....	+19	0	+6	0	-12	16	20	18
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+12	-5	+13	+10	+1	169	174	157
New England.....	+5	-12	+10	+11	-3	140	136	130
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	-12	+9	+9	+1	190	184	165
East North Central.....	+15	-6	+15	+11	+2	156	160	141
West North Central.....	+13	+3	+10	+8	+1	150	161	145
South Atlantic.....	+19	+3	+17	+11	+2	167	178	166
East South Central.....	+17	+1	+15	+11	0	157	166	161
West South Central.....	+12	0	+15	+5	+5	231	244	220
Mountain.....	+22	-3	+15	+24	0	169	166	152
Pacific.....	+14	-3	+15	+11	-1	158	169	152
Tobacco distributors.....	+6	0	+4	+7	0	62	62	63
New England.....	+2	-4	+1	-13	-4	43	50	43
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-4	+3	+9	+1	53	52	46
East North Central.....	+5	+1	+2	+7	-1	51	50	53
West North Central.....	+3	-1	+1	+11	+1	74	69	72
South Atlantic.....	+17	+5	+10	+11	+2	129	138	137
South Central.....	+5	0	+4	-2	-1	52	55	52
Pacific.....	+5	-2	+6	+16	+2	58	54	60
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+1	-7	0	+11	+5	254	226	222
New England.....	+9	0	+8	+10	+5	326	338	288
Middle Atlantic.....	-4	-11	-2	+8	+6	266	218	217
East North Central.....	+22	-4	+6	+14	+12	226	257	202
West North Central.....	+5	+22	+2	+19	-2	246	265	316
South Atlantic.....	+13	-4	+7	+23	+7	189	176	174
South Central.....	+14	-7	+1	+9	+8	262	272	225
Pacific.....	+3	-5	+3	+15	-4	244	207	234
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+6	-14	+9	+8	-1	212	184	184
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	-20	+10	+8	-4	202	207	171
East North Central.....	+1	-17	+9	+6	-4	204	205	176
West North Central.....	0	-4	0	+6	-2	222	211	226
South Atlantic.....	+6	-14	+3	+3	+3	229	236	174
South Central.....	0	-6	+5	-2	+3	210	212	193
Pacific.....	+11	-5	+9	+23	0	240	224	225

See footnote at end of table.

Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS—Continued

JULY 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		7 mo. 1956 from 7 mo. 1955	Percent change, July 1956 from--		July 1956	July 1955	June 1956
	July 1955	June 1956		July 1955	June 1956			
	July 1955	June 1956	July 1955	June 1956	July 1955	July 1956	June 1956	
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+12	-2	+9	+6	-1	204	219	207
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	-10	+13	+16	0	169	176	168
East North Central.....	+6	-4	+6	-5	-1	235	254	227
West North Central.....	+8	-2	+5	+1	-2	222	239	223
South Atlantic.....	+7	-9	+5	+5	-3	194	195	183
East South Central.....	+25	+8	+16	+10	-3	227	257	253
West South Central.....	+18	+5	+16	+8	-1	212	226	224
Mountain.....	+27	+18	+8	+18	-2	243	272	307
Pacific.....	+14	+4	+6	+7	+1	193	210	200
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers.....	+12	-8	+20	+25	+1	144	132	134
New England.....	+17	-3	+29	+38	-1	156	135	158
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	-13	+27	+23	+5	122	107	106
East North Central.....	+10	-14	+17	+30	+2	135	118	116
West North Central.....	+2	-16	+16	+20	+2	154	135	126
South Atlantic.....	+11	-6	+18	+28	-5	155	135	155
East South Central.....	+17	+6	+18	+33	+1	142	129	150
West South Central.....	+23	+5	+19	+17	0	161	170	167
Mountain.....	+4	-7	+9	+11	-3	148	146	142
Pacific.....	+19	-4	+19	+24	-1	152	145	151
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors.....	0	-5	+6	+17	+2	179	147	163
New England.....	+15	-1	+10	+8	+5	160	174	153
Middle Atlantic.....	0	-10	+12	+43	+9	214	131	162
East North Central.....	-1	-14	+8	+28	+1	164	119	139
West North Central.....	-13	-6	-5	+2	+3	216	178	195
South Atlantic.....	-3	+14	+3	+15	+1	167	144	183
East South Central.....	+4	+2	-1	0	-3	178	184	187
West South Central.....	+1	+1	0	-8	-3	206	226	216
Pacific.....	+8	-6	+5	+18	+3	159	123	144
Hardware wholesalers.....	+10	-3	+8	+7	-2	242	255	243
New England.....	+11	-14	+8	+8	-4	262	277	238
Middle Atlantic.....	+18	-15	+12	+9	-2	233	265	212
East North Central.....	+16	+1	+9	+7	-4	212	233	227
West North Central.....	+12	-3	+6	+8	-3	275	285	272
South Atlantic.....	+3	-2	+7	+12	+6	257	229	226
East South Central.....	0	-2	+5	+3	-3	252	244	263
West South Central.....	+1	+2	+8	+6	-4	255	255	267
Mountain.....	+6	-1	+8	+4	-6	265	271	286
Pacific.....	+17	+1	+7	+6	-1	221	255	235
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	+10	0	+8	+4	-3	179	189	184
New England.....	+21	+10	+11	+13	-1	149	157	175
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	+35	+12	+2	-4	182	198	144
East North Central.....	+8	+1	+15	+5	-3	172	177	182
West North Central.....	0	+8	+1	+6	0	237	221	258
South Atlantic.....	+9	-3	+5	+3	-4	153	157	150
South Central.....	+16	-2	-1	+7	-4	163	193	163
Pacific.....	-1	-17	+1	+5	-4	193	182	157
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	+3	-4	+3	+13	-1	98	86	96
New England.....	+4	-2	-3	+25	-4	87	62	85
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-8	+4	+2	-5	91	89	88
East North Central.....	+9	+1	+5	+19	0	111	96	112
West North Central.....	+3	-11	-1	+9	-3	114	110	106
South Atlantic.....	+8	-4	+7	+31	-5	62	47	66
South Central.....	+22	-3	-5	+17	-2	152	133	161
Pacific.....	-6	-8	+4	+4	0	43	40	33
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+5	-17	+19	+11	-3	144	136	128
New England.....	+18	-12	+22	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-28	+18	+30	0	144	100	103
East North Central.....	+2	-16	+19	+6	-3	168	150	146
West North Central.....	+3	-21	+13	-3	-3	138	154	125
South Atlantic.....	+15	-5	+21	+17	-1	141	136	137
South Central.....	+6	-9	+25	+5	-2	130	131	123
Mountain.....	-8	-33	+8	+11	-6	168	134	142
Pacific.....	+18	-7	+13	+6	-4	141	187	153

x Insufficient data to show separately.

DESCRIPTION OF KINDS OF BUSINESS

All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey. The kinds of business shown in this report parallel broad classifications used in the 1954 Census of Business covering wholesale trade. Each establishment in this survey has been assigned a kind-of-business classification based upon its trade designation and an analysis of its annual 1954 sales by commodity lines as reported in the 1954 Census of Business. A description of each kind of business classification in this report is given below.

Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers

General-line grocery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments handling a general line of dry groceries and processed foods usually sold in retail grocery stores, such as canned foods, flour, sugar, coffee, tea and spices, as well as such nonfood items as household chemicals, soaps and detergents, paper products, brooms, brushes, etc. Voluntary group wholesalers, retailer-cooperative warehouses, and cash-and-carry depots are included, as well as nonaffiliated general-line grocery wholesalers.

Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.--This classification includes two general types of merchant wholesale establishments: Those handling a combination of grocery items, no one item predominating, but not a sufficiently broad line of commodities to be classified as "general line"; and those primarily engaged in selling specialized lines of groceries and related products, such as canned foods; coffee, tea, and spices; dairy products; dried fruits and nuts; frosted and frozen foods; fish and seafood; bakery products; packaged breakfast cereals; flour; cooking oils and shortening; and soft drinks.

Confectionery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling candy, chewing gum, popcorn, potato chips, salted nuts, fountain fruits and syrups, and related items. Cigars, cigarettes, and other products are also frequently handled as secondary lines.

Meat, meat products wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh, frozen, cured or processed (but not canned) meats, lard, and other edible meat products. Secondary lines such as butter, cheese, eggs, dressed poultry, vegetable shortening, and canned meats are frequently handled.

Farm products (edible) distributors

Poultry, poultry products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling live or dressed poultry, eggs, and related products. Establishments primarily engaged in dressing poultry are considered manufacturers.

Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh fruits, vegetables, berries, melons, and related items.

Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers

Beer distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling beer, ale, porter, stout and other fermented malt liquors. Soft drinks, confectionery, tobacco, wines, and spirits are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wines, whiskey, gin, rum, brandy, and other spirits, including neutral spirits and ethyl alcohol used in blending. Merchants who bottle and sell wines and distilled spirits manufactured in bulk by others, liquor departments of drug wholesalers, and State-operated wholesale outlets are included. State depots primarily engaged in supplying State liquor stores, however, are not included in Wholesale Trade.

Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalersDrug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a full line of drugs, pharmaceuticals, proprietary medicines, druggists rubber goods, cosmetics, toiletries, drug sundries, and related merchandise. Cooperatives and voluntary group wholesalers handling a full line of drugs are also included in this classification. Liquor departments of drug wholesalers, however, are included with "wines and distilled spirits wholesalers."

Specialty-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling proprietary medicines, toilet preparations, and articles such as drugs, perfumes, cosmetics, powders, shaving preparations, toilet soap, dentifrices, combs, brushes, mirrors, medical glass, bandages, rubber goods, and antiseptics.

Industrial chemicals, explosives distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such industrial and heavy chemicals as coal-tar chemicals, plastics, compressed and liquefied gases (except LP gas), acids, ammonia, soda, industrial alcohols, explosives, dyestuffs, naval stores, etc. Concerns primarily engaged in selling pyrotechnics and ammunition for small arms are included in "Amusement and sporting goods wholesalers."

Paint, varnish wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling paints, varnishes, lacquers, enamels, calcimines, shellac, and stains. Glass, wallpaper, painters supplies, oils, chemicals, and related products are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Tobacco distributors

Tobacco distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling manufactured tobacco products such as cigars, cigarettes, chewing and smoking tobacco, and snuff. Confectionery, smokers articles, razor blades, playing cards, etc., are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Dry goods, apparel wholesalers

Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling men's, boys' clothing, and furnishings (including suits, coats, overcoats, work clothing, hats and caps, shirts, ties, and underwear); women's, children's clothing, furnishings, and accessories (including suits, dresses, and skirts); furs and fur clothing; millinery, millinery supplies; shoes and other footwear; work clothing; and related lines.

Dry goods, apparel wholesalers--Continued

Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a diversified combination of lines usually sold in retail dry goods and general merchandise stores, including piece goods, home furnishings, work clothing, dresses, infants' wear notions, and hosiery. Men's and women's clothing, furnishings, and millinery frequently constitute secondary lines.

Specialty-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling hosiery, underwear, piece goods, knit and lace goods, fancy linen and needlework and notions (thread, tapes, needles, pins, buttons, hair accessories, zippers, and shoe laces.)

Piece goods converters.--Merchant wholesale establishments which purchase textiles in the gray or unfinished form, have them dyed and/or finished by others, usually on a contract basis, and sell to the cutting-up trade, garment makers, wholesalers, or retailers. Converters operating bleaching, dyeing, and finishing plants are not considered as merchant wholesalers.

Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers

Furniture (household, office) wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling home or office furniture--wooden, metal or other.

Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling household china, glassware, and earthenware; floor coverings (carpets, rugs, linoleums, etc.); antique home furnishings; and miscellaneous home furnishings such as brooms, brushes, curtains, draperies, pictures and picture frames, window shades, kitchen utensils, phonograph records, and musical instruments.

Paper, allied products wholesalers

Paper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wrapping paper and other coarse paper; fine paper (writing papers, reproduction paper stock, cover, text, thin, and other fine papers); newspaper and book paper; paperboard; and converted paper products such as bags, boxes, cups, dishes, towels, napkins, tissues, and bottle caps.

Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial and social stationery, including envelopes, type-writer and mimeograph paper in cut sizes, file cards and folders; and office supplies such as pens, pencils, writing inks, carbon paper, paper clips, type-writer ribbons, greeting cards, and erasers; and embossed and printed wallpaper for use in covering or decorating interior walls and ceilings.

Farm products (raw materials) merchants

Farm products (raw materials) merchants.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cotton, grain, hides, skins, raw furs, livestock, leaf tobacco, wool, mohair, horses and mules, and other inedible products such as broomcorn, moss, hair, feathers, bristles, and fibers. This classification includes merchants (including terminal elevators) primarily engaged in selling raw farm products in marketing centers. Dealers buying such products direct from farmers and assembling them at local production points are classified as "assemblers" and not included here.

Automotive wholesalers

Motor-vehicle distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling new and used passenger automobiles and similar motor vehicles, road-type trucks, truck-tractors, busses, trailers, and semitrailers to dealers or to fleet operators, industrial accounts, and to commercial users. Dealers in road-type trucks, truck-tractors, and truck-trailers are included here on the basis of kind-of-goods sold.

Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments--frequently referred to as jobbers in this trade--primarily engaged in selling automotive equipment, accessories, parts, tires, tubes, and garage equipment and tools.

Electrical, electronic, and appliance goods distributors

Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of electrical goods such as electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials; lighting fixtures and lamps; radio and television sets and accessories; electric refrigerators and other electrical appliances and specialties; and electronic parts and equipment; and those primarily engaged in selling such electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials, and lighting fixtures and lamps, as conduits and fittings, interior wires and cables, wiring devices, safety switches, poles, crossarms, pole-line hardware, outside wires and cables, residential, commercial, and industrial lighting fixtures, and incandescent and fluorescent lamps. Establishments specializing in the sale of electrical prime movers and other electrical power equipment for the generation, transmission, or utilization of electric energy are also included.

Electrical appliances, radio and TV sets and parts, and electronic parts, equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such electrical appliances and specialties as radio and television sets, dish washers, electric refrigerators, electric ranges, washing machines, ironers, radio and television parts and accessories, home freezers, sewing machines, hot water heaters, electric irons, percolators, clocks, hotplates, vacuum cleaners, etc., and electronic tubes, electronic replacement parts and accessories, and transmission and sound equipment.

Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers

Hardware wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of merchandise sufficiently broad to service retail hardware stores and the hardware departments of other outlets--general-line hardware wholesalers; and establishments primarily engaged in selling builders hardware, heavy hardware, shelf or light hardware, and hardware specialties such as tools, cutlery, bolts, nuts, rivets, screws, padlocks, keys, and the like--specialty-line hardware wholesalers.

Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers--Continued

Plumbing, heating goods distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling plumbing and heating equipment and supplies such as plumbing fixtures, including sanitary ware; steam and hot water heating boilers, radiators, parts, and fittings; stoves, ranges, furnaces, and other types of heating apparatus (except electric); oil burners; gas appliances and supplies; plumbing pipe, valves, and fittings; and plumbers brass goods.

Lumber, construction materials distributors

Lumber, millwork wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling lumber and millwork such as rough, dressed, and finished lumber; sheathing, siding, flooring, shingles, plywood, veneers, doors, sashes, frames, interior woodwork and trim.

Construction materials distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such construction materials as brick, tile, and terra cotta; cement, lime, and plaster; building glass; sand, gravel, and crushed stone; ready-mixed concrete; roofing, siding, and insulation; and stone, slate, concrete products, and building board.

Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors

Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial refrigeration equipment (including electric) such as refrigerators, display cases, freezers, dispensers, water coolers, food locker equipment; and those selling air conditioning and ventilating equipment and supplies, including fans, blowers, and accessories. Establishments specializing in the sale of commercial refrigeration components and accessories are also included in this classification.

Commercial machines, equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling office machines and equipment (except furniture) such as adding machines, typewriters, addressing, duplicating, sealing, computing, stapling, accounting, and statistical machines; restaurant and hotel equipment such as coffee urns, steam tables, china, glassware, silverware, linens, and related items; store machines and fixtures such as display fixtures, show racks, pricing equipment, cash registers, scales, meat slicers and grinders, coffee grinders, etc.; and such related equipment as florists' supplies, theater supplies and equipment, and parking meters. Establishments primarily engaged in selling to users are included, as well as those selling to dealers.

Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling machinery, equipment, and supplies to manufacturing and mining concerns. Included here are establishments selling industrial machinery; industrial belting, hose, and packing; machine tools, mine and mill supplies; oil well and oil refining supplies; printing machinery and supplies; industrial rope, cordage, and twine; industrial materials, handling equipment; power transmission equipment; and machinery and equipment for such industries as food products, woodworking, shoe manufacturing, tanning, textile, and paper and pulp.

Professional equipment, supplies houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling dental supplies (chairs, sterilizers, cabinets, instruments, dental gold and alloys, waxes, teeth, and the like); religious supplies (church goods and religious articles such as statuary, vestments, fonts, candles, religious pictures, calendars, literature, etc.); school equipment and supplies (desks, blackboards, chalk, rulers, wall and globe maps, etc.); optical goods; surgical, medical, hospital supplies, and equipment; artists' supplies; engineering instruments and supplies; and supplies for other professions.

Surgical, medical, hospital supplies houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling surgical and medical instruments; doctors' apparatus and equipment; orthopedic appliances; artificial limbs; operating room and other hospital equipment; X-ray machines and accessories and other scientific instruments used by physicians and in hospitals.

Service establishment equipment, supplies houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling barber and beauty supplies; laundry, dry cleaning equipment, supplies (washing, drying, ironing, and pressing machines laundry soaps and chemicals; dry cleaning fluids, marking equipment, etc.); shoe service supplies and equipment; undertakers supplies (caskets, burial vaults, burial garments, embalming chemicals and preparations, and other morticians and funeral equipment); upholsterers supplies (fabrics, leather and fillings, and other types of supplies used in the upholstery trade); and miscellaneous service equipment, such as janitors' supplies, furriers' supplies, bootblack's supplies, and hat cleaners' supplies.

Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors--Continued

Other machinery, equipment, supplies houses (not shown separately in accompanying table).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling (a) transportation equipment such as aircraft and aeronautical equipment, supplies; railroad equipment, supplies; marine equipment, supplies; and other transportation equipment and supplies; (b) construction machinery, equipment such as road building machinery, excavating and dredging machinery, derricks, cranes, hoists, and winches; and related construction equipment as pneumatic hammers, concrete construction clamps and forms, scaffolding, chutes, and wheelbarrows--but not construction materials, and (c) farm-garden machinery, equipment (including tractors) used in the preparation and maintenance of the soil, the planting and harvesting of crops, and other operations and processes pertaining to agriculture; dairy machinery and equipment, such as milking machines and cream separators; poultry equipment, such as incubators, brooders, and feeders, and irrigation equipment.

Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors

Iron, steel, and products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments usually referred to as steel warehouses--primarily engaged in selling iron and steel products such as semifinished forms and shapes, plates, sheets, strips, bars, structural shapes, piling, nails, tubular products, wire products, forgings and castings. Steel warehouses of firms operating steelworks and rolling mills are also included here.

Nonferrous metals distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling nonferrous metals and metalwork such as aluminum, copper, tin, brass, lead, and zinc.

Iron-steel scrap, waste materials dealers

Iron-steel scrap dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, breaking up, sorting, and selling all forms of iron and steel scrap.

Waste materials dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, sorting, and selling such waste materials as nonferrous scrap metals, waste paper, rags, wiping cloths, textile wastes, scrap rubber, and other waste and salvage materials. Scrap iron and steel may be handled as secondary lines.

Other merchant wholesalers

Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cameras and photographic goods (cameras, parts, and accessories, projection apparatus, enlargers, developing and printing room apparatus and accessories, sensitized unexposed photographic supplies and equipment); sporting goods (toys, games, novelties, fireworks, bicycles, sporting goods, and athletic goods); and other recreation goods such as playground equipment, billiard and bowling equipment and supplies; and hobby goods.

Book, periodical, newspaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, and related items.

Coal wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling bituminous coal, anthracite coal, and coke. This includes firms with coal yards as well as those selling goods shipped directly from mine to customer.

Farm supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling mixed and other feeds; fertilizers, fertilizer materials, and agricultural chemicals; seeds (farm, garden, and flower); and miscellaneous farm supplies such as hay, straw, and alfalfa.

