

For Wire Transmission 10:00 a.m. E.T. September 7, 2001

BW/01-07

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES JULY 2001

Sales. July 2001 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$227.6 billion, up 0.6 percent (+/-0.7%) from the revised June level but were down 1.7 percent (+/-1.5%) from the July 2000 level. The June preliminary estimate was revised downward \$0.5 billion or 0.2 percent. Among durable goods, sales of electrical goods increased 2.4 percent from last month, while computer and computer peripheral equipment and software were down 3.3 percent. Among nondurable goods, sales of farm product raw materials were up 4.7 percent from June, while petroleum and petroleum products fell 5.4 percent.

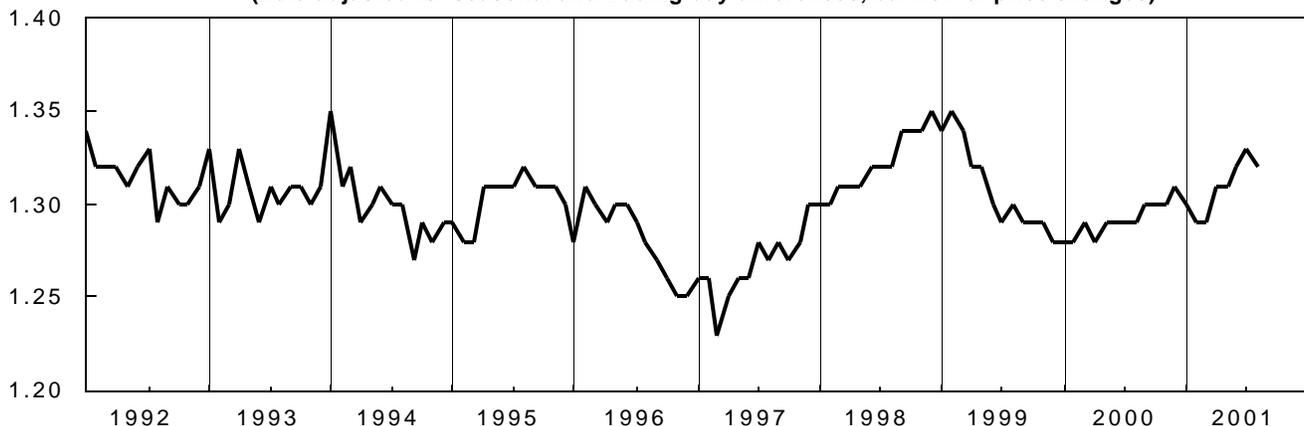
Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$299.6 billion at the end of July, down 0.7 percent (+/-0.3%) from last month, but were virtually unchanged (+/-2.6%) from a year ago. The June preliminary estimate

was revised downward \$0.4 billion or 0.1 percent. End-of-month inventories of durable goods decreased 0.8 percent (+/-0.4%) from last month and were 4.4 percent (+/-2.3%) below July 2000. Compared to last month, inventories of electrical goods were down 3.8 percent. Among nondurable goods, inventories of petroleum and petroleum products increased 3.1 percent from June, while groceries and related products decreased 2.0 percent.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The July inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.32. The July 2000 ratio was 1.29.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling variability. A discussion of the reliability of the data and general survey methodology appears in BW/00-A Current Business Reports.

Monthly Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1992 to 2001
(Data adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



Monthly Wholesale Trade for August is scheduled to be released October 10, 2001 at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233, or call Scott Scheleur, (301) 457-2747 or (301) 457-2764. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

This report is available on day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (202-482-1986). The data are also available on the internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/mwts.html>.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 2001 and 2000

[In millions of dollars]