Jewelry wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling a general-or specialty-line of jewelry such as clocks and watches; precious stones and metals; watch materials, jewelers supplies; costume jewelry; and miscellaneous items such as silverware, plated ware, medals, trophies, semi-precious stones, and insignia.

Merchant wholesalers, n.e.c.--(Not shown separately in the accompanying table.) Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling petroleum products, cut flowers and potted plants; forest products except lumber; inedible oils and fats; textiles and materials other than dry goods; industrial yarns; crude rubber; ores; sponges; artificial leather; wood pulp; artificial flowers; and products not elsewhere classified; and establishments handling a line of merchandise too broad to be included in any of the classifications outlined above.

**MONTHLY
WHOLESALE TRADE
REPORT**

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

AUGUST 1956

FOR RELEASE
OCTOBER 10, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Sales

August 1956 sales of merchant wholesalers were up 11 percent above July and were also 8 percent higher than in August a year ago. Cumulative sales for the first eight months of 1956 were 9 percent higher than sales in the comparable period of 1955.

Durable goods trades, in total, showed a 9 percent increase over July sales and a 5 percent gain over a year ago. Nondurable goods reported somewhat larger increases, 12 percent over the previous month and 10 percent above last August.

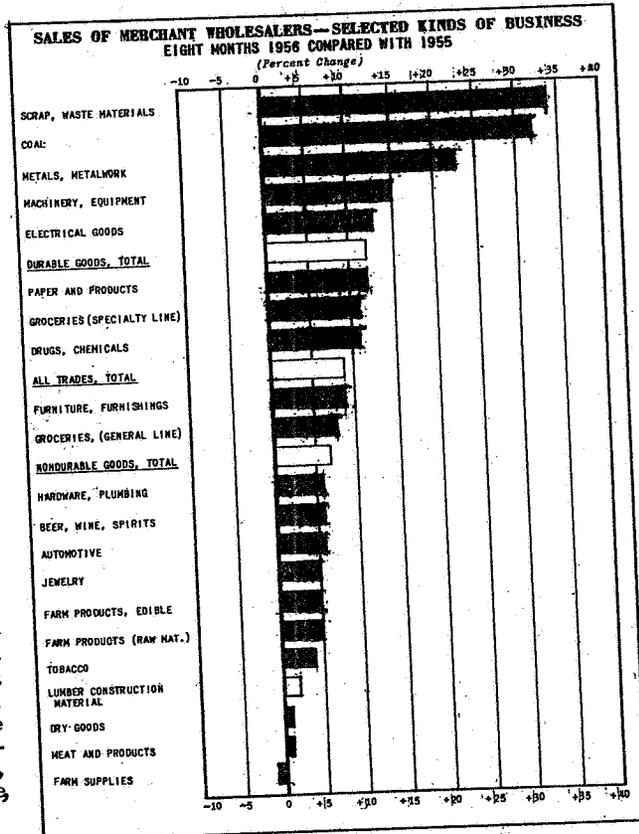
Almost all trades reported increased sales over July as well as a year ago. Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers, registered the principal increase (45%) over July sales. Large gains were also noted by iron and steel scrap dealers (41%), farm products (raw materials) merchants (34%), jewelry wholesalers (31%), dry goods wholesalers (29%), piece goods wholesalers (27%), furniture wholesalers (22%), coal wholesalers (21%), and home furnishings wholesalers (20%). Declines were reported in only three trades--iron, steel and products distributors (7%), air conditioning and commercial refrigeration equipment distributors (9%), and fresh fruit and vegetable distributors (14%). Most large gains over year-ago sales were experienced by wholesalers of nondurable goods such as coal (37%), farm products (raw materials) (28%), stationery, wallpaper (15%), amusement, sporting goods (13%), farm supplies (12%), meat and meat products (11%), and clothing, furnishings, footwear (11%). However, significant gains were also made by professional equipment, supplies distributors (18%), nonferrous metals distributors (12%), automotive equipment wholesalers (11%) and furniture, home furnishings wholesalers (11%).

For all geographic divisions August 1956 sales were higher than in July 1956 or in August 1955. The East South Central Division, reflecting largely the trend of farm products merchants (raw materials), indicated the principal increase over the previous month (22%) as well as a year ago (21%).

Inventories

Wholesalers inventories at the end of August were slightly (1%) above July 31 stock but were 12 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. The August 1956 stock-sales ratio of 118 percent was 11 points below the July ratio but 5 points above the ratio of these same firms for August 1955.

Most trades reported August 31 inventories slightly below July 31 levels. Farm products (raw materials) merchants, whose inventories rose 42 percent between June and July indicated another large increase (24%) between July and August. Coal wholesalers also showed an increase of 24 percent over July 31 stock. Farm products merchants reported the principal increase over year-ago inventories--45 percent. Other large increases were noted by electrical goods distributors (20%), nonferrous metals distributors (21%) and specialty-line grocery wholesalers (28%).

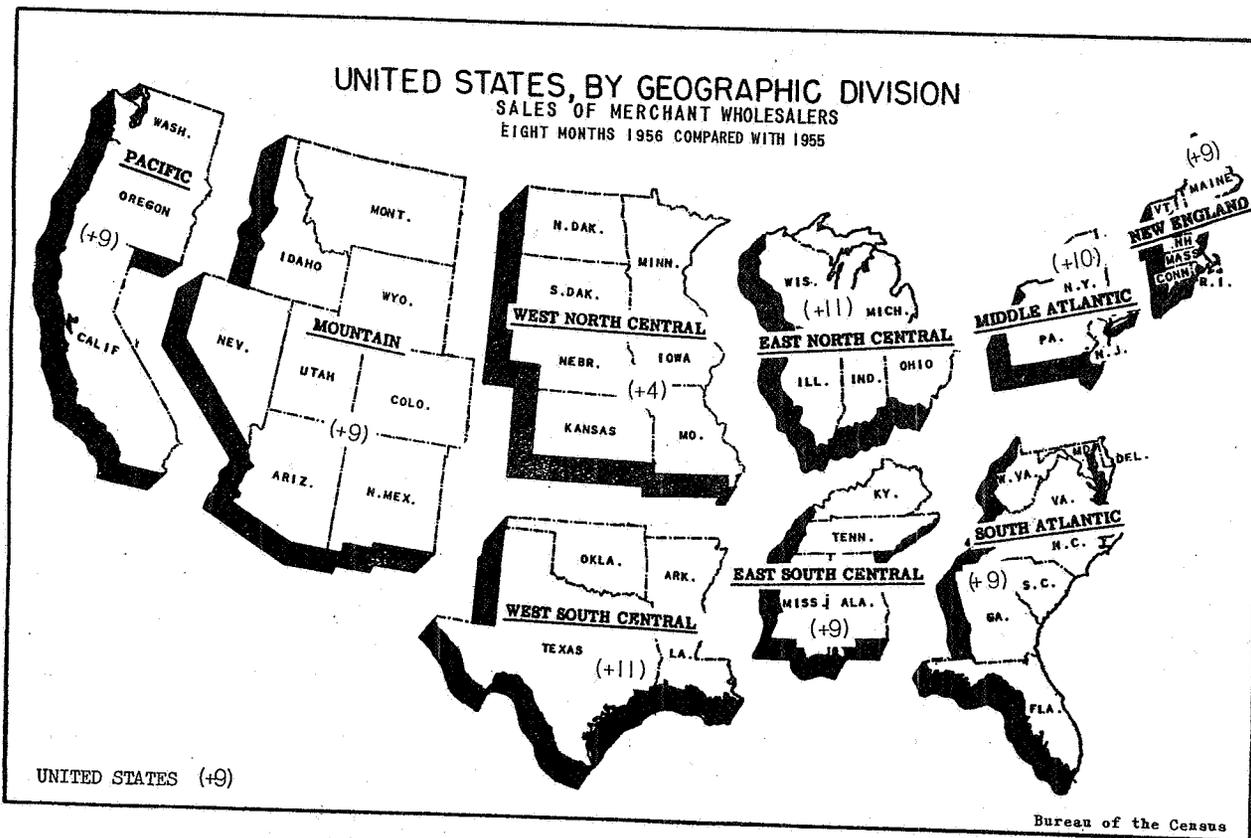


By geographic division August inventories showed relatively small changes from the previous month. However, substantial increases over year-ago inventories were reported in all geographic divisions except New England which showed no change. The East South Central Division with stocks up 24 percent, reflected the sharpest increase.

General

Data shown in this report are based on a new probability sample representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the Bureau revised the sample of merchant wholesalers to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. A description of the revised sample is included on page 2.

Each month, approximately one week prior to the publication of this report, an advance release is issued containing percentage changes in sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios for most trades covered by this report. This advance release is available upon request.



DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, TERMINOLOGY AND KINDS OF BUSINESS

Scope of the Survey.--Wholesale trade includes several types of establishments: merchant wholesalers; manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; assemblers of farm products; and agents, brokers and commercial merchants. This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade. However, all kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are described in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual developed by the Federal Bureau of the Budget, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and baling waste materials. Firms which operate retail and manufacturing establishments in addition to their wholesale establishments report only for their merchant wholesale establishments. A description of each kind of business classification shown in this report (which was included in the July 1956 issue), is available on request.

Sample design.--Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the sample was revised to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. Over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) are included in this sample which was drawn from lists of all merchant wholesalers (about 165,000 establishments) in the 1954 Census of Business. The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month.

In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms. This month, about 88 percent of this number of firm submitted their reports in time for the trend tabulations. The number of establishments reporting, previously shown as a measure of coverage, will no longer be shown since the trend comparisons are based on weighted values (see below). However, information on the number of establishments reporting for a trade and the number selected in the sample will be provided on request.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) the distribution of firms within the trade by sales-size, (c) the degree of reliability desired in the data, and

(d) whether geographic division trends were to be shown for the trade. This sample has been designed to develop monthly dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories by kind of business with a sampling variability for each trade of approximately 5 percent at the one sigma level. The sampling variability of the percentage changes based on this sample is expected to be somewhat lower. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Percentage changes.--For each firm reporting, data are available for each of the three months (current, previous, and year ago) for which comparisons are made. Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes of sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios. Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included. Sales trends shown in this report reflect the operation of firms selected in the sample which were in business in each of the three months compared.

Inventory, end-of-month represents stock, at cost value, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month. Inventory trends are based on reports from only those firms which included data for all three periods compared. The number of firms reporting inventories is generally smaller than the number reporting sales. Some firms cannot submit inventory data in time for tabulation but furnish sales figures only.

Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

AUGUST 1956

Kind of business	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change:		8 mo. 1956 from 8 mo. 1955	Percent change, August 1956 from--		August 1956	August 1955	July 1956
	August 1956 from--			August 1955	July 1956			
	August 1955	July 1956						
Merchant wholesalers, total.....	+8	+11	+9	+12	+1	118	113	129
Durable goods, total.....	+5	+9	+12	+10	-1	146	137	159
Automotive wholesalers.....	+7	+8	+6	+5	-1	158	159	173
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-6	+8	-1	+5	-3	85	78	94
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+11	+8	+9	+5	-1	177	181	192
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+5	+6	+13	+20	-1	148	130	158
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+9	+3	+19	+20	-2	131	121	138
Elect. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distrs....	0	+11	+5	+20	+1	169	140	186
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+11	+21	+9	+6	-3	160	171	201
Furniture wholesalers.....	+11	+22	+10	+7	-3	155	165	192
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+11	+20	+9	+6	-3	163	177	209
Hardware, plumbing--heating goods wholesalers.....	0	+8	+6	+4	-1	197	188	216
Hardware wholesalers.....	+1	+7	+7	+4	0	220	212	236
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	-2	+9	+6	+4	-1	175	166	197
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+1	+10	+2	+13	-3	87	83	95
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-1	+10	0	+15	-2	103	86	111
Construction materials distributors.....	+2	+9	+7	+8	-3	72	79	81
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+8	+8	+15	+13	0	157	148	169
Air conditioning, comm. refrigeration equip., distrs.....	+2	-9	+7	+7	-7	131	129	134
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+6	+5	+12	+3	-1	172	177	176
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+4	+10	+17	+10	+1	140	133	151
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+18	+12	+12	+9	+1	145	164	169
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+19	+6	+12	+9	-3	103	127	124
Service establishment supply houses.....	+8	+12	+10	+1	0	144	156	166
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+7	-4	+23	+6	-4	172	155	171
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+5	-7	+23	+5	-4	201	181	193
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+12	+5	+24	+21	+1	71	63	76
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+7	+31	+34	+12	+2	59	54	74
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+9	+41	+44	+12	+6	50	48	64
Waste materials dealers.....	+5	+19	+17	+12	-1	73	63	90
Jewelry wholesalers.....	-1	+31	+5	+6	0	190	192	247
Nondurable goods, total.....	+10	+12	+7	+14	+4	96	93	104
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+9	+7	+8	+14	0	76	74	81
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+9	+7	+8	+6	-1	94	97	102
Voluntary groups.....	+10	+3	+11	+2	-2	86	93	91
Retailer-cooperative.....	+17	+9	+11	+14	+1	81	85	87
Nonaffiliated.....	+5	+9	+5	+6	-2	105	105	117
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+8	+5	+11	+28	+2	84	74	86
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+8	+10	+4	0	0	63	65	68
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+11	+10	+1	+6	-3	20	19	22
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+6	-9	+5	+6	-4	23	22	21
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	+6	+4	+7	+5	-1	24	22	25
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+6	-14	+5	+7	-6	22	22	19
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+6	+7	+6	+2	-2	91	95	101
Beer, ale distributors.....	+5	+2	+5	+2	-6	48	48	52
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+6	+12	+7	+1	0	138	150	163
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+6	+9	+11	+9	+1	130	126	142
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+7	+11	+12	+8	+3	144	142	158
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+5	+7	+9	+16	-4	95	86	105
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+3	+5	+5	+2	0	160	165	166
Tobacco distributors.....	+9	+9	+4	+2	+2	54	57	58
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+6	+34	+1	+5	-1	175	170	237
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+11	+45	+3	+6	-1	159	171	252
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+7	+29	+5	+3	-3	169	162	226
Piece goods converters.....	-5	+27	-6	+7	+2	220	185	243
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+10	+13	+12	+8	-1	113	120	131
Paper wholesalers.....	+9	+14	+12	+8	-2	108	115	126
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+15	+10	+11	+11	+4	166	171	174
Farm products merchants (raw materials).....	+28	+34	+5	+45	+24	129	116	160
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	+8	+13	+10	+15	+5	99	93	103
Amusement, sporting goods distributors.....	+13	+16	+11	+12	-3	148	148	174
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.....	+8	+5	+11	+17	+3	125	113	130
Coal wholesalers.....	+37	+21	+32	+3	+24	58	85	56
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+12	+15	-2	+6	+8	122	142	130

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

AUGUST 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		8 mo. 1956 from 8 mo. 1955	Percent change, August 1956 from--		August 1956	August 1955	July 1955
	August 1956 from--	August 1955		August 1956	July 1956			
	August 1955	July 1956	1955	1955	1956	1955	1955	
Merchant wholesalers, total.....	+8	+11	+9	+12	+1	118	113	129
New England.....	+4	+10	+9	0	-1	97	108	108
Middle Atlantic.....	+8	+11	+10	+11	+1	114	108	122
East North Central.....	+6	+11	+11	+13	+1	111	104	123
West North Central.....	+3	+12	+4	+11	+4	130	123	140
South Atlantic.....	+5	+9	+9	+10	+3	126	119	134
East South Central.....	+21	+22	+9	+24	+5	116	119	141
West South Central.....	+17	+6	+11	+13	+2	132	134	144
Mountain.....	+14	+6	+6	+6	0	118	127	125
Pacific.....	+7	+8	+9	+17	-2	125	115	139
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+9	+7	+8	+6	-1	94	97	102
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	+11	+8	+11	-2	116	112	135
East North Central.....	+9	+8	+9	+11	-1	91	91	103
West North Central.....	+6	+5	+8	-2	-1	82	88	86
South Atlantic.....	+9	+6	+3	+3	-3	105	111	115
East South Central.....	+6	+8	0	+2	-2	105	106	115
West South Central.....	+14	+14	+9	+9	+3	94	97	104
Mountain.....	+17	+5	+17	+8	+3	109	115	111
Pacific.....	+14	+8	+15	+6	-2	78	82	81
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+8	+5	+11	+28	+2	84	74	86
New England.....	-4	+14	+11	-12	-1	95	141	106
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	+6	+13	+42	+4	65	52	65
East North Central.....	+3	+4	+8	+13	+5	102	91	101
West North Central.....	+7	+1	+7	-8	+1	71	69	71
South Atlantic.....	+18	+7	+7	+17	+2	81	87	80
South Central.....	+9	+9	+7	+28	-3	85	72	95
Pacific.....	+14	+3	+10	+41	-5	90	61	97
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+6	-14	+5	+7	-6	22	22	19
New England.....	+16	-26	+11	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	-3	-13	+2	+5	-13	9	8	8
East North Central.....	+14	-16	+6	+12	-1	19	20	16
West North Central.....	+2	-18	+1	-2	-7	27	28	26
South Atlantic.....	+9	-7	+5	+15	-17	24	23	30
South Central.....	+13	+1	+7	+14	+10	17	14	16
Pacific.....	-4	-16	+5	+5	+12	55	49	42
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+7	+11	+12	+8	+3	144	142	158
New England.....	+2	+5	+9	+11	+3	181	172	181
Middle Atlantic.....	-2	+15	+7	-1	+5	122	114	137
East North Central.....	+6	+12	+14	+4	+2	138	152	158
West North Central.....	+14	+9	+11	+15	+5	129	129	134
South Atlantic.....	+11	+11	+17	+10	0	158	161	177
East South Central.....	+5	+9	+13	+6	+5	177	174	187
West South Central.....	+15	+17	+15	+7	+2	172	187	201
Mountain.....	+19	+13	+16	+28	-1	183	171	210
Pacific.....	+17	+6	+15	+18	+2	133	123	138
Tobacco distributors.....	+9	+9	+4	+2	+2	54	57	58
New England.....	+8	+5	+3	-1	0	56	62	59
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	+12	+5	0	-1	55	62	61
East North Central.....	+6	+9	+2	+3	+3	45	45	51
West North Central.....	-6	0	0	+2	+1	67	66	69
South Atlantic.....	+15	+12	+10	+7	-3	48	51	55
South Central.....	+13	+10	+5	0	+4	50	56	53
Pacific.....	+8	+11	+6	+16	+14	80	71	79
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+6	+34	+1	+5	-1	175	170	237
New England.....	+9	+56	+8	+1	-2	151	154	220
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	+28	-1	+3	+1	176	166	218
East North Central.....	+5	+34	+6	-4	+2	233	264	305
West North Central.....	+4	+41	+2	+17	-12	173	160	291
South Atlantic.....	+5	+49	+7	+6	-1	170	169	283
South Central.....	+10	+53	+3	+8	-5	184	201	291
Pacific.....	+13	+35	+4	+15	+3	168	168	229
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+11	+21	+9	+6	-3	160	171	201
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	+23	+10	+6	0	165	167	200
East North Central.....	+5	+16	+8	+10	0	160	158	181
West North Central.....	+2	+9	0	+2	-8	207	213	243
South Atlantic.....	+17	+25	+7	-3	-2	169	206	230
South Central.....	+7	+26	+8	+11	-2	185	207	243
Pacific.....	+8	+20	+9	+4	-8	111	120	166

See footnote at end of table.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