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories						Inventories/Sales		
		Monthly			Percent change			Monthly			Percent change			Ratios		
		Jul. 2001 (p)	Jun. 2001 (r)	Jul. 2000 (r)	Jul./ Jun.	Jun./ May	Jul. 01 Jul. 00	Jul. 2001 (p)	Jun. 2001 (r)	Jul. 2000 (r)	Jul./ Jun.	Jun./ May	Jul. 01 Jul. 00	Jul. 2001 (p)	Jun. 2001 (r)	Jul. 2000 (r)
Adjusted²																
42	U.S. Total	227,633	226,302	231,472	0.6	-1.1	-1.7	299,615	301,869	299,582	-0.7	-0.4	0.0	1.32	1.33	1.29
421	Durable	115,332	114,777	120,366	0.5	-1.4	-4.2	184,854	186,394	193,372	-0.8	-1.3	-4.4	1.60	1.62	1.61
4211	Automotive	16,805	16,761	15,990	0.3	1.1	5.1	25,366	25,295	26,715	0.3	-0.1	-5.0	1.51	1.51	1.67
4212	Furniture	3,666	3,661	3,940	0.1	0.7	-7.0	5,584	5,600	5,905	-0.3	-2.7	-5.4	1.52	1.53	1.50
4213	Lumber	6,248	6,118	5,835	2.1	-2.7	7.1	6,456	6,408	6,764	0.7	-0.3	-4.6	1.03	1.05	1.16
4214	Prof. equip.	22,812	22,708	23,259	0.5	-1.9	-1.9	25,436	25,412	26,761	0.1	-0.8	-5.0	1.12	1.12	1.15
42143	Comp. equip.	12,332	12,749	13,670	-3.3	-1.5	-9.8	10,453	10,275	11,281	1.7	-3.6	-7.3	0.85	0.81	0.83
4215	Metals	8,005	7,955	8,679	0.6	-2.3	-7.8	13,050	13,145	15,280	-0.7	-0.9	-14.6	1.63	1.65	1.76
4216	Electrical	17,528	17,112	20,395	2.4	-4.6	-14.1	27,435	28,524	28,357	-3.8	-2.9	-3.3	1.57	1.67	1.39
4217	Hardware	5,062	5,078	5,439	-0.3	-1.6	-6.9	10,613	10,562	10,722	0.5	-0.2	-1.0	2.10	2.08	1.97
4218	Machinery	21,906	21,964	21,829	-0.3	-1.1	0.4	49,293	49,561	49,498	-0.5	-0.7	-0.4	2.25	2.26	2.27
4219	Misc. Durable	13,300	13,420	15,000	-0.9	0.5	-11.3	21,621	21,887	23,370	-1.2	-2.7	-7.5	1.63	1.63	1.56
422	Nondurable	112,301	111,525	111,106	0.7	-0.8	1.1	114,761	115,475	106,210	-0.6	1.1	8.1	1.02	1.04	0.96
4221	Paper	6,334	6,317	6,635	0.3	-1.7	-4.5	6,565	6,644	6,697	-1.2	-2.2	-2.0	1.04	1.05	1.01
4222	Drugs	15,517	15,781	13,969	-1.7	3.2	11.1	24,806	25,207	20,393	-1.6	2.2	21.6	1.60	1.60	1.46
4223	Apparel	7,109	7,242	7,923	-1.8	-2.3	-10.3	13,083	13,325	12,645	-1.8	0.4	3.5	1.84	1.84	1.60
4224	Groceries	34,320	33,998	32,514	0.9	0.4	5.6	21,629	22,072	21,421	-2.0	1.0	1.0	0.63	0.65	0.66
4225	Farm products	8,682	8,289	9,089	4.7	-4.4	-4.5	11,184	10,990	10,790	1.8	1.1	3.7	1.29	1.33	1.19
4226	Chemicals	4,984	4,882	5,054	2.1	-0.9	-1.4	5,832	5,856	5,872	-0.4	-0.1	-0.7	1.17	1.20	1.16
4227	Petroleum	12,931	13,670	14,796	-5.4	-6.7	-12.6	4,417	4,283	4,200	3.1	0.1	5.2	0.34	0.31	0.28
4228	Alcohol	6,423	6,285	5,950	2.2	2.2	7.9	6,874	6,937	6,365	-0.9	1.5	8.0	1.07	1.10	1.07