AUGUST 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		8 mo. 1956 from 8 mo. 1955	Percent change, August 1956 from--		August 1956	August 1955	July 1956
	August 1956	July 1956		August 1956	July 1956			
	August 1955	July 1955	August 1955	July 1955				
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+11	+8	+9	+5	-1	177	181	192
New England.....	+7	-2	+7	+8	0	136	136	138
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	+10	+13	+3	-5	182	181	193
East North Central.....	+9	+11	+6	0	-2	161	165	178
West North Central.....	+7	+13	+5	-1	+4	217	212	213
South Atlantic.....	+2	+1	+5	+3	+1	189	205	202
East South Central.....	+11	+6	+15	+18	+1	250	241	258
West South Central.....	+31	+7	+17	+10	-1	214	255	231
Mountain.....	+5	+7	+7	+5	+2	241	236	254
Pacific.....	+13	+16	+7	+4	-2	175	187	205
Electrical equipment, supplies wholesalers.....	+9	+3	+19	+20	-2	131	121	138
New England.....	+18	-2	+28	+33	-1	110	96	110
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	+4	+25	+14	-4	109	111	117
East North Central.....	-2	0	+14	+23	+1	142	115	143
West North Central.....	-9	-4	+13	+13	-9	145	116	151
South Atlantic.....	+8	+5	+16	+17	-2	146	137	157
East South Central.....	+16	0	+17	+22	-10	120	113	133
West South Central.....	+40	+9	+21	+36	+3	134	137	141
Mountain.....	+30	+30	+13	+3	-1	140	159	171
Pacific.....	+13	+2	+18	+19	-4	130	124	137
Electrical appliances, electronic parts distributors.....	0	+11	+5	+20	+1	169	140	186
New England.....	0	+5	+9	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+4	+12	+35	-1	160	125	165
East North Central.....	-7	+13	+6	+19	+2	178	142	194
West North Central.....	+9	+19	-2	+30	+3	197	168	230
South Atlantic.....	-7	+17	+2	+11	-1	182	145	203
East South Central.....	-2	+7	-2	+9	+1	189	174	207
West South Central.....	-1	+9	0	+6	-3	195	172	219
Pacific.....	+4	+12	+5	+15	+3	152	138	172
Hardware wholesalers.....	+1	+7	+7	+4	0	220	212	236
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	+3	+10	+3	-2	226	215	239
East North Central.....	+5	+11	+8	+6	+1	219	205	239
West North Central.....	+1	+17	+5	+1	-2	227	228	274
South Atlantic.....	+6	+7	+7	+3	0	257	265	274
East South Central.....	-4	+6	+4	+6	0	244	220	257
West South Central.....	-2	+3	+7	+5	+1	250	235	264
Pacific.....	-1	+1	+5	+3	-1	210	211	215
Plumbing, heating goods wholesalers.....	-2	+9	+6	+4	-1	175	166	197
New England.....	0	+11	+9	-2	+1	160	163	182
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	+9	+10	+1	0	175	175	199
East North Central.....	-2	+10	+12	+6	-2	177	163	198
West North Central.....	-16	+1	-2	+4	-3	202	156	211
South Atlantic.....	-3	+6	+4	+4	-3	203	188	221
South Central.....	-9	+3	-2	+1	-2	185	158	189
Pacific.....	+6	+12	+2	+12	+1	108	131	148
Lumber, construction materials dealers.....	+1	+10	+2	+13	-3	87	83	95
New England.....	+18	+11	+1	+13	+14	50	43	43
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	+9	+4	-2	-7	60	63	71
East North Central.....	+3	+7	+5	+11	-5	95	87	98
West North Central.....	-14	+12	-3	+11	0	126	123	146
South Atlantic.....	-6	+4	+4	+11	-8	64	54	73
South Central.....	0	+15	-4	+17	0	115	139	133
Pacific.....	+2	+13	+3	+21	-1	97	84	107
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+4	+10	+17	+10	+1	140	133	151
New England.....	-2	+3	+12	+8	-2	182	127	178
Middle Atlantic.....	+12	+12	+17	+14	+1	180	165	191
East North Central.....	+11	+8	+18	+8	+1	106	110	116
West North Central.....	-4	+14	+10	-1	-4	97	92	127
South Atlantic.....	+3	+21	+20	+13	+3	108	96	119
South Central.....	+3	+9	+21	+8	+2	134	126	143
Mountain.....	+11	+19	+9	+8	-1	148	170	207
Pacific.....	-9	+6	+9	+7	+1	181	173	184

x Insufficient data to show separately.

COMM. 88.

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
St Clair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

SEPTEMBER 1956

FOR RELEASE
NOVEMBER 9, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Sales

September 1956 sales of merchant wholesalers, contrary to their usual seasonal pattern, dropped 7 percent below August 1956 sales but were only slightly (1%) below September sales a year ago. Third quarter sales were 5 percent higher in 1956 than in 1955, well below the 10 percent gains over a year ago shown during the first and second quarters of 1956. For the first 9 months of 1956, sales were 8 percent higher than in the comparable period of 1955.

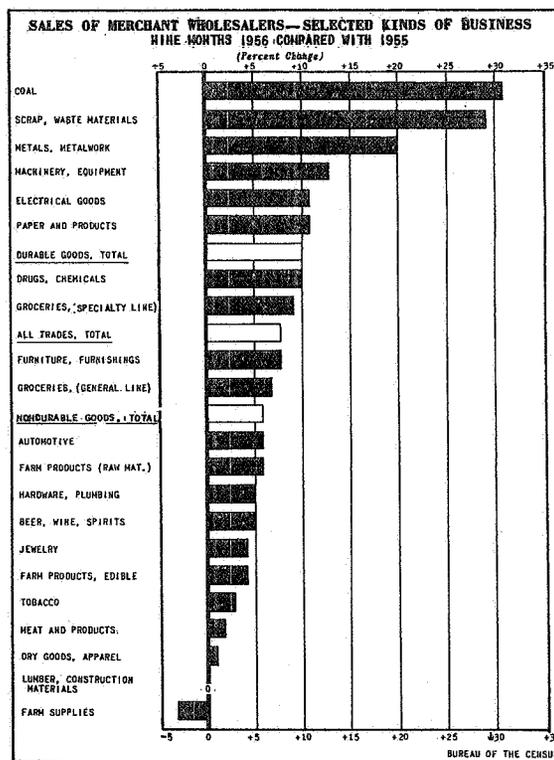
Durable goods trades, in total, and nondurable goods trades reflected the same decline (7%) from August 1956 sales. Compared with a year ago, nondurable goods trades showed no change, while durable goods trades were down 2 percent. However, for the 9 month period, durable goods trades were up 10 percent above sales a year ago compared to a 6 percent gain for nondurable goods trades.

Almost all trades reported September sales lower than in the previous month. Beer wholesalers, with sales off 26 percent, indicated the sharpest decline. Other large declines were experienced by lumber, millwork wholesalers (20%), fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers (19%), air conditioning, commercial refrigeration distributors (16%), tobacco distributors (14%) and clothing, furnishings wholesalers (14%). Jewelry wholesalers indicated an increase of 8 percent over August sales, somewhat smaller than the usual gain for this trade. Iron and steel scrap dealers, who had reported a 41 percent increase in sales between July and August, noted a slight (1%) increase in September.

Compared with sales a year ago, coal wholesalers, up 24 percent, and iron and steel scrap dealers, up 16 percent, indicated the most substantial gains. Drug wholesalers, automotive equipment wholesalers, book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers, amusement, sporting goods wholesalers and stationery, wallpaper wholesalers, reported moderate gains of 5 to 10 percent. Sharp declines from September 1955 sales were reported by lumber and millwork wholesalers (18%), waste materials dealers (18%), piece goods converters (13%), and motor-vehicle distributors (12%). Third quarter 1956 sales in each of these trades were from 6 to 9 percent below their year ago levels. With the exception of waste materials dealers, these trades also reported lower sales for the 9 month period. Waste materials dealers, reflecting sharp gains during the first and second quarters, reported a 9 month sales increase of 12 percent.

Inventories

Wholesalers inventories at the end of September rose 2 percent above their August 31 level but were up 12 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. The September 1956 stock-sales ratio of 129 points higher than the stock-sales ratio for September 1955.

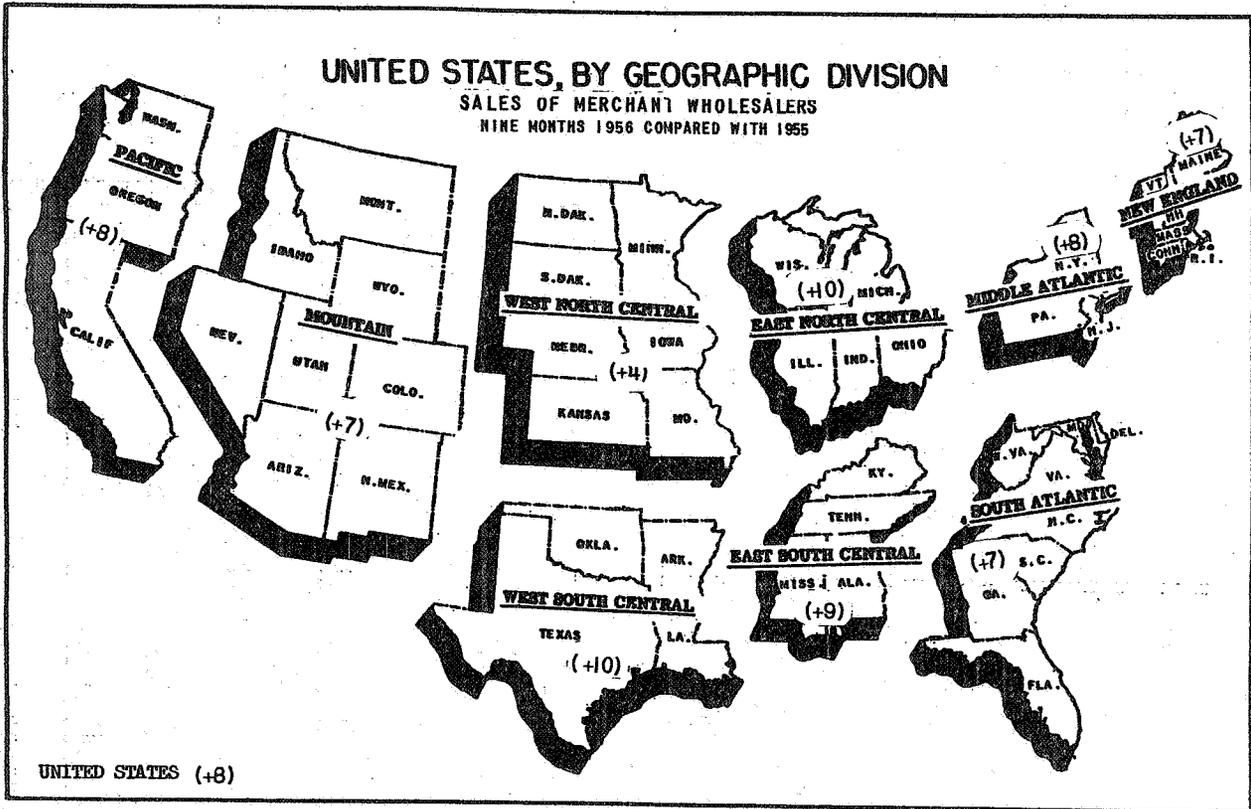


Coal wholesalers, with September 30 inventories up 16 percent over the previous month and 36 percent above last September, reported the principal increases over both periods. Farm products (raw materials) merchants, fresh fruit and vegetable wholesalers, scrap and waste materials dealers and electrical goods distributors also reported significant increases over both periods.

General

Data shown in this report are based on a new probability sample representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the Bureau revised the sample of merchant wholesalers to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. A description of the revised sample is included on page 2.

Each month, approximately one week prior to the publication of this report, an advance release is issued containing percentage changes in sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios for most trades covered by this report. This advance release is available upon request.



DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, TERMINOLOGY AND KINDS OF BUSINESS

Scope of the Survey.—Wholesale trade includes several types of establishments: merchant wholesalers; manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; assemblers of farm products; and agents, brokers and commercial merchants. This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade. However, all kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are described in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual developed by the Federal Bureau of the Budget, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and hauling waste materials. Firms which operate retail and manufacturing establishments in addition to their wholesale establishments report only for their merchant wholesale establishments. A description of each kind of business classification shown in this report (which was included in the July 1956 issue), is available on request.

Sample design.—Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the sample was revised to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census—the 1954 Census of Business. Over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) are included in this sample which was drawn from lists of all merchant wholesalers (about 165,000 establishments) in the 1954 Census of Business. The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month.

In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms. This month, about 90 percent of this number of firm submitted their reports in time for the trend tabulations. The number of establishments reporting, previously shown as a measure of coverage, will no longer be shown since the trend comparisons are based on weighted values (see below). However, information on the number of establishments reporting for a trade and the number selected in the sample will be provided on request.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) the distribution of firms within the trade by sales-size, (c) the degree of reliability desired in the data, and

(d) whether geographic division trends were to be shown for the trade. This sample has been designed to develop monthly dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories by kind of business with a sampling variability for each trade of approximately 5 percent at the one sigma level. The sampling variability of the percentage changes based on this sample is expected to be somewhat lower. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Percentage changes.—For each firm reporting, data are available for each of the three months (current, previous, and year ago) for which comparisons are made. Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes of sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios. Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included. Sales trends shown in this report reflect the operation of firms selected in the sample which were in business in each of the three months compared.

Inventory, end-of-month represents stock, at cost value, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month. Inventory trends are based on reports from only those firms which included data for all three periods compared. The number of firms reporting inventories is generally smaller than the number reporting sales. Some firms cannot submit inventory data in time for tabulation but furnish sales figures only.

Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

Table 1.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

SEPTEMBER 1956

Kind of business	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		8 mo. 1956 from 9 mo. 1955	Percent change		September 1956	September 1955	August 1956
	September 1956 from--			Sept. 1956 from--				
	September 1955	August 1956	September 1955	August 1956	1956	1955	1956	
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	-1	-7	+8	+12	+2	129	114	117
Durable goods, total.....	-2	-7	+10	+13	+2	157	136	144
Automotive wholesalers.....	+2	-7	+6	+6	0	184	180	173
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-12	-10	-2	+13	-1	135	108	124
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+5	-6	+8	+5	0	194	196	184
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	-1	-4	+11	+27	+4	146	112	133
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	-1	-5	+16	+22	+4	136	110	124
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	-1	-3	+5	+32	+5	157	115	144
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	-1	-2	+8	+4	0	173	170	174
Furniture wholesalers.....	-2	-4	+8	+8	-2	158	155	153
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	0	-1	+7	+3	+1	180	181	174
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	-4	-4	+5	+6	-1	205	184	194
Hardware wholesalers.....	-6	-3	+5	+5	-2	227	201	224
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	-3	-4	+5	+6	0	185	168	173
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	-13	-14	0	+10	-1	105	86	93
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-18	-20	-2	+6	0	115	87	97
Construction materials distributors.....	-6	-7	+5	+15	-1	96	84	88
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+2	-11	+13	+14	+1	175	158	155
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors.....	0	-16	+6	+7	-1	139	129	125
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+1	-2	+10	+11	0	180	160	170
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	0	-12	+15	+13	+4	165	147	138
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+2	-5	+10	+9	-1	179	173	171
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+3	0	+11	+7	+1	206	203	191
Service establishment supply houses.....	+2	-1	+9	+9	-1	130	125	128
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	-3	-6	+20	+12	+4	167	140	148
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	-2	-6	+20	+11	+5	190	165	170
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	-5	-6	+20	+21	-2	96	63	79
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+1	-1	+29	+15	+7	65	51	59
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+16	+1	+41	+10	+4	48	47	48
Waste materials dealers.....	-18	-5	+12	+19	+10	90	56	75
Jewelry wholesalers.....	-3	+8	+4	+3	+8	226	199	229
Nondurable goods, total.....	0	-7	+6	+11	+2	105	95	94
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	-2	-7	+7	+8	+1	76	70	70
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+1	-3	+7	+6	+4	102	99	95
Voluntary groups.....	+5	-3	+10	+5	+3	98	99	92
Retailer-cooperative.....	+3	-4	+10	+13	+3	93	86	86
Nonaffiliated.....	-2	-7	+5	+4	+5	112	105	102
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-6	-12	+9	+15	-4	69	57	63
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+6	-4	+1	+5	-2	71	69	68
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+3	-7	+2	+1	-2	22	21	19
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	-6	-15	+4	+8	+9	30	25	23
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	-6	-7	+5	+9	+6	28	24	24
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-6	-19	+4	+8	+11	31	26	22
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	-5	-15	+5	0	+3	116	108	97
Beer, ale distributors.....	-5	-26	+4	+15	0	67	56	50
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	-5	-4	+5	-4	+4	157	150	147
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+2	-3	+10	+8	+1	*128	*120	*121
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+5	-2	+12	+8	+2	*143	*138	*133
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	-4	-3	+7	+9	-1	88	76	85
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	-1	-3	+4	+5	+1	142	135	138
Tobacco distributors.....	-5	-14	+3	+4	-1	67	64	53
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-4	-8	+1	+8	-1	*182	*160	*175
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+1	-14	+3	+14	-1	208	178	184
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	-4	-6	+4	+7	-3	139	124	140
Piece goods converters.....	-13	-2	-7	+1	+1	242	216	249
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+2	-6	+11	+12	+2	102	93	94
Paper wholesalers.....	+1	-6	+11	+12	+2	98	89	91
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+10	-5	+11	+12	+1	129	126	121
Farm products (raw materials) merchants.....	+7	-4	+6	+31	+9	173	137	145
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	+9	-2	+10	+8	0	104	104	104
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+10	-3	+11	+12	-2	154	158	156
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.....	+7	-2	+10	+4	-4	150	158	160
Coal wholesalers.....	+24	-1	+31	+36	+14	131	128	140
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	*-5	-5	-3	+6	+6	89	75	75

* Revised since advance release issued November 1, 1956.

Table 2.—CUMULATIVE SALES TRENDS OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS
First Three Quarters 1956 Compared With 1955

Kind of business	Percentage change in cumulative sales 1956 compared with 1955				
	1st quarter	2nd quarter	6 months	3rd quarter	9 months
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL	+10	+10	+10	+5	+8
Durable goods, total	+17	+13	+14	+3	+10
Automotive wholesalers.....	+7	+4	+5	+6	+6
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	+8	-7	0	-8	-2
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+7	+9	+8	+9	+8
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+13	+18	+15	+3	+11
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+19	+24	+22	+6	+16
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	+6	+9	+7	0	+5
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+11	+8	+9	+5	+8
Furniture wholesalers.....	+12	+8	+10	+5	+8
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+10	+8	+9	+5	+7
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	+6	+8	+7	+1	+5
Hardware wholesalers.....	+9	+6	+7	+1	+5
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+4	+11	+7	+1	+5
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+5	+1	+3	-4	0
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+3	-1	0	-7	-2
Construction materials distributors.....	+11	+6	+8	+1	+5
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+19	+15	+17	+6	+12
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors.....	+7	+9	+8	+3	+6
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+12	+13	+13	+5	+10
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+23	+20	+21	+3	+15
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+13	+8	+10	+10	+10
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+11	+8	+9	+16	+11
Service establishment supply houses.....	+13	+6	+9	+8	+9
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+32	+21	+26	+8	+20
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+33	+21	+27	+8	+20
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+31	+20	+25	+10	+20
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+56	+35	+45	+3	+29
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+69	+48	+57	+10	+41
Waste materials dealers.....	+36	+13	+24	-6	+12
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+4	+8	+6	+1	+4
Nondurable goods, total	+6	+7	+7	+5	+6
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+7	+7	+7	+6	+7
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+7	+8	+8	+6	+7
Voluntary groups.....	+10	+11	+11	+8	+10
Retailer-cooperative.....	+8	+13	+10	+10	+10
Nonaffiliated.....	+6	+5	+5	+4	+5
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+12	+9	+11	+6	+9
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+5	0	+2	0	+1
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	-2	-1	-2	+8	+2
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+6	+4	+5	+5	+4
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	+10	+7	+7	0	+5
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-1	+5	+2	+7	+4
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+7	+5	+6	+4	+5
Beer, ale distributors.....	+5	+3	+4	+4	+4
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+8	+6	+7	+3	+5
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+11	+11	+11	+7	+10
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+12	+15	+13	+8	+12
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+9	+8	+8	+5	+7
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+8	+1	+4	+4	+4
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	+2	+3	+3	+3
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+2	-1	0	+1	+1
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+2	-2	0	+10	+3
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+5	+7	+6	0	+4
Piece goods converters.....	-1	-11	-6	-9	-7
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+14	+11	+12	+8	+11
Paper wholesalers.....	+14	+11	+13	+8	+11
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+11	+11	+11	+7	+9
Farm products (raw materials) merchants.....	-7	+13	+2	+11	+6
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	+10	+15	+11	+8	+10
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+9	+10	+10	+12	+11
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.....	+9	+12	+10	+10	+10
Coal wholesalers.....	+34	+31	+32	+24	+31
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	-8	-1	-5	+2	-3

Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

SEPTEMBER 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		9 mo. 1956 from 9 mo. 1955	Percent change, September 1956 from--		Sept. 1956	Sept. 1955	Aug. 1956
	September 1956 from--			Sept. 1955	Aug. 1956			
	Sept. 1955	Aug. 1956						
Merchant wholesalers, total.....	-1	-7	+8	+12	+2	129	114	117
New England.....	-6	-9	+7	+11	+2	148	123	137
Middle Atlantic.....	-2	-7	+8	+8	0	115	105	105
East North Central.....	0	-7	+10	+16	+2	113	97	104
West North Central.....	-1	-10	+4	+10	+2	136	118	116
South Atlantic.....	-4	-8	+7	+13	+5	151	129	136
East South Central.....	+6	-1	+9	+19	+7	145	129	130
West South Central.....	+4	-11	+10	+7	-2	152	149	139
Mountain.....	-3	-6	+7	+9	-1	153	135	145
Pacific.....	-1	-9	+8	+15	+5	134	120	118
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+5	-6	+8	+5	0	194	196	184
New England.....	-1	0	+6	+2	+4	245	249	225
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-3	+12	+3	-3	191	195	193
East North Central.....	+16	-2	+7	+7	0	105	115	110
West North Central.....	+1	-4	+5	+6	+4	244	232	222
South Atlantic.....	+1	-9	+4	+5	+1	185	192	176
East South Central.....	+7	-9	+13	+7	-1	229	258	209
West South Central.....	+1	-16	+16	+14	+2	268	251	218
Mountain.....	+6	-10	+7	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Pacific.....	+4	-10	+7	+12	0	250	214	215
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	-1	-4	+11	+27	+4	146	112	133
New England.....	+3	+8	+26	+30	+2	140	107	150
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	0	+22	+11	+1	122	113	125
East North Central.....	-5	-9	+11	+19	+1	103	82	93
West North Central.....	+3	-7	+12	+28	+9	185	151	158
South Atlantic.....	0	-2	+15	+20	+5	153	127	143
East South Central.....	+5	-12	+16	+49	+4	207	140	170
West South Central.....	-1	-11	+19	+24	+6	200	157	168
Mountain.....	-6	-9	+9	+11	0	124	105	113
Pacific.....	+1	-4	+16	+32	+7	145	111	128
Elect. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors...	-1	-3	+5	+32	+5	157	115	145
New England.....	-1	+2	+8	+54	+2	124	83	118
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	+2	+11	+43	+5	157	125	147
East North Central.....	-6	-7	+4	+43	+7	174	112	158
West North Central.....	-15	-5	-4	+19	+5	169	114	148
South Atlantic.....	-5	-14	+1	+23	+2	204	154	172
East South Central.....	-6	-4	-3	+6	+5	184	129	151
West South Central.....	-3	-13	0	+25	+6	204	140	167
Pacific.....	+7	+6	+5	+40	+8	200	149	195
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	-1	-2	+8	+4	0	173	170	174
Middle Atlantic.....	-3	0	+8	+4	-1	217	195	229
East North Central.....	+2	-3	+7	+10	+3	144	133	133
West North Central.....	0	+6	0	+10	-1	169	153	183
South Atlantic.....	+2	-6	+7	-3	0	194	206	193
South Central.....	-7	-9	+6	+10	+1	144	166	130
Pacific.....	+8	-2	+9	-2	+4	160	221	151
Hardware wholesalers.....	-6	-3	+5	+5	-2	227	201	225
Middle Atlantic.....	-11	0	+8	+7	-3	215	189	222
East North Central.....	-5	-5	+7	+12	-1	202	169	196
West North Central.....	-5	-5	+4	-5	-5	235	230	238
South Atlantic.....	-8	0	+5	+18	-2	228	173	252
East South Central.....	-6	-5	+3	+1	-1	251	229	241
West South Central.....	-6	-6	+6	+8	+2	277	242	255
Pacific.....	-2	-3	+5	+3	0	240	239	236
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	-3	-4	+5	+6	0	185	168	173
New England.....	-5	+1	+6	-1	0	237	202	230
Middle Atlantic.....	-7	+1	+8	0	0	154	150	157
East North Central.....	+2	-4	+11	+9	-2	148	135	141
West North Central.....	-1	-2	-2	+17	+1	203	171	192
South Atlantic.....	-6	-8	+3	-4	-1	209	205	189
South Central.....	-2	-7	-2	+3	+2	230	216	199
Pacific.....	-8	-12	+1	+8	+3	206	169	169
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	-13	-14	0	+10	-1	105	86	93
New England.....	-6	-12	0	+8	-6	98	88	91
Middle Atlantic.....	-16	-15	+1	+10	+2	127	96	108
East North Central.....	-8	-6	+3	+20	-3	99	79	91
West North Central.....	-26	-15	-5	-10	-5	105	85	90
South Atlantic.....	-16	-17	+2	+19	+2	178	116	152
South Central.....	+1	-8	-4	+11	+1	114	114	100
Pacific.....	-18	-19	0	+3	+5	59	52	49

x Insufficient data to show separately.

Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS—Continued

SEPTEMBER 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		9 mo. 1956 from 9 mo. 1955	Percent change, September 1956 from—		Sept. 1956	Sept. 1955	Aug. 1956
	September 1956 from—			Sept. 1955	Aug. 1956			
	Sept. 1955	Aug. 1956						
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	0	-12	+15	+13	+4	165	147	138
New England.....	-11	-10	+8	+42	+2	170	96	157
Middle Atlantic.....	-14	-25	+14	+3	0	147	121	111
East North Central.....	+8	-14	+17	+16	+8	133	124	105
West North Central.....	0	-11	+9	+10	+11	202	127	153
South Atlantic.....	-8	-14	+15	+6	+4	255	194	160
South Central.....	+11	-9	+20	+8	+2	165	170	144
Mountain.....	-12	-6	+8	+22	+3	207	200	169
Pacific.....	+6	+10	+8	+9	+5	157	159	161
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+1	-5	+7	+6	+4	102	99	95
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-6	+7	+14	+4	100	93	98
East North Central.....	+7	+1	+8	+5	+7	99	97	93
West North Central.....	+1	-6	+8	+7	+4	91	90	86
South Atlantic.....	-4	-10	+2	+3	0	106	97	95
East South Central.....	+1	-7	0	+8	+6	114	106	95
West South Central.....	-7	-5	+8	0	-3	120	120	118
Mountain.....	-4	0	+15	+6	+8	103	101	96
Pacific.....	+4	-6	+14	+8	+3	84	79	79
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-6	-12	+9	+15	-4	69	57	63
Middle Atlantic.....	-9	-15	+10	+14	-8	55	42	50
East North Central.....	0	-15	+7	+4	-2	74	73	66
West North Central.....	-10	-16	+4	+32	-8	122	92	108
South Atlantic.....	+12	-1	+8	+11	-3	50	50	51
South Central.....	+4	-13	+6	+54	-5	55	41	57
Pacific.....	-4	-7	+9	+16	+5	78	63	66
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-6	-19	+4	+8	+11	31	26	22
New England.....	-11	-20	+7	+22	+30	85	58	57
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	-26	+2	-4	+9	12	14	8
East North Central.....	-9	-21	+5	+12	+16	20	15	16
West North Central.....	-8	-5	0	+3	+8	44	36	38
South Atlantic.....	-16	-17	+3	-2	+7	17	16	13
South Central.....	-7	-10	+6	-1	0	20	15	18
Pacific.....	-5	-15	+4	0	+8	42	39	34
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+5	-2	+12	+8	+2	143	138	133
New England.....	0	+6	+8	-2	0	187	171	213
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	0	+7	+6	+2	106	107	93
East North Central.....	+2	+1	+13	+8	-2	139	131	145
West North Central.....	0	-7	+10	+4	+3	161	164	138
South Atlantic.....	+6	-4	+15	+8	+3	160	157	148
East South Central.....	+4	+5	+11	+12	+5	123	114	122
West South Central.....	+3	-11	+14	+11	+1	185	173	161
Mountain.....	+12	-5	+15	+14	+3	175	183	158
Pacific.....	+3	-9	+14	+13	+3	153	142	135
Tobacco distributors.....	-5	-14	+3	+4	-1	67	64	53
New England.....	-5	-12	+2	-3	-3	56	55	55
Middle Atlantic.....	-10	-19	+3	-4	-4	77	76	43
East North Central.....	+4	-11	+2	+8	-7	63	62	58
West North Central.....	-6	-8	-2	+10	+7	75	69	63
South Atlantic.....	-10	-18	+7	+12	+2	60	52	54
South Central.....	-4	-10	+4	0	-1	59	56	55
Pacific.....	-2	-15	+6	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-4	-8	+1	+8	-1	182	160	175
New England.....	-21	-12	+5	-2	+3	133	88	108
Middle Atlantic.....	-4	-7	-1	+4	-1	190	176	192
East North Central.....	-3	-11	+5	+9	-1	176	167	154
West North Central.....	+2	-14	+2	+23	-7	226	179	196
South Atlantic.....	-5	-13	+5	+14	+2	261	219	227
South Central.....	-4	-1	+1	+11	-5	131	110	130
Pacific.....	+2	-12	+4	+13	+3	149	121	131

x Insufficient data to show separately.

**MONTHLY
WHOLESALE TRADE
REPORT**

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

OCTOBER 1956

FOR RELEASE
DECEMBER 10, 1956

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers, after a September decline, rose 13 percent during October 1956 and were 12 percent higher than October sales a year ago. Cumulative sales for the first ten months of 1956 were 9 percent higher than sales for the comparable period of 1955.

Durable goods trades, in total, showed a 12 percent increase over September sales and a 12 percent gain over a year ago. Nondurable goods trades reported a somewhat larger increase, 14 percent, over the previous month but noted the same gain (12%) over October 1955 sales as the durable goods trades.

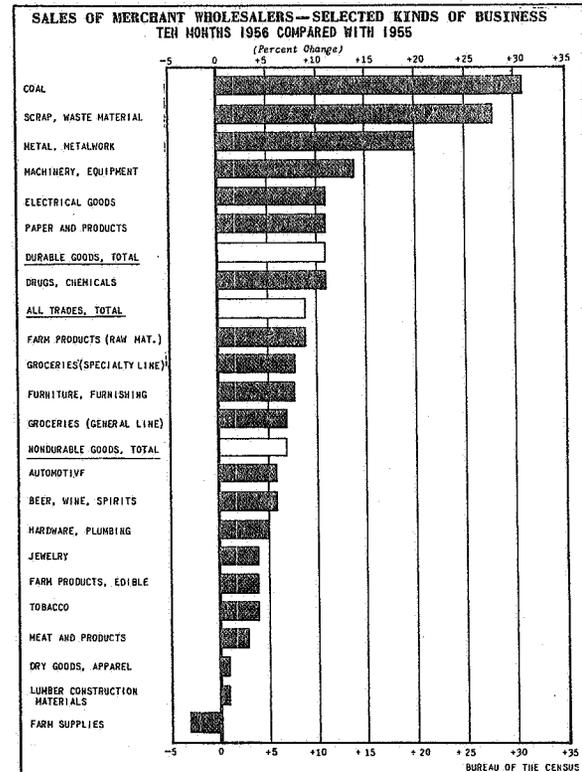
Almost all trades reported increased sales over September as well as a year ago. Farm products (raw materials) merchants registered the principal increase (38%) over September sales. Large gains were also noted by wine, distilled spirits wholesalers (29%), industrial chemicals wholesalers (24%), iron, steel scrap dealers (24%), iron, steel products distributors (23%), piece goods converters (23%), jewelry wholesalers (22%), and stationery, wallpaper wholesalers (22%). Only one trade--motor-vehicle distributors--reported sales at the same level as a month earlier. Most large gains over year-ago sales were experienced by wholesalers of nondurable goods such as farm products (raw materials) (27%), coal (25%), industrial chemicals (22%) and wine, distilled spirits (20%). However, the largest gain was made by iron, steel scrap dealers (43%) while other dealers of durable goods such as iron, steel products (23%), and industrial machinery (19%) also made significant gains. Declines from year-ago sales were reported by four trades--piece goods converters (1%), motor-vehicle distributors (2%), poultry products distributors (6%), and waste materials dealers (14%), while one trade, farm supplies wholesalers--showed no change.

All geographic divisions reflected higher sales in October than in September 1956 or October 1955. The West South Central Division indicated the principal increase over the previous month (20%) as well as a year ago (22%).

Inventories

Wholesalers inventories at the end of October rose 3 percent above their September level but were 11 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. Heavier inventories were more than offset by increased sales in October. As a result, the October 1956 stock-sales ratio of 114 percent was 11 points below the September ratio and 3 points lower than the stock-sales ratio for October 1955.

While most trades reported only slight changes in inventories between September 30 and October 31, 1956, inventories in the nondurable goods trades rose more sharply than in the durable goods trades. Farm products (raw materials) merchants (20%) and fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers (27%), indicated the sharpest increases over previous month stocks. Compared with a year ago, large increases were reported by coal



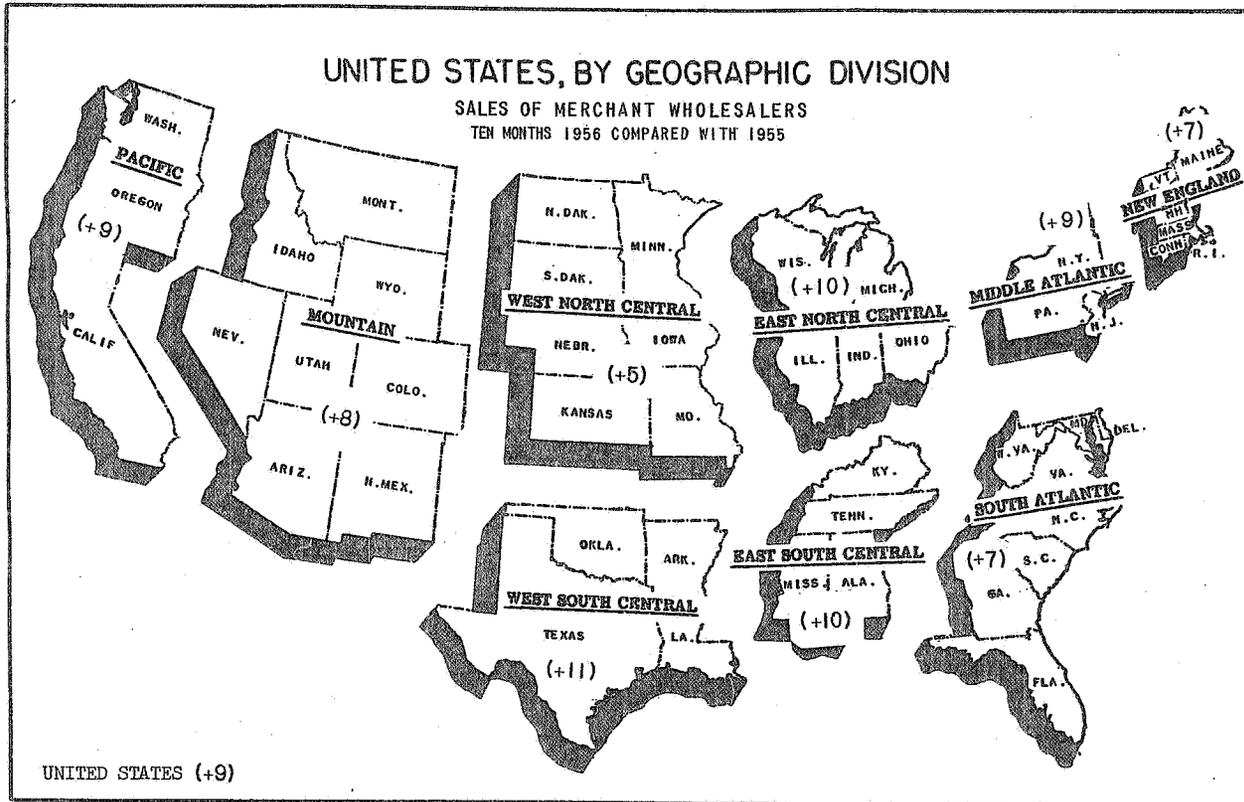
wholesalers (29%), farm products (raw materials) merchants (28%), electrical appliances distributors (23%) and industrial chemicals wholesalers (22%).

By geographic division, October 1956 inventories showed relatively small changes from the previous month, the largest being an increase of 7 percent shared by the South Atlantic and West South Central Divisions. Substantial increases over year-ago inventories were reported in most geographic divisions, the largest (18%) occurring in the East South Central and as well as in the West South Central Division.

General

Data shown in this report are based on a new probability sample representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the Bureau revised the sample of merchant wholesalers to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. A description of the revised sample is included on page 2.

Each month, approximately one week prior to the publication of this report, an advance release is issued containing percentage changes in sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios for most trades covered by this report. This advance release is available upon request.



DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, TERMINOLOGY AND KINDS OF BUSINESS

Scope of the Survey.--Wholesale trade includes several types of establishments: merchant wholesalers; manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; assemblers of farm products; and agents, brokers and commercial merchants. This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade. However, all kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are described in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual developed by the Federal Bureau of the Budget, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and baling waste materials. Firms which operate retail and manufacturing establishments in addition to their wholesale establishments report only for their merchant wholesale establishments. A description of each kind of business classification shown in this report (which was included in the July 1956 issue), is available on request.

Sample design.--Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the sample was revised to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. Over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) are included in this sample which was drawn from lists of all merchant wholesalers (about 165,000 establishments) in the 1954 Census of Business. The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month.

In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms. This month, about 90 percent of this number of firm submitted their reports in time for the trend tabulations. The number of establishments reporting, previously shown as a measure of coverage, will no longer be shown since the trend comparisons are based on weighted values (see below). However, information on the number of establishments reporting for a trade and the number selected in the sample will be provided on request.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) the distribution of firms within the trade by sales-size, (c) the degree of reliability desired in the data, and

(d) whether geographic division trends were to be shown for the trade. This sample has been designed to develop monthly dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories by kind of business with a sampling variability for each trade of approximately 5 percent at the one sigma level. The sampling variability of the percentage changes based on this sample is expected to be somewhat lower. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Percentage changes.--For each firm reporting, data are available for each of the three months (current, previous, and year ago) for which comparisons are made. Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes of sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios. Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included. Sales trends shown in this report reflect the operation of firms selected in the sample which were in business in each of the three months compared.

Inventory, end-of-month represents stock, at cost value, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month. Inventory trends are based on reports from only those firms which included data for all three periods compared. The number of firms reporting inventories is generally smaller than the number reporting sales. Some firms cannot submit inventory data in time for tabulation but furnish sales figures only.

Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

OCTOBER 1956

Kind of business	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		10 mo. 1956 from 10 mo. 1955	Percent change		October 1956	October 1955	September 1956
	October 1956 from--			October 1956 from--				
	October 1955	September 1956	October 1955	September 1956				
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL	+12	+13	+9	+11	+3	114	117	125
Durable goods, total.....	+12	+12	+11	+12	+1	137	141	153
Automotive wholesalers.....	+7	+9	+6	+6	+1	168	167	182
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-2	0	-2	+8	0	135	132	133
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+8	+10	+8	+6	+1	174	174	192
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+10	+5	+11	+19	+2	163	153	167
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+12	+6	+16	+15	0	135	131	143
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	+9	+4	+5	+23	+4	193	178	192
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+10	+15	+8	+4	-2	146	150	172
Furniture wholesalers.....	+12	+10	+8	+1	0	151	156	165
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+9	+17	+8	+5	-2	144	148	174
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	+3	+7	+5	+3	-1	172	173	191
Hardware wholesalers.....	+5	+8	+5	+3	-1	200	203	222
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+2	+7	+4	+3	-1	150	151	166
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+6	+11	+1	+4	-1	98	105	111
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+3	+8	-2	+1	-1	128	136	143
Construction materials distributors.....	+12	+14	+6	+10	-2	71	74	81
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+17	+12	+14	+16	+1	143	148	158
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors.....	+7	+4	+6	+8	-2	138	134	145
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+11	+11	+10	+15	0	102	96	114
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+19	+17	+15	+11	+3	131	142	150
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+15	+8	+11	+9	+3	134	145	138
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+11	+13	+11	+10	+3	138	145	148
Service establishment supply houses.....	+15	+12	+10	+8	+3	135	148	146
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+19	+21	+20	+17	+6	146	150	168
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+23	+23	+20	+17	+7	166	176	192
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+9	+16	+19	+17	-2	81	73	94
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+20	+22	+28	+10	+7	42	45	48
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+43	+24	+41	+11	+6	38	47	43
Waste materials dealers.....	-14	+16	+9	+9	+8	53	41	58
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+7	+22	+4	-5	-4	182	208	230
Nondurable goods, total	+12	+14	+7	+10	+6	96	98	102
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+11	+9	+7	+5	+3	69	72	72
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+14	+9	+8	+8	+6	96	100	98
Voluntary groups.....	+10	+8	+10	+5	+6	93	96	96
Retailer-cooperative.....	+29	+18	+13	+20	+7	80	85	86
Nonaffiliated.....	+10	+5	+5	+6	+6	106	109	105
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	+7	+8	-3	-2	58	60	61
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+7	+15	+2	0	0	84	91	94
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+19	+13	+3	+10	0	17	20	20
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+3	+8	+4	+6	+12	31	30	24
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	-6	+3	+4	+9	+15	32	29	30
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+8	+10	+4	+5	+27	30	30	22
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+18	+19	+6	+11	+12	109	115	116
Beer, ale distributors.....	+13	+4	+5	+10	-6	63	65	70
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+20	+29	+7	+11	+18	136	147	150
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+16	+14	+11	+12	+3	139	147	155
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+15	+12	+12	+11	+4	155	165	166
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+22	+24	+10	+22	+1	95	99	122
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+5	+4	+4	+5	+1	156	157	161
Tobacco distributors.....	+11	+9	+4	+4	+2	56	59	60
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+5	+14	+1	+2	-4	155	160	177
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+5	+12	+3	+2	-3	165	169	192
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+9	+12	+4	+4	-1	141	138	147
Piece goods converters.....	-1	+23	-6	-4	-9	166	188	211
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+14	+14	+11	+9	0	106	114	120
Paper wholesalers.....	+14	+12	+11	+9	-1	104	111	117
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+14	+22	+11	+9	0	124	136	139
Farm products (raw materials) merchants.....	+27	+38	+9	+28	+20	124	162	156
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	+8	+9	+11	+6	+4	97	99	101
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+13	+13	+11	+6	-2	136	140	151
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.....	+4	+4	+9	+3	+6	152	95	152
Coal wholesalers.....	+25	+8	+31	+29	+4	122	162	143
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	0	+11	-3	+5	+6	140	137	130

Table 2.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

October 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		10 mo. 1956 from 10 mo. 1955	Percent change, October 1956 from---		Oct. 1956	Oct. 1955	Sept. 1956
	Oct. 1955	Sept. 1956		Oct. 1955	Sept. 1956			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL	+12	+13	+9	+11	+3	114	117	125
New England.....	+7	+11	+7	+10	0	113	109	122
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	+12	+9	+11	+4	99	99	106
East North Central.....	+13	+16	+10	+10	+2	106	111	120
West North Central.....	+12	+13	+5	+3	-1	120	156	144
South Atlantic.....	+8	+12	+7	+10	+7	149	150	156
East South Central.....	+16	+11	+10	+18	+6	115	110	121
West South Central.....	+22	+20	+11	+18	+7	132	133	143
Mountain.....	+15	+13	+8	+8	+2	132	141	145
Pacific.....	+13	+11	+9	+11	+2	116	123	128
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers	+8	+10	+8	+6	+1	174	174	192
New England.....	+9	+18	+6	+5	-2	181	188	217
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	+14	+11	+11	+2	170	159	190
East North Central.....	+1	+11	+7	+1	+2	181	181	198
West North Central.....	-3	+4	+4	-6	-5	243	264	272
South Atlantic.....	+6	+11	+4	+7	-1	188	185	222
East South Central.....	+4	+9	+11	+12	+2	115	95	116
West South Central.....	+15	+6	+16	+13	0	201	205	211
Mountain.....	+52	+48	+11	+3	0	116	134	135
Pacific.....	+24	+2	+9	+5	0	185	210	199
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors	+12	+6	+16	+15	0	135	131	143
New England.....	+4	+6	+23	+3	-5	126	119	134
Middle Atlantic.....	+15	+9	+21	+23	+4	92	85	94
East North Central.....	+8	+8	+11	+13	0	126	120	137
West North Central.....	+12	-2	+12	+11	-1	206	207	204
South Atlantic.....	+16	+14	+15	+9	-6	146	156	176
East South Central.....	+11	-1	+15	+21	0	208	194	209
West South Central.....	+21	-5	+19	+37	+4	198	175	176
Mountain.....	+12	+6	+9	+13	+11	142	125	135
Pacific.....	+10	+6	+15	+11	-2	134	133	144
Elect. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors..	+9	+4	+5	+23	+4	193	178	192
New England.....	-15	-11	+5	+4	-1	175	133	153
Middle Atlantic.....	+21	+6	+12	+35	+2	184	170	190
East North Central.....	+12	+5	+5	+24	+1	207	218	213
West North Central.....	-6	+2	-4	+10	0	202	172	199
South Atlantic.....	+1	+11	+1	+25	+20	197	152	183
East South Central.....	+1	+5	-2	+7	-2	173	167	191
West South Central.....	+27	+6	+3	+21	-1	205	211	222
Pacific.....	+22	+4	+7	+32	+15	178	162	165
Furniture, Home furnishings wholesalers	+10	+15	+8	+4	-2	146	150	172
Middle Atlantic.....	+6	+17	+8	+6	-4	152	148	188
East North Central.....	+14	+20	+8	+9	0	93	100	112
West North Central.....	+5	+17	+1	+4	-2	161	155	189
South Atlantic.....	+18	+34	+7	+8	+1	186	193	235
South Central.....	-5	+2	+5	-3	+1	241	230	257
Pacific.....	+10	+4	+9	+1	+2	191	210	199
Hardware wholesalers	+5	+8	+5	+3	-1	200	203	222
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	+12	+7	+6	+1	115	115	132
East North Central.....	+5	+9	+7	+11	-1	185	174	207
West North Central.....	+9	+7	+5	-7	-2	199	237	230
South Atlantic.....	+5	+4	+5	+7	+3	258	263	269
East South Central.....	-2	+7	+3	0	-2	210	205	227
West South Central.....	+11	+10	+6	+6	-5	238	250	275
Mountain.....	+8	+4	+6	+3	+3	261	274	264
Pacific.....	+12	+2	+5	+3	-3	239	250	254
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors	+2	+7	+4	+3	-1	150	151	166
New England.....	+6	+7	+6	-1	+2	116	124	136
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	+11	+7	+3	-1	204	199	238
East North Central.....	+2	+4	+10	+13	0	96	89	101
West North Central.....	-8	+8	-3	-4	-4	160	154	179
South Atlantic.....	+6	+9	+3	+2	-2	146	154	162
South Central.....	-8	0	-2	-1	0	184	174	194
Pacific.....	+10	+6	+2	+14	-2	200	203	214
Lumber, construction materials distributors	+6	+11	+1	+4	-1	98	105	111
New England.....	-1	+15	0	+6	-6	97	83	115
Middle Atlantic.....	+11	+14	+2	+4	0	87	101	100
East North Central.....	+8	+9	+4	+1	+1	87	98	99
West North Central.....	+2	+4	-4	-3	0	112	103	117
South Atlantic.....	+13	+20	+3	+14	-4	114	116	135
South Central.....	0	+10	-3	+6	-5	130	128	175
Pacific.....	+3	+8	0	-1	-1	87	107	98

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

OCTOBER 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		10 mo. 1956 from 10 mo. 1955	Percent change, October 1956 from--		Oct. 1956	Oct. 1955	Sept. 1956
	October 1956 from--	Oct. 1955		Sept. 1956	Oct. 1955			
	Oct. 1955	Sept. 1956	Oct. 1955	Sept. 1956	Oct. 1955	Oct. 1955	Sept. 1956	
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+19	+17	+15	+11	+3	131	142	150
New England.....	+37	+13	+10	+36	-2	85	89	96
Middle Atlantic.....	+21	+15	+15	+18	+12	159	159	163
East North Central.....	+22	+26	+17	+6	0	105	121	132
West North Central.....	+4	+8	+9	+20	0	109	89	117
South Atlantic.....	+16	+30	+15	+6	-4	115	126	154
South Central.....	+16	+15	+20	+8	+3	129	137	143
Mountain.....	+27	+18	+9	+7	+2	112	152	138
Pacific.....	+17	+13	+10	+9	0	170	191	192
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+14	+9	+8	+8	+6	96	100	98
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	+11	+7	+10	+4	100	93	107
East North Central.....	+17	+8	+9	+15	+9	80	83	78
West North Central.....	+8	+5	+8	+7	+5	101	103	103
South Atlantic.....	+11	+7	+3	-3	+3	93	106	96
East South Central.....	+10	+7	+1	0	+7	133	140	130
West South Central.....	+21	+13	+9	+6	+10	96	110	98
Mountain.....	+14	+2	+15	+10	+9	85	89	80
Pacific.....	+34	+20	+16	+19	+4	73	80	84
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+3	+7	+8	-3	-2	58	60	61
New England.....	+16	+11	+8	+6	-15	70	73	86
Middle Atlantic.....	-2	+6	+8	+13	-1	46	39	48
East North Central.....	+16	+15	+8	+8	-3	62	67	74
West North Central.....	+20	+6	+5	-15	-13	70	122	83
South Atlantic.....	+1	+2	+7	-16	+4	110	125	95
South Central.....	+18	+3	+7	-5	-1	71	90	79
Pacific.....	+6	+10	+9	-5	+1	41	34	43
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+8	+10	+4	+5	+27	30	30	22
New England.....	-2	+8	+7	+3	+7	21	22	24
Middle Atlantic.....	+13	+13	+3	+6	+10	7	8	7
East North Central.....	+9	+17	+5	+8	+35	22	22	15
West North Central.....	-4	+2	-1	+1	+5	45	44	41
South Atlantic.....	+1	+11	+3	+1	+9	42	41	44
South Central.....	+15	+10	+7	+3	+14	34	37	30
Pacific.....	+5	+3	+4	+12	+37	42	42	23
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+15	+12	+12	+11	+4	155	165	166
New England.....	+17	+6	+9	+11	+1	131	136	135
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	+8	+7	+4	+5	140	153	143
East North Central.....	+15	+10	+13	+3	+2	144	160	159
West North Central.....	+21	+13	+11	+10	+2	163	181	182
South Atlantic.....	+12	+19	+15	+13	+4	153	158	170
East South Central.....	+18	+11	+12	+6	0	155	174	174
West South Central.....	+14	+11	+14	+8	+5	196	208	209
Mountain.....	+38	+17	+18	+25	+6	187	201	206
Pacific.....	+20	+17	+14	+14	+8	150	140	163
Tobacco distributors.....	+11	+9	+4	+4	+2	56	59	60
New England.....	+8	+7	+2	-8	+6	41	45	40
Middle Atlantic.....	+10	+10	+3	+3	+3	52	55	57
East North Central.....	+17	+11	+4	+10	+5	54	57	58
West North Central.....	+5	+10	-1	+5	+3	72	75	76
South Atlantic.....	+7	+4	+7	+2	-1	65	68	69
South Central.....	+9	+6	+5	-1	0	55	60	59
Pacific.....	+15	+14	+7	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+5	+14	+1	+2	-4	155	160	177
New England.....	-2	+1	+4	+5	+4	164	172	165
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	+17	0	+3	-5	149	150	172
East North Central.....	+2	+22	+5	-3	+6	144	150	163
West North Central.....	-4	+1	+2	+6	-11	249	220	273
South Atlantic.....	+12	+10	+6	+9	-4	182	190	220
South Central.....	-8	-3	0	+5	-1	229	228	223
Pacific.....	+6	+3	+4	-3	+2	106	104	105

x Insufficient data to show separately.

MONTHLY
WHOLESALE TRADE
REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
 Robert W. Burgess, Director

NOVEMBER 1956

FOR RELEASE
 JANUARY 11, 1957

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers in November dropped 6 percent below October 1956 sales but were 4 percent above November sales a year ago. Cumulative sales for the first eleven months of 1956 were 8 percent higher than sales in the comparable period of 1955.

Durable goods trades, in total, showed a 7 percent decline from October sales, but a 4 percent gain over a year ago. Nondurable goods trades reported a somewhat smaller decline (4%) from the previous month and a slightly larger gain (5%) over November 1955 sales than the durable goods trades.

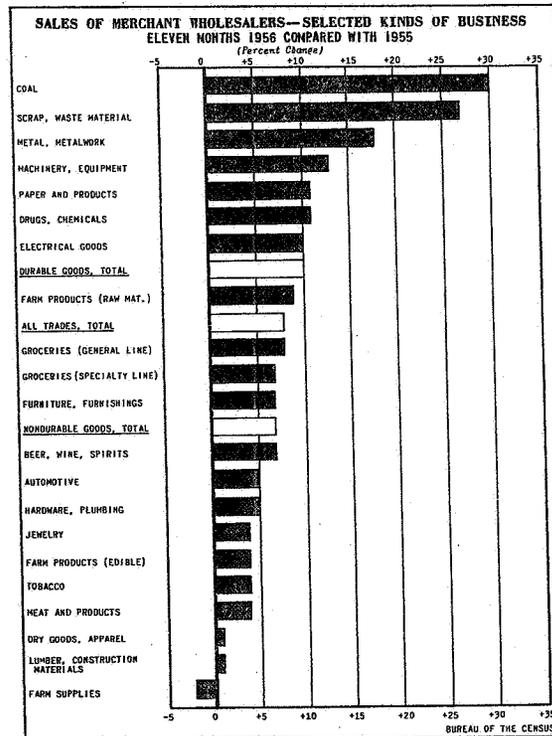
Almost all trades reported lower sales in November than in the previous month. Construction materials distributors, with sales down 18 percent, indicated the sharpest decline. Other large declines were experienced by lumber, millwork wholesalers (15%), motor-vehicle distributors (14%) and plumbing, heating goods distributors (13%). The most substantial increases over October sales were experienced by wine, distilled spirits wholesalers (13%) and poultry distributors (13%). Iron, steel scrap dealers showed the largest increase (35%) over sales a year ago. Significant increases were also indicated by coal wholesalers (18%), commercial machines, equipment distributors (13%), wine, distilled spirits wholesalers (11%), drug wholesalers (11%), and industrial chemicals wholesalers (11%). Motor-vehicle distributors, with sales down 24 percent, reported the sharpest decline from year-ago sales. Other large declines were indicated for piece goods converters (12%) and waste materials dealers (9%).

In two geographic divisions--South Atlantic and Mountain--November sales were unchanged from October. All other divisions reflected declines ranging from 5 to 10 percent. Compared with a year ago, only the West North Central Division registered a decline (2%). The Mountain Division, with sales up 17 percent, reported the principal increase.

Inventories

Wholesalers' inventories at the end of November were at the same level as a month earlier but were up 10 percent above stocks on hand a year ago. The November 1956 stock-sales ratio of 117 was 6 points above the October ratio and also 6 points higher than the stock-sales for November 1955.

Most trades showed little or no change from previous month inventories. However, some large increases were shown by wholesalers of such nondurable goods as farm supplies (13%), poultry (12%), fresh fruit, vegetables (12%) and wine, distilled spirits (9%). Compared with a year ago, farm products merchants (raw materials) reported the most substantial increase, 36 percent. Other large increases were noted by electrical appliance distributors (25%) and coal



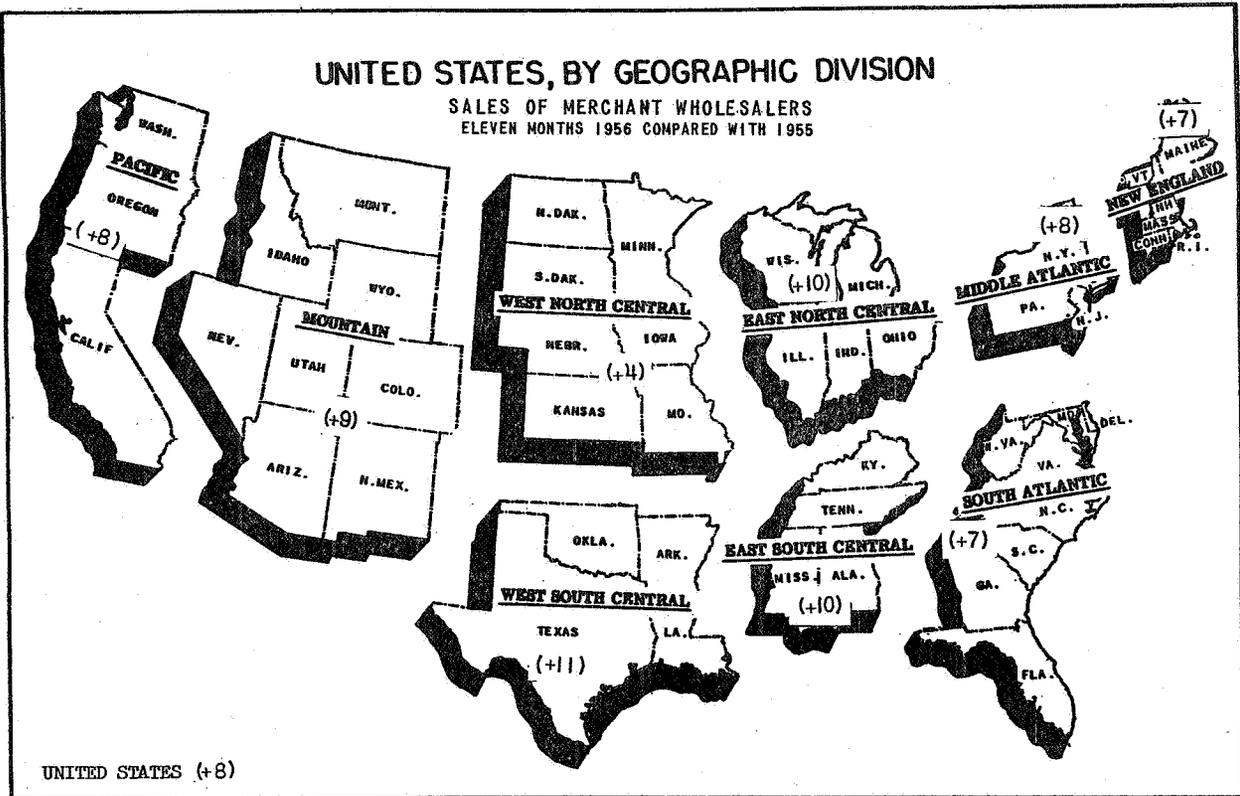
wholesalers (25%). Piece goods converters with stocks down 6 percent, and air conditioning, commercial refrigerator equipment wholesalers, with inventories off 2 percent, reported the only declines from year-ago levels.

The Mountain Division reported inventories 5 percent higher than a month earlier. All other geographic divisions showed little or no change. Compared with a year ago, however, all geographic divisions reported larger increases, ranging from 6 percent in the Pacific to 17 percent in New England.

General

Data shown in this report are based on a new probability sample representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the Bureau revised the sample of merchant wholesalers to bring it up to date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. A description of the revised sample is included on page 2.

Each month approximately one week prior to the publication of this report, an advance release is issued containing percentage changes in sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios for most trades covered by this report. This advance release is available upon request.



DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, TERMINOLOGY AND KINDS OF BUSINESS

Scope of the Survey.--Wholesale trade includes several types of establishments: merchant wholesalers; manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; assemblers of farm products; and agents, brokers and commercial merchants. This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade. However, all kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are described in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual developed by the Federal Bureau of the Budget, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and baling waste materials. Firms which operate retail and manufacturing establishments in addition to their wholesale establishments report only for their merchant wholesale establishments. A description of each kind of business classification shown in this report (which was included in the July 1956 issue), is available on request.

Sample design.--Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the sample was revised to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. Over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) are included in this sample which was drawn from lists of all merchant wholesalers (about 165,000 establishments) in the 1954 Census of Business. The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month.

In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms. This month, about 90 percent of this number of firms submitted their reports in time for the trend tabulations. The number of establishments reporting, previously shown as a measure of coverage, will no longer be shown since the trend comparisons are based on weighted values (see below). However, information on the number of establishments reporting for a trade and the number selected in the sample will be provided on request.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) the distribution of firms within the trade by sales-size, (c) the degree of reliability desired in the data, and

(d) whether geographic division trends were to be shown for the trade. This sample has been designed to develop monthly dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories by kind of business with a sampling variability for each trade of approximately 5 percent at the one sigma level. The sampling variability of the percentage changes based on this sample is expected to be somewhat lower. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Percentage changes.--For each firm reporting, data are available for each of the three months (current, previous, and year ago) for which comparisons are made. Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes of sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios. Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included. Sales trends shown in this report reflect the operation of firms selected in the sample which were in business in each of the three months compared.

Inventory, end-of-month represents stock, at cost value, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month. Inventory trends are based on reports from only those firms which included data for all three periods compared. The number of firms reporting inventories is generally smaller than the number reporting sales. Some firms cannot submit inventory data in time for tabulation but furnish sales figures only.

Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

Kind of business	Sales			Inventory, end-		Stock-sales ratios		
	Percent change		11 mo. 1956 from 11 mo. 1955	of-month (at cost)		(percent)		
	November 1956 from--			Percent change November 1956 from--		November 1956	November 1955	October 1956
	November 1955	October 1956	November 1955	October 1956				
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL	+4	-6	+8	+10	0	117	111	111
Durable goods, total	+4	-7	+10	+10	-1	142	136	135
Automotive wholesalers.....	-2	-5	+5	+1	-2	190	193	183
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-24	-14	-3	+3	0	118	94	99
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+1	-4	+8	+1	-2	201	212	197
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+2	0	+10	+21	-1	153	127	156
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+5	-2	+15	+16	0	142	128	139
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	0	+1	+4	+25	-1	165	127	174
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+2	-7	+7	+2	-1	150	150	142
Furniture wholesalers.....	+3	-7	+8	+4	-1	171	174	163
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+1	-8	+7	0	-2	140	139	132
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	+2	-11	+5	+4	-2	205	203	185
Hardware wholesalers.....	+4	-8	+5	+3	-2	226	227	210
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+1	-13	+4	+4	-3	183	181	162
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+1	-17	+1	+6	-1	112	106	91
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-6	-15	-2	+3	0	159	138	132
Construction materials distributors.....	+10	-18	+6	+11	-2	74	73	58
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+7	-4	+13	+13	-1	r 156	r 153	r 150
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors.....	+1	-10	+6	-2	-1	241	249	215
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+13	-3	+11	+11	0	166	163	164
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+3	0	+14	+8	-3	r 124	r 122	r 125
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+9	-6	+10	+6	-4	177	185	170
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+1	-3	+10	+7	-1	138	142	135
Service establishment supply houses.....	+8	-5	+9	+9	+1	120	124	112
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+5	-10	+18	+19	+3	142	130	129
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+8	-9	+19	+19	+3	169	157	149
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	-2	-12	+16	+15	+1	71	63	68
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	r +17	-7	+27	+10	+3	41	43	39
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+35	-5	+40	+12	+4	36	41	34
Waste materials dealers.....	-9	-12	+7	+8	+1	53	53	48
Jewelry wholesalers.....	-1	-2	+4	0	-1	148	153	155
Nondurable goods, total	+5	-4	+7	+11	+2	97	91	89
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+4	-7	+7	+3	-2	71	72	66
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+7	-4	+8	+2	-2	97	106	96
Voluntary groups.....	+8	-4	+10	+2	-2	87	94	86
Retailer-cooperative.....	+8	-9	+12	+14	-7	68	66	68
Nonaffiliated.....	+5	-2	+5	+1	-2	118	127	118
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	0	-10	+7	+2	-2	71	69	63
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+5	-4	+2	+11	+1	97	93	92
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+6	-9	+4	+18	+3	26	23	22
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	0	+5	+4	+6	+12	26	24	24
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	-5	+13	+3	+8	+12	24	21	25
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+3	0	+4	+5	+12	27	25	24
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+10	+7	+7	+9	+8	117	114	112
Beer, ale distributors.....	+7	-5	+5	+13	0	62	56	56
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+11	+13	+8	+8	+9	148	147	148
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+10	-6	+11	+9	-2	141	149	135
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	-4	+12	+7	-2	161	170	159
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+11	-9	+10	+14	0	101	103	91
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+6	-11	+4	+9	+1	144	142	127
Tobacco distributors.....	+7	0	+4	+5	+3	54	56	53
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-6	-10	+1	+2	-2	184	166	170
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	-2	-12	+3	+9	-5	149	136	136
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	-5	-8	+3	+3	-2	203	182	192
Piece goods converters.....	-12	-10	-7	-6	+1	212	183	189
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+8	-5	+11	+11	0	117	113	110
Paper wholesalers.....	+7	-5	+11	+12	0	116	110	108
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+11	-4	+11	+7	0	127	139	124
Farm products (raw materials) merchants.....	+9	-10	+9	+36	+7	134	91	119
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	+3	-2	+10	+12	+3	88	87	85
Amusement, sporting goods wholesalers.....	+9	-3	+11	+9	-5	142	146	156
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.....	+8	-7	+9	+11	-2	117	122	116
Coal wholesalers.....	+18	-5	+30	+25	+1	100	143	110
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+4	-6	-2	+9	+13	129	144	119

r Revised figure from Press Release for November.

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

NOVEMBER 1956

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		11 mo. 1956 from 11 mo. 1955	Percent change, November 1956 from--		Nov. 1956	Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956
	Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956		Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL	+4	-6	+8	+10	0	117	111	111
New England.....	+6	-5	+7	+17	-1	110	91	106
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-6	+8	+10	0	111	105	105
East North Central.....	+5	-6	+10	+8	-1	108	107	104
West North Central.....	-2	-10	+4	+11	+2	131	122	117
South Atlantic.....	+6	0	+7	+12	+1	132	128	130
East South Central.....	+9	-8	+10	+15	+2	152	146	136
West South Central.....	+5	-5	+11	+12	0	146	126	135
Mountain.....	+17	0	+9	+8	+5	156	164	145
Pacific.....	+6	-6	+8	+6	0	112	113	106
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers	+1	-4	+8	+1	-2	201	212	197
New England.....	+2	-8	+6	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	-1	+10	+4	-4	149	163	158
East North Central.....	-2	-3	+6	-5	-2	233	254	236
West North Central.....	+6	-6	+5	+4	-1	218	234	206
South Atlantic.....	+6	-5	+4	+2	-5	189	202	183
East South Central.....	+8	-1	+10	+4	-3	222	230	227
West South Central.....	-1	-4	+13	+6	-1	213	204	208
Mountain.....	+4	+1	+10	0	-3	217	215	221
Pacific.....	-3	-8	+7	0	0	196	205	182
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors	+5	-2	+15	+16	0	142	128	139
New England.....	-9	-8	+20	+7	+6	161	148	138
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-5	+19	+27	+1	125	102	117
East North Central.....	+1	-2	+10	+16	0	135	117	134
West North Central.....	+7	-1	+11	+17	+1	165	146	159
South Atlantic.....	+7	+3	+14	+4	0	144	143	150
East South Central.....	+10	-6	+15	+26	+1	184	157	161
West South Central.....	+11	-2	+19	+13	-1	204	202	201
Mountain.....	+7	+7	+9	+17	-2	146	135	150
Pacific.....	+7	-1	+15	+13	-4	146	135	152
Elect. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors ..	0	+1	+4	+25	-1	165	127	174
New England.....	0	+3	+4	+13	0	168	149	174
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	-12	+10	+30	+2	188	131	179
East North Central.....	+6	+5	+5	+29	-6	150	124	167
West North Central.....	-8	+13	-5	+11	-2	173	134	194
South Atlantic.....	+13	+5	+2	+36	+2	198	169	215
East South Central.....	-2	+1	-2	+11	-8	242	214	271
West South Central.....	-6	+5	+2	-3	0	197	142	200
Pacific.....	-8	+4	+5	+34	+1	177	108	180
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers	+2	-7	+7	+2	-1	150	150	142
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	-8	+7	+3	-2	140	131	129
East North Central.....	+8	-3	+8	+5	+5	138	153	133
West North Central.....	+1	-8	+1	-2	-4	191	197	185
South Atlantic.....	+4	-11	+7	+1	-5	157	162	158
South Central.....	-9	-18	+3	-7	-7	162	173	144
Pacific.....	-1	0	+8	+5	+2	186	181	190
Hardware wholesalers	+4	-8	+5	+3	-2	226	227	210
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	-12	+6	+3	0	230	237	205
East North Central.....	+7	-9	+7	+6	-5	200	196	190
West North Central.....	-3	-12	+4	-5	-5	244	256	228
South Atlantic.....	+10	-6	+5	+13	+1	246	233	217
East South Central.....	-1	+3	+2	-5	+4	205	212	192
West South Central.....	+9	-2	+7	+10	-1	254	255	254
Mountain.....	+3	-20	+6	+14	-3	279	232	229
Pacific.....	+5	-7	+5	+5	0	216	218	200
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors	+1	-13	+4	+4	-3	183	181	162
New England.....	+1	-17	+5	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	0	-13	+6	+1	-3	195	194	167
East North Central.....	-2	-16	+8	+3	-3	172	165	147
West North Central.....	+3	-17	-2	-2	-6	214	226	188
South Atlantic.....	0	-5	+3	+5	+1	172	164	166
South Central.....	+2	-9	-2	+7	-2	191	203	184
Pacific.....	+1	-13	+2	+13	-5	171	162	147
Lumber, construction materials distributors	+1	-17	+1	+6	-1	112	106	91
New England.....	-15	-6	-1	+6	-5	112	71	104
Middle Atlantic.....	+9	-13	+2	+4	-2	115	109	90
East North Central.....	+6	-22	+4	+6	0	126	133	95
West North Central.....	-4	-26	-4	+13	0	108	97	74
South Atlantic.....	+7	-1	+4	+4	-8	65	72	69
South Central.....	-5	-12	-4	+2	-1	140	115	123
Pacific.....	-4	-15	+1	+12	+3	54	55	45

Table 2.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS--Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (see map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change		11 mo. 1956 from 11 mo. 1955	Percent change, November 1956 from--		Nov. 1956	Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956
	Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956		Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956			
	Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956	Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956	Nov. 1956	Nov. 1955	Oct. 1956	
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+3	0	+14	+8	-3	124	122	125
New England.....	0	-1	+9	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Middle Atlantic.....	+15	-3	+15	+27	-6	116	118	119
East North Central.....	-8	+6	+14	-4	-4	112	108	125
West North Central.....	+15	+1	+9	+6	+3	180	191	165
South Atlantic.....	+6	+3	+11	+17	0	131	137	145
South Central.....	+2	-10	+18	+8	-1	127	125	116
Mountain.....	+11	-6	+9	-2	+6	165	197	116
Pacific.....	-5	-10	+8	+4	-2	147	132	136
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+7	-4	+8	+2	-2	97	106	96
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	-5	+6	-4	-6	96	106	97
East North Central.....	+5	-3	+9	-3	-5	87	97	87
West North Central.....	+3	-1	+7	-3	-2	94	100	95
South Atlantic.....	+2	-4	+3	-5	-4	122	149	120
East South Central.....	+8	-1	+2	+4	+1	116	120	118
West South Central.....	+9	-5	+9	+5	-1	123	130	118
Mountain.....	+20	+1	+15	+10	-4	125	128	124
Pacific.....	+12	-10	+16	+14	0	70	74	67
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	0	-10	+7	+2	-2	71	69	63
New England.....	+8	-11	+8	+31	-6	111	100	93
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	-9	+6	+1	-3	75	62	63
East North Central.....	+11	-6	+8	+2	-2	73	80	69
West North Central.....	+5	-5	+5	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
South Atlantic.....	+1	-9	+6	+9	+5	82	77	69
South Central.....	+13	-8	+8	+11	+12	74	75	62
Pacific.....	+3	-14	+8	-15	-11	39	48	41
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	+3	0	+4	+5	+12	27	25	24
New England.....	+11	-9	+7	-12	+10	25	32	19
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-1	+3	+10	+9	12	12	11
East North Central.....	+1	+5	+5	+8	+10	21	20	21
South Atlantic.....	+5	+19	+3	+10	+16	55	54	71
South Central.....	+4	+3	+7	+29	+23	36	21	24
Pacific.....	+2	-9	+4	-11	+7	25	32	25
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+11	-4	+12	+7	-2	161	170	159
New England.....	+4	-6	+8	+7	+1	145	147	135
Middle Atlantic.....	+7	-6	+7	0	-2	206	232	206
East North Central.....	+11	-5	+13	+8	0	132	134	125
West North Central.....	+18	-6	+12	+15	-3	149	155	144
South Atlantic.....	+11	0	+15	+8	-3	147	154	153
East South Central.....	+9	-9	+12	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
West South Central.....	+9	-1	+13	+8	-5	199	200	208
Mountain.....	+18	+2	+18	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Pacific.....	+17	-5	+15	+15	-4	147	157	144
Tobacco distributors.....	+7	0	+4	+5	+3	54	56	53
New England.....	-1	0	+2	-9	+12	59	65	51
Middle Atlantic.....	+5	-3	+3	+5	0	48	47	46
East North Central.....	+8	+1	+4	+8	0	55	55	56
West North Central.....	-2	0	-1	+2	+4	66	67	63
South Atlantic.....	+14	+7	+8	-4	-1	46	58	51
South Central.....	+6	-2	+5	+5	+8	52	55	48
Pacific.....	+11	+3	+7	+9	+2	73	74	76
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-6	-10	+1	+2	-2	184	166	170
New England.....	-7	-7	+3	-1	-5	151	133	144
Middle Atlantic.....	-10	-14	-1	0	-1	202	171	171
East North Central.....	+6	+3	+5	+8	-2	143	141	150
West North Central.....	-3	-18	+1	+9	0	211	204	179
South Atlantic.....	+13	+5	+7	+11	-13	144	157	177
South Central.....	-3	-8	0	+10	-7	183	160	181
Pacific.....	+2	+3	+4	-8	-10	113	136	145

x Insufficient data to show separately.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Postage and Fees Paid
U. S. Department of Commerce

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
Robert W. Burgess, Director

DECEMBER 1956

FOR RELEASE
February 11, 1957

SALES AND INVENTORIES

Annual Sales

Sales of merchant wholesalers for the year 1956 were 8 percent ahead of 1955. Fourth quarter sales were 7 percent higher in 1956 than in 1955, somewhat better than the 5 percent gain noted in the third quarter but below the 10 percent increases over a year ago reported in the first and second quarters of 1956.

Durable goods trades, in total, showed an increase of 9 percent over 1955 sales as compared to an increase of 7 percent by the nondurable goods trades. Increases were reported in all but a few trades such as farm supplies (-2%), lumber, millwork (-3%), motor-vehicle distributors (-3%) and piece goods converters (-7%). Iron, steel scrap dealers registered the principal gain (39%) over annual 1955 sales. Other substantial increases were reported for coal (29%), iron, steel products (17%), nonferrous metals (15%), electrical apparatus and supplies (14%), and industrial machinery and equipment (12%).

All geographic divisions shared in the increased sales during 1956. The West South Central Division recorded the principal gain, 11 percent over 1955 sales, while the West North Central Division, up 4 percent, indicated the smallest increase.

December Sales

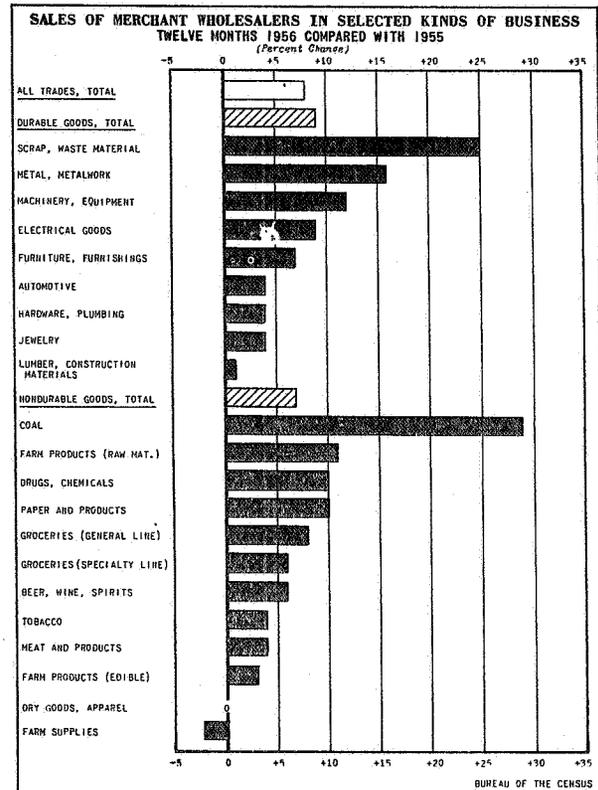
December 1956 sales of merchant wholesalers were off 6 percent from November but were 3 percent higher than sales a year ago. The sharpest decline from the previous month was a seasonal drop of 28 percent for clothing, furnishings and footwear. Other large decreases were noted by dry goods (23%), automotive equipment (19%), construction materials (19%) and plumbing and heating goods (15%). Among those reporting small increases over November were wine, distilled spirits (7%), electrical goods (6%), and beer, ale (4%). Compared with December sales a year ago, large increases were noted for farm products (raw materials) (33%), iron, steel scrap dealers (22%) and coal (13%). The largest decline was indicated by piece goods converters (17%).

In most geographic divisions, December 1956 sales were moderately below November but slightly above last December. The East South Central and the Pacific Divisions shared the largest decrease (9%) from the previous month, while the West South Central Division reported the principal increase (10%) over a year ago. New England reported the only increase (2%) over previous month sales, while the Mountain Division experienced the only decline (3%) from a year ago.

Inventories

Inventories of wholesalers at year-end 1956 were off 2 percent from stocks on hand November 30, 1956, but were up 11 percent over a year ago. The December stock-sales ratio of 126 percent was 4 points above the previous month ratio and 6 points above the ratio for December 1955.

By trade, significant declines from previous month inventories were noted for wine, distilled spirits (16%), poultry and poultry products (14%), beer, ale (11%) and electrical appliances (10%); large increases



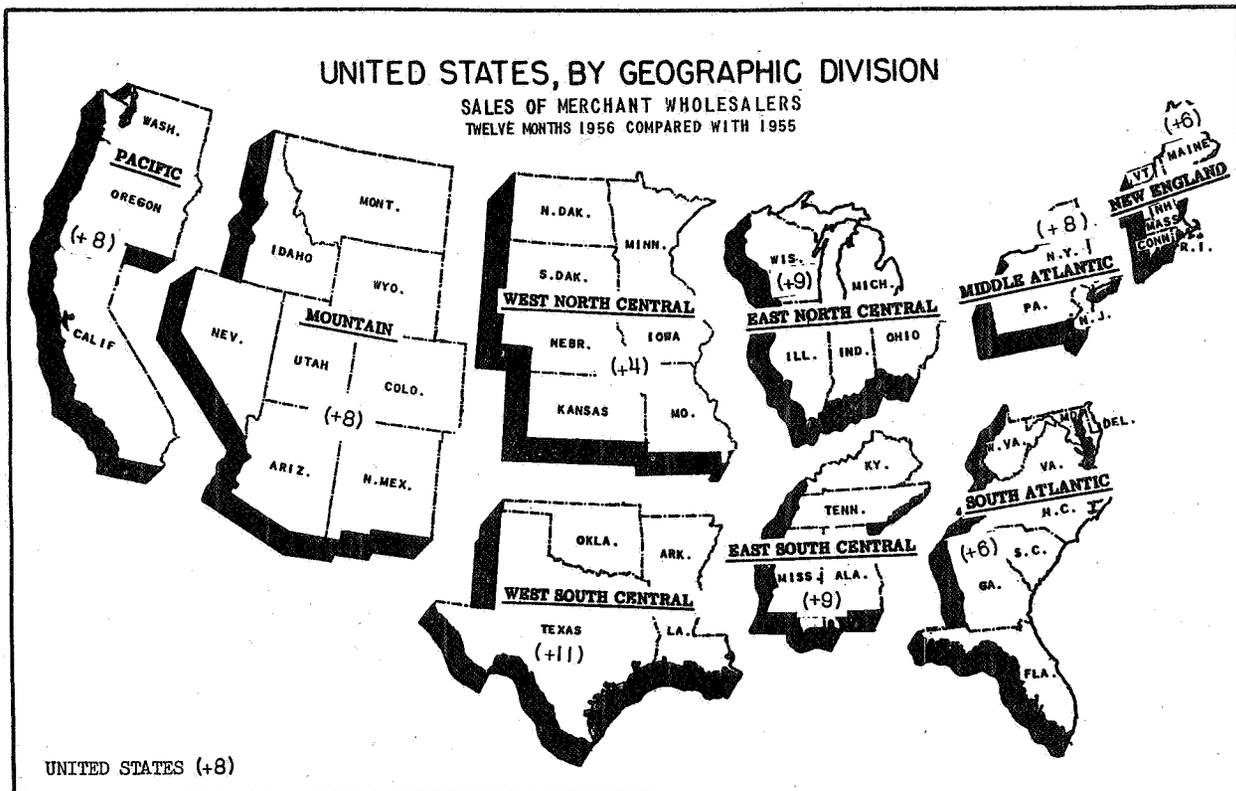
were reported for iron, steel products (11%), and farm supplies (10%). Changes from previous year inventories were more substantial with large increases reported by farm products (raw materials) (45%), nonferrous metals (28%), coal (25%), and iron, steel products (22%). The most significant decline was for piece goods converters (16%).

The East South Central and Pacific Divisions showed no change from previous month inventories but all other geographic divisions noted slight declines. Compared with a year ago, most divisions reported substantial increases. The outstanding increases occurred in the West South Central Division (22%) and the East South Central Division (31%), largely due to higher stocks of farm products (cotton) merchants.

General

Data shown in this report are based on a probability sample representative of all merchant wholesalers in the country. A description of the revised sample is included on page 2.

Each month approximately one week prior to the publication of this report, an advance release is issued containing percentage changes in sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios for most trades covered by this report. This advance release is available upon request.



DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE, TERMINOLOGY AND KINDS OF BUSINESS

Scope of the Survey.--Wholesale trade includes several types of establishments: merchant wholesalers; manufacturers sales branches and sales offices; petroleum bulk stations; assemblers of farm products; and agents, brokers and commercial merchants. This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers which constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade. However, all kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Merchant wholesalers are described in the Standard Industrial Classification Manual developed by the Federal Bureau of the Budget, as "Establishments usually known as wholesalers, merchant wholesalers or jobbers, primarily engaged in buying, taking title to, and where customary, physically storing and handling goods and selling the goods at wholesale principally to retailers and industrial and commercial users. This group also includes industrial distributors, exporters, and importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers; drop shippers, wagon distributors, etc. The establishments included in this group may perform operations on the goods incidental to the wholesale trading and delivery, such as installing equipment, and fixtures; and collecting and baling waste materials. Firms which operate retail and manufacturing establishments in addition to their wholesale establishments report only for their merchant wholesale establishments. A description of each kind of business classification shown in this report is included on page 7.

Sample design.--Firms reporting in the survey are part of a probability sample representing merchant wholesalers in all kinds of business. Effective with the July 1956 survey, the sample was revised to bring it up-to-date on the basis of the most recent complete Census--the 1954 Census of Business. Over 17,000 firms (about 26,000 establishments) are included in this sample which was drawn from lists of all merchant wholesalers (about 165,000 establishments) in the 1954 Census of Business. The reporting panel includes a fixed panel of about 1,400 very large firms reporting monthly and four rotating panels each containing about 3,900 smaller firms which report every fourth month.

In any given month, the total reporting panel includes about 5,300 firms. This month, about 90 percent of this number of firms submitted their reports in time for the trend tabulations. The number of establishments reporting, previously shown as a measure of coverage, will no longer be shown since the trend comparisons are based on weighted values (see below). However, information on the number of establishments reporting for a trade and the number selected in the sample will be provided on request.

The number of firms selected in the sample for each kind of business varies from 150 to 650 firms, depending upon (a) the total number of firms in the trade, (b) the distribution of firms within the trade by sales-size, (c) the degree of reliability desired in the data, and

(d) whether geographic division trends were to be shown for the trade. This sample has been designed to develop monthly dollar volume estimates of sales and inventories by kind of business with a sampling variability for each trade of approximately 5 percent at the one sigma level. The sampling variability of the percentage changes based on this sample is expected to be somewhat lower. In those kinds of business for which percentage changes are shown by geographic division, the sample chosen for the national estimates was increased by about 50 percent to provide wider representation by geographic division. In some of these trades, however, data are not shown separately for some geographic divisions because even this increase in the sample size will not provide reliable results in all geographic divisions.

Each firm selected in the sample has an assigned weight which reflects its probability of selection (or, in other terms, the number of firms in the trade which it represents in the sample). Large firms are selected with certainty, thus having a weight of one (1). Other firms are sampled at varying rates, depending upon size, with smaller firms having a lower probability of selection and thus a larger weight.

Percentage changes.--For each firm reporting, data are available for each of the three months (current, previous, and year ago) for which comparisons are made. Sales and inventory figures reported for each firm are multiplied by its weight and the results summarized to obtain percentage changes of sales and inventories and stock-sales ratios. Data in this report are not adjusted for number of days in the month nor for seasonal or price fluctuations.

Sales include sales of merchandise and receipts from repairs or other services to customers after deducting returns and allowances, and discounts. Sales of merchandise for others on a commission basis are also included. Local and State sales taxes, and Federal excise taxes are included. Sales trends shown in this report reflect the operation of firms selected in the sample which were in business in each of the three months compared.

Inventory, end-of-month represents stock, at cost value, of merchandise on hand for sale at the end of the month. Inventory trends are based on reports from only those firms which included data for all three periods compared. The number of firms reporting inventories is generally smaller than the number reporting sales. Some firms cannot submit inventory data in time for tabulation but furnish sales figures only.

Stock-sales ratios are percentages derived by dividing stocks, at cost, by total sales for those firms reporting inventories in conjunction with sales. Excluded from these ratios were all firms which report "zero" inventories (e.g., drop shippers). No adjustment is made in these calculations for the markup of sales, which varies from trade to trade.

Table 1.--TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

Kind of business	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change			Percent change, December 1956 from--		December 1956	December 1955	November 1956
	December 1956 from--		12 mo. 1956 from 12 mo. 1955	December 1956 from--				
	December 1955	November 1956		December 1955	November 1956			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL	+3	-6	+8	+11	-2	126	120	122
Durable goods, total	+1	-6	+9	+11	-1	162	148	153
Automotive wholesalers.....	-5	-16	+4	+5	-1	208	193	168
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	-5	-1	-3	+15	+9	126	117	110
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	-5	-19	+7	+3	-2	226	208	179
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+3	+6	+9	+17	-8	136	124	158
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+4	+5	+14	+18	-6	125	114	143
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	+2	+7	+4	+15	-10	149	136	175
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+3	-11	+7	+5	-7	178	167	169
Furniture wholesalers.....	+1	-3	+7	+6	-7	193	176	201
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+5	-14	+7	+4	-7	170	161	150
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	-4	-12	+4	+1	-2	232	219	207
Hardware wholesalers.....	-2	-9	+5	+2	-2	242	232	219
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	-6	-15	+3	+1	-2	220	206	193
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	-3	-16	+1	-1	+4	132	124	101
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	-10	-13	-3	-5	+7	147	134	114
Construction materials distributors.....	+5	-19	+6	+3	0	116	112	89
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	0	-5	+12	+17	+1	186	161	177
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors.....	+6	-1	+6	+13	-5	158	155	180
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	-3	-5	+9	+19	+1	198	151	173
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	-2	-1	+12	+18	+3	152	127	149
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	0	-8	+9	+12	-3	175	165	162
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	-1	+2	+9	+9	-3	150	145	147
Service establishment supply houses.....	+3	-9	+9	+1	-2	139	148	131
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+4	-3	+16	+22	+10	181	148	156
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+1	-11	+17	+22	+11	229	187	182
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+10	+13	+15	+28	+3	76	61	83
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+12	0	+25	+8	-2	54	51	53
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+22	0	+39	+14	-6	42	42	39
Waste materials dealers.....	-8	-1	+5	0	+2	78	68	78
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+6	-6	+4	+3	-6	120	130	131
Nondurable goods, total	+5	-5	+7	+12	-4	100	98	99
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+3	-3	+6	+5	-2	80	81	80
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+5	-6	+8	+4	-5	102	104	100
Voluntary groups.....	+7	-2	+10	0	-5	88	98	92
Retailer-cooperative.....	+12	-2	+12	+3	-6	81	85	81
Nonaffiliated.....	+3	-10	+5	+6	-4	123	122	112
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-1	+1	+6	+6	+2	80	80	81
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+5	-3	+2	+1	-7	60	65	65
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	+5	-3	+4	+1	-6	20	20	21
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	-4	-2	+3	+7	-9	23	21	26
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	-10	-2	+2	+4	-14	20	17	24
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-1	-2	+4	+8	-7	26	24	27
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+4	+6	+6	+9	-15	86	79	109
Beer, ale distributors.....	+4	+4	+5	+8	-11	51	48	60
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+3	+7	+7	+10	-16	105	97	139
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+3	-9	+10	+9	-1	152	144	138
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+3	-8	+11	+10	-3	162	152	151
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+3	-10	+9	+9	+2	120	110	100
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	-1	-13	+4	+6	+2	211	214	206
Tobacco distributors.....	+3	+2	+4	+7	-9	52	50	56
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-8	-23	0	-2	0	191	184	157
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	-2	-28	+2	+8	-3	179	155	131
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	-7	-23	+2	0	+2	205	201	175
Piece goods converters.....	-17	-12	-7	-16	-2	177	189	165
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	-3	-11	+10	+7	-2	128	116	115
Paper wholesalers.....	-4	-11	+10	+8	-3	130	115	115
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+4	-7	+10	+5	-2	117	119	113
Farm products (raw materials) merchants.....	+33	-12	+11	+45	-3	167	149	143
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	+7	-1	+10	+11	-1	89	106	87
Amusement, sporting goods distributors.....	+3	-5	+10	+5	-10	128	126	135
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.....	+5	+3	+9	+2	-13	93	93	114
Coal wholesalers.....	+13	-2	+29	+25	-4	126	146	116
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	+8	-6	-2	+14	+10	226	227	197

r Revised from Press Release of December 1956.

Table 2.-- CUMULATIVE SALES TRENDS OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

Kind of business	Percentage change in cumulative sales 1956 compared with 1955						
	1st quarter	2nd quarter	3rd quarter	4th quarter	1st half	2nd half	Annual
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL.....	+10	+10	+5	+7	+10	+6	+8
Durable goods, total.....	+17	+13	+3	+5	+14	+4	+9
Automotive wholesalers.....	+7	+4	+6	0	+5	+3	+4
Motor-vehicle distributors.....	+8	-7	-8	-10	0	-9	-3
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.....	+7	+9	+9	+2	+8	+5	+7
Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors.....	+13	+18	+3	+5	+15	+4	+9
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors.....	+19	+24	+6	+7	+22	+7	+14
Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts, distributors.....	+6	+9	0	+3	+7	+1	+4
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers.....	+11	+8	+5	+5	+9	+5	+7
Furniture wholesalers.....	+12	+8	+5	+5	+10	+5	+7
Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.....	+10	+8	+5	+5	+9	+5	+7
Hardware, plumbing-heating goods wholesalers.....	+6	+8	+1	+1	+7	+1	+4
Hardware wholesalers.....	+9	+6	+1	+2	+7	+2	+5
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.....	+4	+11	+1	0	+7	0	+3
Lumber, construction materials distributors.....	+5	+1	-4	+2	+3	-1	+1
Lumber, millwork wholesalers.....	+3	-1	-7	-3	0	-5	-3
Construction materials distributors.....	+11	+6	+1	+9	+8	+5	+6
Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+19	+15	+6	+8	+17	+7	+12
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment, distributors.....	+7	+9	+3	+5	+8	+4	+6
Commercial machines, equipment distributors.....	+12	+13	+5	+7	+13	+6	+9
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	+23	+20	+3	+6	+21	+4	+12
Professional equipment, supplies distributors.....	+13	+8	+10	+8	+10	+9	+9
Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.....	+11	+8	+16	+3	+9	+9	+9
Service establishment supply houses.....	+13	+6	+8	+9	+9	+8	+9
Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors.....	+32	+21	+8	+9	+26	+9	+16
Iron, steel and products distributors.....	+33	+21	+8	+11	+27	+9	+17
Nonferrous metals distributors.....	+31	+20	+10	+5	+25	+7	+15
Scrap, waste materials dealers.....	+56	+35	+3	+15	+45	+10	+25
Iron, steel scrap dealers.....	+69	+48	+10	+33	+57	+23	+39
Waste materials dealers.....	+36	+13	-6	-12	+24	-9	+5
Jewelry wholesalers.....	+4	+8	+1	+4	+6	+2	+4
Nondurable goods, total.....	+6	+7	+5	+7	+7	+7	+7
Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers.....	+7	+7	+6	+5	+7	+6	+6
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+7	+8	+6	+9	+8	+8	+8
Voluntary groups.....	+10	+11	+8	+9	+11	+8	+10
Retailer-cooperative.....	+8	+13	+10	+17	+10	+14	+12
Nonaffiliated.....	+6	+5	+4	+5	+5	+4	+5
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	+12	+9	+6	0	+11	+3	+6
Confectionery wholesalers.....	+5	0	0	+6	+2	+2	+2
Meat, meat products wholesalers.....	-2	-1	+8	+10	-2	+9	+4
Farm products (edible) distributors.....	+6	+4	+5	-1	+5	+2	+3
Poultry, poultry products distributors.....	+10	+7	0	-6	+7	-3	+2
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-1	+5	+7	+3	+2	+5	+4
Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+7	+5	+4	+10	+6	+7	+6
Beer, ale distributors.....	+5	+3	+4	+7	+4	+5	+5
Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.....	+8	+6	+3	+11	+7	+8	+7
Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers.....	+11	+11	+7	+11	+11	+9	+10
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+12	+15	+8	+10	+13	+9	+11
Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.....	+9	+8	+5	+16	+8	+10	+9
Paint, varnish wholesalers.....	+8	+1	+4	+3	+4	+4	+4
Tobacco distributors.....	+5	+2	+3	+7	+3	+5	+4
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	+2	-1	+1	-2	0	-1	0
Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.....	+2	-2	+10	+1	0	+4	+2
Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)....	+5	+7	0	-1	+6	-1	+2
Piece goods converters.....	-1	-11	-9	-10	-6	-10	-7
Paper, allied products wholesalers.....	+14	+11	+8	+6	+12	+7	+10
Paper wholesalers.....	+14	+11	+8	+7	+13	+7	+10
Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.....	+11	+11	+7	+13	+11	+10	+10
Farm products (raw materials) merchants.....	-7	+13	+11	+23	+2	+18	+11
Other nondurable goods wholesalers.....	+10	+15	+8	+6	+11	+7	+10
Amusement, sporting goods distributors.....	+9	+10	+12	+8	+10	+10	+10
Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.....	+9	+12	+10	+6	+10	+8	+9
Coal wholesalers.....	+34	+31	+24	+19	+32	+22	+29
Farm supplies wholesalers.....	-8	-1	+2	+4	-5	+3	-2

Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change			Percent change, Dec. 1956 from--		Dec. 1956	Dec. 1955	Nov. 1956
	December 1956 from--		12 mo. 1956 from 12 mo. 1955	Dec. 1956 from--				
	Dec. 1955	Nov. 1956	12 mo. 1955	Dec. 1955	Nov. 1956			
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS, TOTAL	+3	-6	+8	+11	-2	126	120	122
New England.....	+3	+2	+6	+2	-5	102	107	108
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	-4	+8	+9	-2	112	106	110
East North Central.....	+2	-7	+9	+13	-2	121	111	115
West North Central.....	+2	-9	+4	+3	-3	144	143	136
South Atlantic.....	+1	-6	+6	+5	-4	133	126	134
East South Central.....	+2	-9	+9	+31	0	180	150	167
West South Central.....	+10	-1	+11	+22	-1	118	120	116
Mountain.....	-3	-8	+8	+12	-4	133	119	131
Pacific.....	+4	-9	+8	+12	0	145	136	131
Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers	-5	-19	+7	+3	-2	226	208	179
New England.....	-1	-16	+5	+16	+6	111	89	83
Middle Atlantic.....	-15	-17	+8	+1	+3	239	196	186
East North Central.....	+1	-22	+6	0	-9	233	226	171
West North Central.....	-17	-18	+3	+4	-2	239	247	214
South Atlantic.....	+5	-27	+4	+5	-3	242	246	173
East South Central.....	-10	-15	+8	+11	-2	309	261	247
West South Central.....	-3	-12	+12	+3	+2	279	259	243
Mountain.....	+6	-11	+10	+2	-3	230	238	257
Pacific.....	-3	-20	+6	+2	-3	192	181	154
Electrical apparatus, supplies distributors	+4	+5	+14	+18	-6	125	114	143
New England.....	+10	+22	+20	+10	-3	93	93	127
Middle Atlantic.....	0	-4	+18	+22	-3	120	101	127
East North Central.....	-3	+4	+8	+16	-6	120	101	134
West North Central.....	+13	+10	+11	+20	-5	143	136	162
South Atlantic.....	+1	+4	+13	+6	-9	118	119	136
East South Central.....	+10	+33	+14	+40	-4	124	138	178
West South Central.....	+23	+20	+19	+36	-6	152	138	194
Mountain.....	+12	+6	+9	+16	-4	137	131	151
Pacific.....	+7	0	+14	+10	-7	127	123	137
Elect. appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors ...	+2	+7	+4	+15	-10	149	136	175
New England.....	+14	+14	+5	+11	-2	128	133	142
Middle Atlantic.....	+15	+14	+10	+35	-7	139	121	163
East North Central.....	+2	+5	+5	+17	-12	147	139	182
West North Central.....	-5	+4	-5	+5	-14	180	161	223
South Atlantic.....	-8	+14	+1	+12	-9	146	152	185
East South Central.....	-8	-5	-3	+7	+2	201	203	175
West South Central.....	-19	-9	0	-8	-8	225	183	225
Pacific.....	+8	+6	+5	+28	-13	133	112	162
Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers	+3	-11	+7	+5	-7	178	167	169
Middle Atlantic.....	+3	-16	+6	-2	-8	165	165	145
East North Central.....	+8	0	+8	+13	-8	146	140	155
West North Central.....	+1	-12	+1	+27	+8	276	245	220
South Atlantic.....	-2	-13	+6	+6	-8	196	161	168
South Central.....	-5	+11	+3	-7	-14	173	170	214
Pacific.....	+9	-11	+8	+1	-2	181	155	158
Hardware wholesalers	-2	-9	+5	+2	-2	242	232	219
Middle Atlantic.....	-10	-12	+5	+6	-2	252	210	236
East North Central.....	-1	-10	+6	+5	+3	247	224	198
West North Central.....	-4	-20	+3	-5	-3	266	277	219
South Atlantic.....	0	+4	+5	-3	0	208	221	204
East South Central.....	-5	-12	+2	0	-8	225	212	214
West South Central.....	-11	-17	+6	+4	0	293	251	243
Pacific.....	+4	-5	+5	+1	-4	228	244	228
Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors	-6	-15	+3	+1	-2	220	206	193
New England.....	-6	-9	+4	-1	-7	180	185	182
Middle Atlantic.....	-8	-14	+5	-2	-1	194	179	164
East North Central.....	-14	-23	+7	+1	-3	249	210	199
West North Central.....	+1	-16	-2	+8	+2	251	232	206
South Atlantic.....	0	-6	+3	+1	-8	203	207	206
South Central.....	-11	-17	-3	-1	-4	233	211	204
Pacific.....	+6	-16	+2	+1	+3	227	234	202
Lumber, construction materials distributors	-3	-16	+1	-1	+4	132	124	101
New England.....	0	-17	-1	-14	-21	41	65	45
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	-13	+2	-3	+6	116	93	77
East North Central.....	0	-17	+4	-5	+6	162	160	117
West North Central.....	-20	-21	-5	-9	-5	183	142	133
South Atlantic.....	-5	-22	+3	-7	+1	124	112	84
South Central.....	-16	-11	-5	+7	+8	131	98	108
Pacific.....	+4	-10	+1	+11	+2	144	169	124

Table 3.—TRENDS IN SALES AND INVENTORIES OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS: BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION, FOR SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS—Continued