4229	Misc. Nondur.	16,001	15,061	15,176	6.2	-0.2	5.4	20,371	20,161	17,827	1.0	1.8	14.3	1.27	1.34	1.17
													Sales to date			
													2001		2000	
42	U.S. Total	223,687	229,460	221,481	-2.5	-4.0	1.0	296,771	298,274	297,198	-0.5	-0.7	-0.1	1,593,892	1,581,880	
421	Durable	113,658	117,695	115,086	-3.4	-2.3	-1.2	186,533	186,986	195,255	-0.2	-1.5	-4.5	806,301	826,695	
4211	Automotive	16,906	17,197	15,478	-1.7	-2.7	9.2	24,960	24,840	26,314	0.5	-2.6	-5.1	116,477	113,858	
4212	Furniture	3,549	3,621	3,696	-2.0	-1.5	-4.0	5,752	5,656	6,088	1.7	-0.8	-5.5	25,346	26,389	
4213	Lumber	6,635	6,675	6,010	-0.6	-4.0	10.4	6,643	6,581	6,967	0.9	-1.1	-4.7	42,812	42,225	
4214	Prof. equip.	22,036	23,389	22,003	-5.8	1.2	0.1	25,512	24,929	26,868	2.3	-1.1	-5.0	154,891	159,908	
42143	Comp. equip.	11,740	13,272	12,836	-11.5	4.7	-8.5	10,432	9,823	11,281	6.2	-5.4	-7.5	86,155	94,671	
4215	Metals	7,845	8,090	8,176	-3.0	-5.3	-4.0	13,181	13,184	15,433	0.0	-0.7	-14.6	56,259	61,253	
4216	Electrical	17,177	17,180	19,538	0.0	-3.6	-12.1	27,984	28,695	28,981	-2.5	-1.6	-3.4	126,064	135,120	
4217	Hardware	5,270	5,464	5,488	-3.6	-2.0	-4.0	10,762	10,805	10,851	-0.4	0.3	-0.8	36,395	38,383	
4218	Machinery	21,512	22,887	20,672	-6.0	-3.8	4.1	50,032	50,453	50,290	-0.8	-1.2	-0.5	155,979	149,184	
4219	Misc. Durable	12,728	13,192	14,025	-3.5	-0.6	-9.2	21,707	21,843	23,463	-0.6	-3.0	-7.5	92,078	100,375	
422	Nondurable	110,029	111,765	106,395	-1.6	-5.8	3.4	110,238	111,288	101,943	-0.9	0.6	8.1	787,591	755,185	
4221	Paper	6,195	6,254	6,277	-0.9	-4.4	-1.3	6,499	6,584	6,657	-1.3	-3.9	-2.4	44,478	45,325	
4222	Drugs	15,098	15,402	12,963	-2.0	-1.3	16.5	24,806	24,980	20,352	-0.7	5.5	21.9	106,117	92,805	
4223	Apparel	7,145	7,039	7,749	1.5	0.0	-7.8	13,502	13,578	13,037	-0.6	3.6	3.6	50,918	54,527	
4224	Groceries	34,663	34,168	32,677	1.4	-5.1	6.1	21,175	21,697	21,035	-2.4	0.5	0.7	235,617	222,426	
4225	Farm products	7,770	7,618	7,789	2.0	-14.1	-0.2	8,086	8,407	7,801	-3.8	-8.8	3.7	62,278	60,110	
4226	Chemicals	4,959	5,082	4,867	-2.4	-3.9	1.9	5,914	5,897	5,954	0.3	-0.7	-0.7	35,337	34,804	
4227	Petroleum	12,582	13,656	14,056	-7.9	-10.3	-10.5	4,395	4,180	4,175	5.1	0.6	5.3	99,563	96,110	
4228	Alcohol	6,384	6,687	5,676	-4.5	-2.1	12.5	6,977	7,034	6,460	-0.8	3.3	8.0	41,942	39,635	
4229	Misc. Nondur.	15,233	15,859	14,341	-3.9	-7.7	6.2	18,884	18,931	16,472	-0.2	-1.8	14.6	111,341	109,443	