Kind of business and geographic division (See map page 2)	Sales			Inventory, end-of-month (at cost)		Stock-sales ratios (percent)		
	Percent change			Percent change, Dec. 1956 from--		Dec. 1956	Dec. 1955	Nov. 1956
	December 1956 from--		12 mo. 1956 from 12 mo. 1955	Dec. 1955	Nov. 1956			
	Dec. 1955	Nov. 1956						
Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.....	-2	-1	+12	+18	+3	152	127	149
New England.....	+1	+7	+8	+16	+1	128	140	134
Middle Atlantic.....	+4	+7	+13	+12	+5	166	138	174
East North Central.....	-2	-10	+13	+22	+3	143	109	124
West North Central.....	-3	+1	+8	+10	+4	144	119	128
South Atlantic.....	+13	-2	+12	+25	-13	110	99	172
South Central.....	-7	-6	+16	+15	+3	143	123	139
Mountain.....	-6	+3	+8	+21	+5	217	199	211
Pacific.....	-3	+6	+7	+13	-1	177	159	189
General-line grocery wholesalers.....	+5	-6	+8	+4	-5	102	104	100
Middle Atlantic.....	0	-6	+6	-3	+2	127	132	116
East North Central.....	+11	-6	+9	+12	0	104	105	94
West North Central.....	+5	-9	+7	-4	-6	87	97	78
South Atlantic.....	+5	-4	+3	-1	-10	119	126	130
East South Central.....	-2	-3	+2	+3	-7	95	100	104
West South Central.....	+10	-10	+9	+8	-8	112	115	109
Mountain.....	-3	-22	+14	+12	-9	131	112	115
Pacific.....	+11	-3	+15	+6	-4	82	90	81
Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.....	-1	+1	+6	+6	+2	80	80	81
New England.....	+6	-10	+7	-3	-7	159	164	162
Middle Atlantic.....	+1	+8	+5	+11	+7	69	62	72
East North Central.....	+5	0	+8	+2	-2	83	87	84
South Atlantic.....	-14	-13	+4	+29	-5	104	75	93
South Central.....	+4	+6	+7	+18	-3	59	59	67
Pacific.....	-3	-8	+7	-13	-4	81	100	69
Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.....	-1	-2	+4	+8	-7	26	24	27
New England.....	+20	-17	+8	+38	-22	12	11	13
Middle Atlantic.....	-1	-10	+3	+8	-10	25	21	23
East North Central.....	+8	-3	+5	+6	+4	24	26	23
West North Central.....	-13	+4	-2	-2	-5	41	34	42
South Atlantic.....	+6	+12	+3	+7	-17	27	27	34
South Central.....	-11	+21	+5	-3	-24	20	13	30
Pacific.....	-4	+1	+3	+19	-6	25	21	27
Drug wholesalers (general and specialty lines).....	+3	-8	+11	+10	-3	162	152	151
New England.....	-4	-3	+7	+13	-3	191	168	192
Middle Atlantic.....	0	-8	+7	+4	-2	143	135	126
East North Central.....	-3	-10	+11	+10	-2	167	146	147
West North Central.....	+4	-8	+11	+5	-3	154	146	149
South Atlantic.....	+2	-9	+14	+9	-6	170	166	162
East South Central.....	+1	-9	+11	+8	-1	175	164	166
West South Central.....	+1	-5	+12	+8	-6	195	182	197
Mountain.....	+15	-12	+18	+21	+1	196	171	179
Pacific.....	+22	-8	+15	+18	+1	139	140	129
Tobacco distributors.....	+3	+2	+4	+7	-9	52	50	56
New England.....	-1	+6	+2	-1	-10	50	49	59
Middle Atlantic.....	+2	+2	+3	+7	-3	54	52	55
East North Central.....	+4	+6	+4	+8	-5	43	42	48
West North Central.....	-3	-4	-1	+3	+6	61	59	56
South Atlantic.....	+5	+3	+7	+4	-17	57	59	66
South Central.....	-2	-7	+4	0	-12	48	48	50
Pacific.....	+10	+3	+7	+37	-11	68	53	68
Dry goods, apparel wholesalers.....	-8	-23	0	-2	0	191	184	157
New England.....	+2	-2	+3	-18	-1	152	178	142
Middle Atlantic.....	-7	-22	-2	-6	-1	172	171	146
East North Central.....	-13	-29	+4	+9	-6	145	143	110
West North Central.....	-12	-33	0	+18	+8	363	313	243
South Atlantic.....	-14	-26	+5	+1	-9	226	192	176
South Central.....	-19	-29	-2	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
Pacific.....	-12	-24	+2	+9	-2	206	156	153

x Insufficient data to show separately.

DESCRIPTION OF KINDS OF BUSINESS

All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey. The kinds of business shown in this report parallel broad classifications used in the 1954 Census of Business covering wholesale trade. Each establishment in this survey has been assigned a kind-of-business classification based upon its trade designation and an analysis of its annual 1954 sales by commodity lines as reported in the 1954 Census of Business. A description of each kind-of-business classification in this report is given below.

DURABLE GOODS

Automotive wholesalers

Motor-vehicle distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling new and used passenger automobiles and similar motor vehicles, road-type trucks, truck-tractors, busses, trailers, and semitrailers to dealers or to fleet operators, industrial accounts, and to commercial users. Dealers in road-type trucks, truck-tractors, and truck-trailers are included here on the basis of kind-of-goods sold.

Automotive equipment, tire-tube wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments--frequently referred to as jobbers in this trade--primarily engaged in selling automotive equipment, accessories, parts, tires, tubes and garage equipment and tools.

Electrical, electronics, appliance distributors

Electrical apparatus, supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of electrical goods such as electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials; lighting fixtures and lamps; radio and television sets and accessories; electric refrigerators and other electrical appliances and specialties; and electronic parts and equipment; and those primarily engaged in selling such electrical equipment and apparatus; wiring supplies and construction materials, and lighting fixtures and lamps, as conduits and fittings, interior wires and cables, wiring devices, safety switches, poles, crossarms, pole-line hardware, outside wires and cables, residential, commercial, and industrial lighting fixtures, and incandescent and fluorescent lamps. Establishments specializing in the sale of electrical prime movers and other electrical power equipment for the generation, transmission, or utilization of electric energy are also included.

Electrical appliances, TV, radio sets, electronic parts distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such electrical appliances and specialties as radio and television sets, dish washers, electric refrigerators, electric ranges, washing machines, irons, radio and television parts and accessories, home freezers, sewing machines, hot water heaters, electric irons, percolators, clocks, hotplates, vacuum cleaners, etc., and electronic tubes, electronic replacement parts and accessories, and transmission and sound equipment.

Furniture, home furnishings wholesalers

Furniture wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling home or office furniture--wooden, metal or other.

Home furnishings, floor coverings wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling household china, glassware, and earthenware; floor coverings (carpets, rugs, linoleums, etc.); antique home furnishings; and miscellaneous home furnishings such as brooms, brushes, curtains, draperies, pictures and picture frames, window shades, kitchen utensils, phonograph records, and musical instruments.

Hardware, plumbing, heating goods wholesalers

Hardware wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments selling a general line of merchandise sufficiently broad to service retail hardware stores and the hardware departments of other outlets--general-line hardware wholesalers; and establishments primarily engaged in selling builders hardware, heavy hardware, shelf or light hardware, and hardware specialties such as tools, cutlery, bolts, nuts, rivets, screws, padlocks, keys, and the like--specialty-line hardware wholesalers.

Plumbing, heating equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling plumbing and heating equipment and supplies such as plumbing fixtures, including sanitary ware; steam and hot water heating boilers, radiators, parts, and fittings; stoves, ranges, furnaces, and other types of heating apparatus (except electric); oil burners; gas appliances and supplies; plumbing pipe, valves, and fittings; and plumbers brass goods.

Lumber, construction materials distributors

Lumber, millwork wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling lumber and millwork such as rough, dressed, and finished lumber; sheathing, siding, flooring, shingles, plywood, veneers, doors, sashes, frames, interior woodwork and trim.

Construction materials distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such construction materials as brick, tile, and terra cotta; cement, lime, and plaster; building glass; sand, gravel, and crushed stone, ready-mixed concrete; roofing, siding and insulation; and stone, slate, concrete products, and building board.

Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors

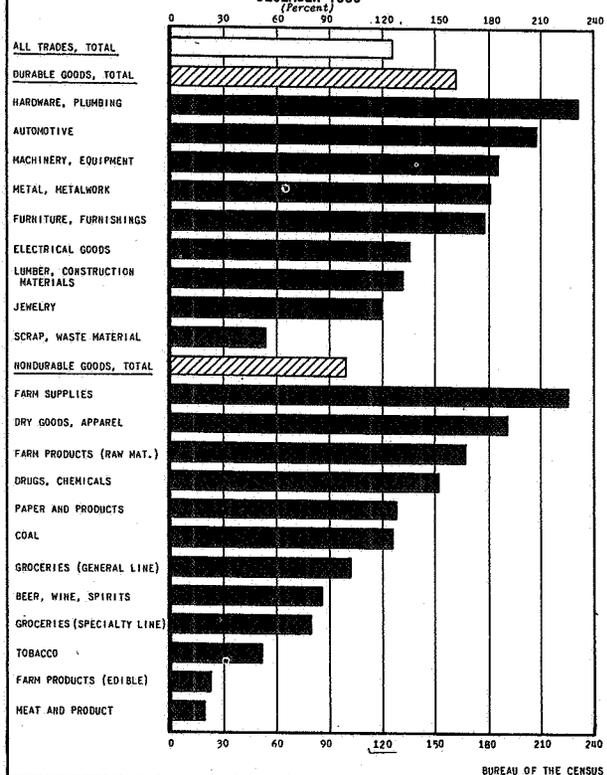
Air conditioning, commercial refrigeration equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial refrigeration equipment (including electric) such as refrigerators, display cases, freezers, dispensers, water coolers, food locker equipment; and those selling air conditioning and ventilating equipment and supplies, including fans, blowers, and accessories. Establishments specializing in the sale of commercial refrigeration components and accessories are also included in this classification.

Commercial machines, equipment distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling office machines and equipment (except furniture) such as adding machines, typewriters, addressing, duplicating, sealing, computing, stapling, accounting, and statistical machines; restaurant and hotel equipment such as coffee urns, steam tables, china, glassware, silverware, linens, and related items; store machines and fixtures such as display fixtures, show racks, pricing equipment, cash registers, scales, meat slicers and grinders, coffee grinders, etc.; and such related equipment as florists' supplies, theater supplies and equipment, and parking meters. Establishments primarily engaged in selling to users are included, as well as those selling to dealers.

STOCKS--SALES RATIOS OF MERCHANT WHOLESALERS

DECEMBER, 1956

(Percent)



Machinery, equipment, supplies distributors--continued

Industrial machinery, equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling machinery, equipment, and supplies to manufacturing and mining concerns. Included here are establishments selling industrial machinery; industrial belting, hose, and packing; machine tools, mine and mill supplies; oil well and oil refining supplies; printing machinery and supplies; industrial rope, cordage, and twine; industrial materials, handling equipment; power transmission equipment; and machinery and equipment for such industries as food products, woodworking, shoe manufacturing, tanning, textile, and paper and pulp.

Professional equipment, supplies distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling dental supplies (chairs, sterilizers, cabinets, instruments, dental gold and alloys, waxes, teeth, and the like); religious supplies (church goods and religious articles such as statuary, vestments, fonts, candles, religious pictures, calendars, literature, etc.); school equipment and supplies (desks, blackboards, chalk, rulers, wall and globe maps, etc.); optical goods; surgical, medical, hospital supplies, and equipment; artists supplies; engineering instruments and supplies; and supplies for other professions.

Surgical, medical, hospital supply houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling surgical and medical instruments; doctors apparatus and equipment; orthopedic appliances; artificial limbs; operating room and other hospital equipment; X-ray machines and accessories and other scientific instruments used by physicians and in hospitals.

Service establishment, supply houses.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling barber and beauty supplies; laundry, dry cleaning equipment, supplies (washing, drying, ironing, and pressing machines; laundry soaps and chemicals; dry cleaning fluids, marking equipment, etc.); shoe service supplies and equipment; undertakers supplies (caskets, burial vaults, burial garments, embalming chemicals and preparations, and other morticians and funeral equipment); upholsterers supplies (fabrics, leather and fillings, and other types of supplies used in the upholstery trade); and miscellaneous service equipment, such as janitors' supplies, furriers' supplies, bootblack's supplies, and hat cleaners' supplies.

Other industrial machinery, equipment distributors (not shown separately in accompanying table).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling (a) transportation equipment such as aircraft and aeronautical equipment, supplies; railroad equipment, supplies; marine equipment, supplies; and other transportation equipment and supplies; (b) construction machinery, equipment such as road building machinery, excavating and dredging machinery, derricks, cranes, hoists, and winches; and related construction equipment as pneumatic hammers, concrete construction clamps and forms, scaffolding, chutes, and wheelbarrows--but not construction materials, and (c) farm-garden machinery, equipment (including tractors) used in the preparation and maintenance of the soil, the planting and harvesting of crops, and other operations and processes pertaining to agriculture; dairy machinery and equipment, such as milking machines and cream separators; poultry equipment, such as incubators, brooders, and feeders and irrigation equipment.

Metals, metalwork (except scrap) distributors

Iron, steel, and products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments usually referred to as steel warehouses--primarily engaged in selling iron and steel products such as semifinished forms and shapes, plates, sheets, strips, bars, structural shapes, piling, nails, tubular products, wire products, forgings and castings. Steel warehouses of firms operating steelworks and rolling mills are also included here.

Nonferrous metals distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling nonferrous metals and metalwork such as aluminum, copper, tin, brass, lead, and zinc.

Scrap, waste materials dealers

Iron, steel scrap dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, breaking up, sorting, and selling all forms of iron and steel scrap.

Waste materials dealers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in assembling, sorting, and selling such waste materials as nonferrous scrap metals, waste paper, rags, wiping cloths, textile wastes, scrap rubber, and other waste and salvage materials. Scrap iron and steel may be handled as secondary lines.

Jewelry wholesalers

Jewelry wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling a general-or specialty-line of jewelry such as clocks and watches; precious stones and metals; watch materials, jewelers supplies; costume jewelry; and miscellaneous items such as silverware, plated ware, medals, trophies, semi-precious stones, and insignia.

NONDURABLE GOODS

Grocery, confectionery, meat wholesalers

General-line grocery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments handling a general line of dry groceries and processed foods usually sold in retail grocery stores, such as canned foods, flour, sugar, coffee, tea and spices, as well as such nonfood items as household chemicals, soaps and detergents, paper products, brooms, brushes, etc. Voluntary group wholesalers, retailer-cooperative warehouses, and cash-and-carry depots are included, as well as nonaffiliated general-line grocery wholesalers.

Specialty-line grocery wholesalers.--This classification includes two general types of merchant wholesale establishments: Those handling a combination of grocery items, no one item predominating, but not a sufficiently broad line of commodities to be classified as "general line"; and those primarily engaged in selling specialized lines of groceries and related products, such as canned foods; coffee, tea, and spices; dairy products; dried fruits and nuts; frosted and frozen foods; fish and seafood; bakery products; packaged breakfast cereals; flour; cooking oils and shortening; and soft drinks.

Confectionery wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling candy, chewing gum, popcorn, potato chips, salted nuts, fountain fruits and syrups, and related items. Cigars, cigarettes, and other products are also frequently handled as secondary lines.

Meat, meat products wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh, frozen, cured or processed (but not canned) meats, lard, and other edible meat products. Secondary lines such as butter, cheese, eggs, dressed poultry, vegetable shortening, and canned meats are frequently handled.

Farm products (edible) distributors

Poultry, poultry products distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling live or dressed poultry, eggs, and related products. Establishments primarily engaged in dressing poultry are considered manufacturers.

Fresh fruit, vegetable wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling fresh fruits, vegetables, berries, melons, and related items.

Beer, wine, distilled spirits wholesalers

Beer, ale distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling beer, ale, porter, stout and other fermented malt liquors. Soft drinks, confectionery, tobacco, wines, and spirits are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Wine, distilled spirits wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wines, whiskey, gin, rum, brandy, and other spirits, including neutral spirits and ethyl alcohol used in blending. Merchants who bottle and sell wines and distilled spirits manufactured in bulk by others, liquor departments of drug wholesalers, and State-operated wholesale outlets are included. State depots primarily engaged in supplying State liquor stores, however, are not included in wholesale trade.

Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalersDrug wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a full line of drugs, pharmaceuticals, proprietary medicines, druggists rubber goods, cosmetics, toiletries, drug sundries, and related merchandise. Cooperatives and voluntary group wholesalers handling a full line of drugs are also included in this classification. Liquor departments of drug wholesalers, however, are included with "wines and distilled spirits wholesalers."

Specialty-line drug wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling proprietary medicines, toilet preparations, and articles such as drugs, perfumes, cosmetics, powders, shaving preparations, toilet soap, dentifrices, combs, brushes, mirrors, medical glass, bandages, rubber goods, and antiseptics.

Drugs, chemicals, allied products wholesalers--Continued

Industrial chemicals, explosives wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling such industrial and heavy chemicals as coal-tar chemicals, plastics, compressed and liquefied gases (except LP gas), acids, ammonia, soda, industrial alcohols, explosives, dyestuffs, naval stores, etc. Concerns primarily engaged in selling pyrotechnics and ammunition for small arms are included in "Amusement and sporting goods wholesalers."

Paint, varnish wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling paints, varnishes, lacquers, enamels, calcimines, shellacs, and stains. Glass, wallpaper, painters supplies, oils, chemicals, and related products are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Tobacco distributors

Tobacco distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling manufactured tobacco products such as cigars, cigarettes, chewing and smoking tobacco, and snuff. Confectionery, smokers articles, razor blades, playing cards, etc., are frequently handled as secondary lines.

Dry goods, apparel wholesalers

Clothing, furnishings, footwear wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling men's, boys' clothing, and furnishings (including suits, coats, overcoats, work clothing, hats and caps, shirts, ties, and underwear); women's, children's clothing, furnishings, and accessories (including suits, dresses, and skirts); furs and fur clothing; millinery, millinery supplies; shoes and other footwear; work clothing; and related lines.

Dry goods wholesalers (general and specialty lines)

General-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments engaged in selling a diversified combination of lines usually sold in retail dry goods and general merchandise stores, including piece goods, home furnishings, work clothing, dresses, infants' wear, notions, and hosiery. Men's and women's clothing, furnishings, and millinery frequently constitute secondary lines.

Specialty-line dry goods wholesalers (not shown separately).--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling hosiery, underwear, piece goods, knit and lace goods, fancy linen and needlework and notions (thread, tapes, needles, pins, buttons, hair accessories, zippers, and shoe laces).

Piece goods converters.--Merchant wholesale establishments which purchase textiles in the gray or unfinished form, have them dyed and/or finished by others, usually on a contract basis, and sell to the cutting-up trade, garment makers, wholesalers, or retailers. Converters operating bleaching, dyeing, and finishing plants are not considered as merchant wholesalers.

Paper, allied products wholesalers

Paper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling wrapping paper and other coarse paper; fine paper (writing papers, reproduction paper stock, cover, text, thin, and other fine papers); newsprint and book paper; paperboard; and converted paper products such as bags, boxes, cups, dishes, towels, napkins, tissues, and bottle caps.

Stationery, wallpaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling commercial and social stationery, including envelopes, typewriter and mimeograph paper in cut sizes, file cards and folders; and office supplies such as pens, pencils, writing inks, carbon paper, paper clips, typewriter ribbons, greeting cards, and erasers; and embossed and printed wallpaper for use in covering or decorating interior walls and ceilings.

Farm products (raw materials) merchants

Farm products (raw materials) merchants.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cotton, grain, hides, skins, raw furs, livestock, leaf tobacco, wool, mohair, horses and mules, and other inedible products such as broomcorn, moss, hair, feathers, bristles, and fibers. This classification includes merchants (including terminal elevators) primarily engaged in selling raw farm products in marketing centers. Dealers buying such products direct from farmers and assembling them at local production points are classified as "assemblers" and not included here.

Other nondurable goods wholesalers

Amusement, sporting goods distributors.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling cameras and photographic goods (cameras, parts, and accessories, projection apparatus, enlargers, developing and printing room apparatus and accessories, sensitized unexposed photographic supplies and equipment); sporting goods (toys, games, novelties, fireworks, bicycles, sporting goods, and athletic goods); and other recreation goods such as playground equipment, billiard and bowling equipment and supplies; and hobby goods.

Book, magazine, newspaper wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, and related items.

Coal wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling bituminous coal, anthracite coal, and coke. This includes firms with coal yards as well as those selling goods shipped directly from mine to customer.

Farm supplies wholesalers.--Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling mixed and other feeds; fertilizers, fertilizer materials, and agricultural chemicals; seeds (farm, garden, and flower); and miscellaneous farm supplies such as hay, straw, and alfalfa.

Merchant wholesalers, n.e.c.--(Not shown separately in the accompanying table.) Merchant wholesale establishments primarily engaged in selling petroleum products, cut flowers and potted plants; forest products except lumber; inedible oils and fats; textiles and materials other than dry goods; industrial yarns; crude rubber; ores; sponges; artificial leather; wood pulp; artificial flowers; and products not elsewhere classified; and establishments handling a line of merchandise too broad to be included in any of the classifications outlined above.