p Preliminary estimate. r Revised.

1 For a full description of the NAICS codes shown above, see the "1997 North American Industry Classification System" or the Current Business Reports "Annual Benchmark Report for Wholesale Trade" publication.

2 Data adjusted for seasonal variations and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. See Table 3 for seasonal adjustment factors used.

Table 2. Coefficients of Variation and Standard Errors for Sales and Inventories Estimates

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Median coefficients of variation for level (%)				Median standard errors for trend				Coefficients of variation for level (%)		Standard errors for trend
		Preliminary estimates		Final estimates		Ratio of two consecutive months		Year-to-year estimates		Cumulative sales estimates		Current year cumulative
		Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Current year	Previous year	to previous year cumulative
42	U.S. Total	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.7	0.4	0.2	0.9	1.5	1.4	1.0	0.9
421	Durable	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.9	0.5	0.2	1.4	1.4	1.8	0.7	1.3
4211	Automotive	4.1	4.7	3.9	4.8	1.0	0.6	3.1	5.2	4.3	2.4	3.1
4212	Furniture	4.0	6.3	3.8	6.3	2.0	1.0	3.9	2.9	3.8	3.2	3.6
4213	Lumber	3.8	5.9	3.8	5.9	1.2	0.7	2.2	4.3	3.7	4.2	1.9
4214	Prof. equip.	4.2	4.6	3.9	4.5	1.2	0.6	2.9	2.1	4.2	2.5	3.1
42143	Comp. equip.	7.0	6.1	6.6	5.8	1.8	1.2	5.3	2.4	7.2	4.3	5.1
4215	Metals	8.1	9.0	8.1	8.9	1.3	0.7	5.2	3.7	8.1	3.6	5.0
4216	Electrical	4.2	4.5	4.2	4.5	1.2	0.5	2.7	3.5	4.1	2.6	2.6
4217	Hardware	6.8	9.5	6.9	9.5	1.3	0.8	4.1	3.7	7.1	4.4	3.8
4218	Machinery	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.5	1.6	0.6	2.6	3.2	3.4	2.6	2.5
4219	Misc. Durable	4.6	8.0	4.6	8.2	1.6	0.8	2.5	2.6	4.7	4.2	2.2
422	Nondurable	1.8	2.7	1.8	2.8	0.4	0.4	0.9	2.9	1.7	1.8	0.9
4221	Paper	4.8	3.5	4.7	3.5	1.1	0.5	2.2	1.5	4.8	4.4	2.0
4222	Drugs	4.1	5.6	4.1	5.6	0.7	0.5	2.5	6.1	4.1	4.0	2.4
4223	Apparel	4.4	5.2	4.3	5.4	1.7	0.8	3.2	5.3	4.4	3.9	3.0
4224	Groceries	2.5	5.6	2.6	5.6	0.7	0.8	2.1	4.1	2.4	3.3	2.0
4225	Farm products	5.3	11.2	5.0	11.6	2.0	1.5	4.6	7.0	5.1	4.6	4.0
4226	Chemicals	4.4	6.8	4.4	6.7	1.4	0.8	3.0	3.5	4.4	4.1	2.8
4227	Petroleum	5.5	6.7	5.4	6.5	0.7	0.8	2.5	3.4	5.5	4.6	2.5
4228	Alcohol	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.9	1.2	0.7	2.3	6.6	3.9	4.6	2.3
4229	Misc. Nondur.	7.7	7.9	7.7	7.6	2.2	1.0	3.6	6.9	7.5	6.7	2.8

Note: Medians are based on data from the period January 2001 to present.

Reliability of Estimates

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: sampling and nonsampling.

Sampling errors occur because observations are made on a sample, not on the entire population, and different samples could have led to different estimates. Standard errors and coefficients of variation, as calculated for this report, are measures of sampling variation. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is up 1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to $+2.7\%$. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Nonsampling errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of wholesale businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and response errors. Imputed data accounts for approximately 28% of the sales estimates and 31% of the inventories estimates. Additionally, estimates of sales and inventories prior to March 2001 have been restated from SIC-based estimates. The restatement methodology may have introduced additional nonsampling error. The calculated median standard errors of year-to-year change estimates may also be influenced by the methodology used to impute historical data for units in the NAICS sample. The effect of this historic imputation methodology on published estimates will decrease as more data from the NAICS sample is accumulated. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

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Table 3. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories					
		2001					2000	2001					2000
		Aug.	Jul.r	Jun.r	May	Apr.	Jul.r	Aug.	Jul.r	Jun.r	May	Apr.	Jul.r
42	U.S. Total¹	1.037	0.983	1.013	1.045	0.979	0.959	0.982	0.993	0.989	0.992	1.003	0.993
421	Durable	1.048	0.987	1.025	1.036	0.974	0.959	0.998	1.009	1.002	1.006	1.006	1.010
4211	Automotive	1.013	1.006	1.026	1.066	1.015	0.968	0.964	0.984	0.982	1.007	1.023	0.985
4212	Furniture	1.070	0.968	0.989	1.011	0.981	0.938	1.039	1.030	1.010	0.991	0.966	1.031
4213	Lumber	1.145	1.062	1.091	1.106	0.989	1.030	1.000	1.029	1.027	1.035	1.030	1.030
4214	Prof. equip.	1.070	0.966	1.030	0.998	0.934	0.946	0.982	1.003	0.981	0.984	1.006	1.004
42143	Comp. equip.	1.080	0.952	1.041	0.979	0.919	0.939	0.975	0.998	0.956	0.974	0.996	1.000
4215	Metals	1.057	0.980	1.017	1.049	0.988	0.942	1.001	1.010	1.003	1.001	0.997	1.010
4216	Electrical	1.058	0.980	1.004	0.993	0.933	0.958	1.011	1.020	1.006	0.993	0.985	1.022
4217	Hardware	1.067	1.041	1.076	1.081	0.965	1.009	1.006	1.014	1.023	1.018	1.017	1.012
4218	Machinery	1.026	0.982	1.042	1.072	1.017	0.947	1.003	1.015	1.018	1.023	1.017	1.016
4219	Misc. Durable	1.033	0.957	0.983	0.994	0.944	0.935	1.017	1.004	0.998	1.001	0.988	1.004
422	Nondurable	1.031	0.980	1.000	1.055	0.981	0.959	0.952	0.960	0.963	0.967	0.994	0.960
4221	Paper	1.083	0.978	0.990	1.018	0.957	0.946	0.990	0.990	0.991	1.008	1.011	0.994
4222	Drugs	1.014	0.973	0.976	1.021	0.970	0.928	0.965	1.000	0.991	0.960	1.002	0.998
4223	Apparel	1.117	1.005	0.972	0.950	0.918	0.978	1.027	1.032	1.019	0.988	0.965	1.031
4224	Groceries	1.038	1.010	1.005	1.063	0.980	1.005	0.975	0.979	0.983	0.988	0.984	0.982
4225	Farm products	0.917	0.895	0.919	1.023	0.929	0.857	0.721	0.723	0.765	0.848	0.974	0.723
4226	Chemicals	1.064	0.995	1.041	1.073	0.971	0.963	1.003	1.014	1.007	1.013	1.012	1.014
4227	Petroleum	1.037	0.973	0.999	1.040	0.979	0.950	1.016	0.995	0.976	0.971	0.977	0.994
4228	Alcohol	1.105	0.994	1.064	1.111	0.945	0.954	1.002	1.015	1.014	0.996	1.009	1.015
4229	Misc. Nondur.	0.972	0.952	1.053	1.139	1.103	0.945	0.935	0.927	0.939	0.973	1.029	0.924

r Revised



1 Adjusted sales and inventories data shown in Table 1 are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

Note: The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimates.