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MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES JULY 2009

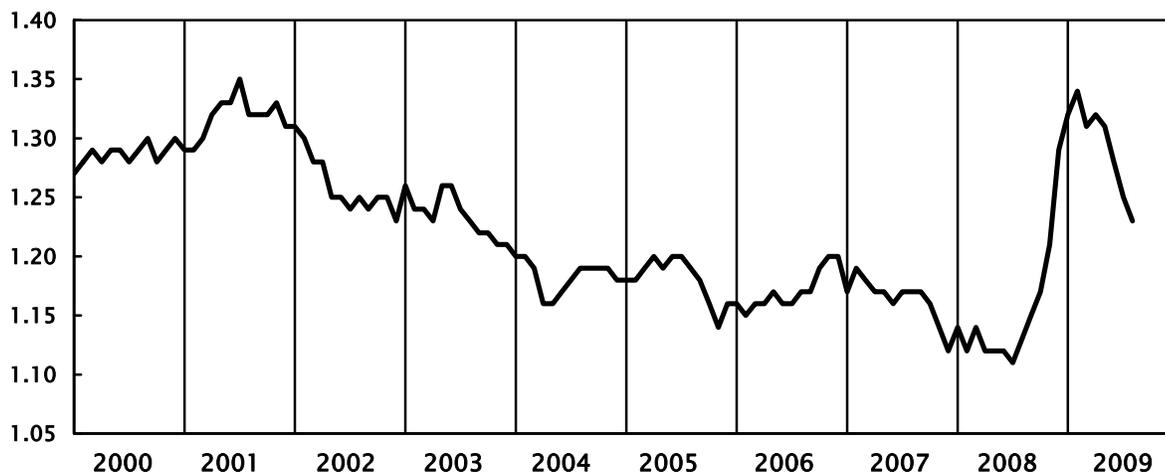
Sales. The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that July 2009 sales of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$314.5 billion, up 0.5 percent (+/-0.5%)* from the revised June level, but were down 19.8 percent (+/-1.1%) from the July 2008 level. The June preliminary estimate was revised downward \$0.2 billion or 0.1 percent. July sales of durable goods were up 1.0 percent (+/-1.1%)* from last month, but were down 21.3 percent (+/-1.8%) from a year ago. Sales of hardware, and plumbing and heating equipment and supplies were up 2.3 percent from last month. Sales of nondurable goods were up 0.1 percent (+/-0.9%)* from last month, but were down 18.6 percent (+/-1.4%) from last year. Sales of drugs and druggists' sundries were up 3.5 percent from last month, while farm product raw materials were down 3.2 percent.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$387.2 billion at the end of July, down 1.4 percent (+/-0.4%) from the revised June level and were down 12.8 percent (+/-1.1%) from a year ago. The June preliminary estimate was revised downward \$1.4 billion or 0.4 percent. End-of-month inventories of durable goods were down 1.5 percent (+/-0.4%) from last month and were down 13.0 percent (+/-1.2%) from last July. Inventories of metals and minerals, except petroleum, were down 4.4 percent from last month and inventories of furniture and home furnishings were down 2.7 percent. End-of-month inventories of nondurable goods were down 1.0 (+/-0.4%) from June and were down 12.4 percent (+/-1.4%) compared to last July. Inventories of farm product raw materials were down 5.1 percent from last month and inventories of beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages were down 2.8 percent.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The July inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.23. The July 2008 ratio was 1.13.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. A discussion of the reliability of the estimates and general survey methodology can be found at: <http://www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/011340.html>.

**Monthly Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers, Except Manufacturers'
Sales Branches and Offices: 2000 to 2009**
(Estimates adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



Monthly Wholesale Trade for August is scheduled to be released October 8, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/wholesale>>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

Table 1. Estimates of Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers, Except Manufacturers' Sales Branches and Offices

[Total sales and inventories estimates are shown in millions of dollars. Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories						Inventories/Sales Ratios		
		Monthly			Percent change			Monthly			Percent change			Ratios		
		Jul. 2009 (p)	Jun. 2009 (r)	Jul. 2008 (r)	Jul./ Jun.	Jun./ May	Jul. 09/ Jul. 08	Jul. 2009 (p)	Jun. 2009 (r)	Jul. 2008 (r)	Jul./ Jun.	Jun./ May	Jul. 09/ Jul. 08	Jul. 2009 (p)	Jun. 2009 (r)	Jul. 2008 (r)
Adjusted²																
42	U.S. Total	314,522	312,941	392,275	0.5	0.3	-19.8	387,191	392,493	443,913	-1.4	-2.1	-12.8	1.23	1.25	1.13
423	.Durable	139,317	137,881	177,016	1.0	1.0	-21.3	237,341	241,073	272,818	-1.5	-1.8	-13.0	1.70	1.75	1.54
4231	..Automotive	19,233	19,019	24,229	1.1	5.6	-20.6	33,553	34,245	42,515	-2.0	-2.1	-21.1	1.74	1.80	1.75
4232	..Furniture	4,325	4,244	5,148	1.9	-1.4	-16.0	6,531	6,715	8,071	-2.7	-2.0	-19.1	1.51	1.58	1.57
4233	..Lumber	7,533	7,552	10,199	-0.3	-0.2	-26.1	12,078	12,152	15,075	-0.6	-2.5	-19.9	1.60	1.61	1.48
4234	..Prof. equip.	28,377	28,026	30,329	1.3	-0.3	-6.4	28,514	28,853	32,701	-1.2	-1.8	-12.8	1.00	1.03	1.08
42343	...Comp. equip.	14,584	14,393	15,038	1.3	2.4	-3.0	9,273	9,355	11,171	-0.9	-1.0	-17.0	0.64	0.65	0.74
4235	..Metals	7,979	7,995	15,491	-0.2	0.2	-48.5	19,326	20,222	28,781	-4.4	-6.1	-32.9	2.42	2.53	1.86
4236	..Electrical	24,048	23,727	28,043	1.4	-2.2	-14.2	29,572	30,141	34,460	-1.9	-2.1	-14.2	1.23	1.27	1.23
4237	..Hardware	6,118	5,978	7,371	2.3	-0.9	-17.0	13,233	13,409	14,540	-1.3	0.0	-9.0	2.16	2.24	1.97
4238	..Machinery	24,575	24,599	30,321	-0.1	-0.4	-19.0	69,156	70,223	69,382	-1.5	-1.7	-0.3	2.81	2.85	2.29
4239	..Misc. Durable	17,129	16,741	25,885	2.3	7.4	-33.8	25,378	25,113	27,293	1.1	2.1	-7.0	1.48	1.50	1.05
424	.Nondurable	175,205	175,060	215,259	0.1	-0.3	-18.6	149,850	151,420	171,095	-1.0	-2.5	-12.4	0.86	0.86	0.79
4241	..Paper ³	7,097	7,205	8,331	-1.5	-1.1	-14.8	6,655	6,468	7,403	2.9	-2.7	-10.1	0.94	0.90	0.89
4242	..Drugs	33,250	32,117	32,562	3.5	-4.4	2.1	31,262	31,033	33,569	0.7	-2.8	-6.9	0.94	0.97	1.03
4243	..Apparel	9,891	9,804	10,770	0.9	-3.0	-8.2	15,447	15,631	16,668	-1.2	-1.9	-7.3	1.56	1.59	1.55
4244	..Groceries	41,542	41,249	43,828	0.7	-1.5	-5.2	25,912	26,205	27,595	-1.1	-1.4	-6.1	0.62	0.64	0.63
4245	..Farm products	16,236	16,765	21,259	-3.2	1.0	-23.6	16,386	17,269	25,461	-5.1	-12.2	-35.6	1.01	1.03	1.20
4246	..Chemicals ³	6,964	6,993	9,214	-0.4	0.0	-24.4	7,775	7,851	9,964	-1.0	1.5	-22.0	1.12	1.12	1.08
4247	..Petroleum	32,467	32,909	60,069	-1.3	6.1	-46.0	14,597	14,832	16,397	-1.6	1.7	-11.0	0.45	0.45	0.27
4248	..Alcohol	9,040	8,977	8,847	0.7	-1.3	2.2	10,778	11,083	10,915	-2.8	0.9	-1.3	1.19	1.23	1.23
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	18,718	19,041	20,379	-1.7	0.4	-8.2	21,038	21,048	23,123	0.0	-1.3	-9.0	1.12	1.11	1.13
													Sales to date			
													2009		2008	
42	U.S. Total	324,787	332,737	406,740	-2.4	7.8	-20.1	385,140	389,344	440,533	-1.1	-1.3	-12.6	2,177,704	2,688,222	
423	.Durable	143,520	148,944	182,277	-3.6	12.8	-21.3	237,953	240,162	273,841	-0.9	-1.4	-13.1	962,377	1,220,772	
4231	..Automotive	19,579	20,312	24,714	-3.6	15.9	-20.8	32,815	33,560	41,792	-2.2	-1.5	-21.5	127,913	182,698	
4232	..Furniture	4,429	4,337	5,292	2.1	5.2	-16.3	6,668	6,681	8,249	-0.2	-0.5	-19.2	29,506	35,949	
4233	..Lumber	8,640	8,715	11,576	-0.9	11.0	-25.4	12,235	12,286	15,301	-0.4	-2.4	-20.0	53,862	71,845	
4234	..Prof. equip.	28,491	30,716	30,359	-7.2	19.8	-6.2	28,571	28,391	32,832	0.6	-1.7	-13.0	190,500	204,900	
42343	...Comp. equip.	14,540	16,408	14,903	-11.4	32.1	-2.4	9,301	9,102	11,171	2.2	-0.5	-16.7	94,992	102,269	
4235	..Metals	8,458	8,459	16,420	0.0	6.7	-48.5	19,423	20,121	28,954	-3.5	-5.6	-32.9	63,381	104,353	
4236	..Electrical	24,697	24,652	28,716	0.2	5.6	-14.0	30,045	29,900	35,046	0.5	-2.3	-14.3	165,516	187,605	
4237	..Hardware	6,528	6,612	7,858	-1.3	11.5	-16.9	13,379	13,436	14,700	-0.4	-0.2	-9.0	42,269	50,865	
4238	..Machinery	24,747	26,592	30,473	-6.9	9.5	-18.8	69,363	70,925	69,729	-2.2	-1.0	-0.5	176,841	210,832	
4239	..Misc. Durable	17,951	18,549	26,869	-3.2	20.1	-33.2	25,454	24,862	27,238	2.4	2.0	-6.5	112,589	171,725	
424	.Nondurable	181,267	183,793	224,463	-1.4	4.1	-19.2	147,187	149,182	166,692	-1.3	-1.2	-11.7	1,215,327	1,467,450	
4241	..Paper	7,203	7,522	8,381	-4.2	7.4	-14.1	6,655	6,468	7,403	2.9	-2.7	-10.1	50,040	55,814	
4242	..Drugs	33,450	32,535	32,692	2.8	1.3	2.3	30,949	30,723	33,133	0.7	-2.1	-6.6	229,454	221,718	
4243	..Apparel	10,742	9,784	11,804	9.8	7.9	-9.0	15,957	15,615	17,268	2.2	3.5	-7.6	68,702	71,580	
4244	..Groceries	41,584	42,239	44,047	-1.6	-0.8	-5.6	25,316	25,760	26,960	-1.7	-1.1	-6.1	294,393	307,516	
4245	..Farm products	15,213	16,296	20,217	-6.6	2.2	-24.8	13,748	15,197	21,285	-9.5	-15.0	-35.4	112,851	143,333	
4246	..Chemicals	7,389	7,525	9,721	-1.8	10.0	-24.0	7,775	7,851	9,964	-1.0	1.5	-22.0	48,661	60,941	
4247	..Petroleum	36,882	36,167	67,037	2.0	11.1	-45.0	15,852	15,989	17,643	-0.9	13.6	-10.2	215,333	406,036	
4248	..Alcohol	9,393	10,171	9,227	-7.6	9.1	1.8	10,907	11,205	11,046	-2.7	2.6	-1.3	60,873	58,748	
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	19,411	21,554	21,337	-9.9	1.9	-9.0	20,028	20,374	21,990	-1.7	-3.8	-8.9	135,020	141,764	

Footnotes:

^p Preliminary estimate.

^r Revised estimate.

¹ For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see the 2002 NAICS manual or <http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm#N42>.

² Except where indicated, sales and inventories estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation. Estimates of sales are also adjusted for trading-day differences and moving holidays. See Table 3 for the combined adjustment factors. Adjusted sales-to-date estimates are not tabulated.

³ No discernible seasonal pattern for this NAICS code was detected in the latest annual review of the seasonal adjustment for inventories. Consequently, the "Adjusted" inventories estimates are equal to the "Not Adjusted" estimates.

Note:

Estimates have not been adjusted for price changes. Table 2 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at http://www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/011340.html.

Table 2. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability of Monthly Wholesale Sales and Inventory Estimates

[Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Coefficient of variation for monthly total				Standard error for monthly total				Coefficient of variation for total		Standard error for percent change
		Preliminary estimates		Final estimates		Ratio of two consecutive months		Current month to current month last year		Sales to date		Current year sales to date to previous year sales to date
		Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Current year	Previous year	
42	U.S. Total	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.5	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.9	0.7
423	..Durable	0.9	1.9	1.1	1.9	0.6	0.2	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.6	1.0
4231	..Automotive	3.4	5.1	3.3	5.0	0.7	0.3	1.2	1.2	3.0	2.7	0.9
4232	..Furniture	5.0	6.6	5.6	6.5	2.6	0.5	3.2	2.6	4.2	3.7	2.2
4233	..Lumber	5.9	8.7	6.1	9.0	0.9	0.9	1.5	1.5	5.5	4.9	1.5
4234	..Prof. equip.	4.1	3.8	4.1	3.9	1.4	0.6	2.4	1.8	4.2	4.3	1.4
42343	...Comp. equip.	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.3	1.7	0.6	2.5	3.0	7.3	6.7	2.0
4235	..Metals	5.8	6.2	5.5	5.9	1.7	0.8	1.8	2.5	5.9	5.1	2.2
4236	..Electrical	2.8	4.5	2.5	4.6	0.9	0.4	4.2	2.5	2.7	8.5	4.1
4237	..Hardware	4.8	4.5	5.1	4.6	1.0	0.6	0.9	2.9	5.1	5.0	1.3
4238	..Machinery	3.2	4.4	3.8	4.5	1.7	0.5	2.2	2.0	3.3	3.6	1.5
4239	..Misc. Durable	5.8	4.4	6.3	4.4	1.3	0.8	3.7	2.0	5.4	5.9	3.3
424	..Nondurable	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.8	1.7	1.3	0.8
4241	..Paper	8.4	8.3	7.7	8.0	1.6	0.9	2.0	3.0	7.8	6.8	1.7
4242	..Drugs	3.8	4.7	3.7	4.6	1.3	0.6	2.4	2.4	3.6	3.8	2.2
4243	..Apparel	4.3	7.5	4.4	7.1	2.0	0.5	2.0	2.9	3.9	3.4	1.7
4244	..Groceries	5.1	8.4	5.2	8.5	1.2	0.5	2.1	2.2	4.6	4.1	2.1
4245	..Farm products	4.0	7.1	4.8	5.9	1.6	1.1	2.5	3.0	4.2	3.4	2.1
4246	..Chemicals	6.3	8.2	7.9	8.0	1.8	0.3	2.1	1.7	6.0	7.6	2.2
4247	..Petroleum	4.5	2.7	4.3	3.1	0.7	0.7	1.8	2.1	4.3	3.8	1.4
4248	..Alcohol	7.0	3.9	6.2	3.8	1.2	0.5	3.2	3.1	6.5	7.3	3.5
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	5.6	6.6	5.7	6.3	1.9	0.7	1.9	2.0	5.7	4.5	1.8

Note:

Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, trading-day differences, or moving holidays. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at http://www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/011340.html.

Reliability of the Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 2 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate, which can be used to construct a 90-percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.8 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.753 \times 0.8$ percent or ± 1.4 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is 1.2 ± 1.4 or -0.2 percent to 2.6 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the actual change is different from zero. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated monthly total $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$ (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of wholesale businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, model error, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Table 3. Combined¹ Adjustment Factors for Monthly Wholesale Sales and Inventory Estimates

[Combined adjustment factors are computed using the Census Bureau's X-12 ARIMA program and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories					
		2009					2008	2009					2008
		Aug.	Jul.r	Jun.r	May	Apr.	Jul.r	Aug.	Jul.r	Jun.r	May	Apr.	Jul.r
42	U.S. Total²	1.001	1.026	1.059	0.991	1.015	1.026	0.995	0.998	0.992	0.985	0.994	0.997
423	..Durable	0.997	1.021	1.074	0.971	1.016	1.021	1.002	1.005	0.996	0.994	0.999	1.006
4231	..Automotive	0.989	1.018	1.068	0.973	1.034	1.020	0.939	0.978	0.980	0.974	0.997	0.983
4232	..Furniture	1.008	1.024	1.022	0.958	0.989	1.028	1.029	1.021	0.995	0.980	0.972	1.022
4233	..Lumber	1.081	1.147	1.154	1.038	1.058	1.135	1.016	1.013	1.011	1.010	1.008	1.015
4234	..Prof. equip.	0.972	1.004	1.096	0.912	0.954	1.001	1.011	1.002	0.984	0.983	0.985	1.004
42343	...Comp. equip.	0.957	0.997	1.140	0.884	0.912	0.991	1.009	1.003	0.973	0.968	0.980	1.000
4235	..Metals	1.029	1.060	1.058	0.994	1.033	1.060	1.014	1.005	0.995	0.990	0.973	1.006
4236	..Electrical	1.013	1.027	1.039	0.962	0.975	1.024	1.019	1.016	0.992	0.994	0.986	1.017
4237	..Hardware	1.062	1.067	1.106	0.983	0.998	1.066	1.012	1.011	1.002	1.004	1.003	1.011
4238	..Machinery	1.003	1.007	1.081	0.984	1.044	1.005	0.995	1.003	1.010	1.003	1.009	1.005
4239	..Misc. Durable	1.029	1.048	1.108	0.991	1.024	1.038	1.025	1.003	0.990	0.991	0.991	0.998
424	..Nondurable	0.998	1.028	1.043	1.006	1.017	1.030	0.993	0.988	0.990	0.972	0.989	0.987
4241	..Paper ³	1.019	1.015	1.044	0.962	0.986	1.006	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4242	..Drugs	0.956	1.006	1.013	0.956	1.000	1.004	1.011	0.990	0.990	0.983	0.992	0.987
4243	..Apparel	1.100	1.086	0.998	0.897	0.941	1.096	1.051	1.033	0.999	0.947	0.942	1.036
4244	..Groceries	0.999	1.001	1.024	1.017	1.018	1.005	0.999	0.977	0.983	0.980	0.976	0.977
4245	..Farm products	0.898	0.937	0.972	0.961	0.989	0.951	0.805	0.839	0.880	0.909	1.001	0.836
4246	..Chemicals ³	1.022	1.061	1.076	0.978	0.988	1.055	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4247	..Petroleum	1.092	1.136	1.099	1.050	1.006	1.116	1.019	1.086	1.078	0.965	0.961	1.076
4248	..Alcohol	0.985	1.039	1.133	1.025	0.986	1.043	0.983	1.012	1.011	0.995	1.014	1.012
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	1.027	1.037	1.132	1.115	1.115	1.047	0.955	0.952	0.968	0.993	1.030	0.951

Footnotes:

¹ Revised factors.

¹ Combined factors for sales include the effects of seasonal variation, trading day differences, and moving holidays. Combined factors for inventories include only the effects of seasonal variation.

² Adjusted sales and inventories estimates for detailed kind-of-business levels in Table 1 are computed by dividing each "Not Adjusted" estimate by the combined adjustment factor for the corresponding kind of business and month. Adjusted estimates for broad kind-of-business levels are obtained by summing adjusted estimates at the appropriate detailed levels. Combined factors shown for broad kind-of-business levels may be used to approximate adjusted estimates at these levels, but the resulting estimates may differ slightly from the published estimates.

³ No discernible seasonal pattern for this NAICS code was detected in the latest annual review of the seasonal adjustment for inventories. Therefore, the combined adjustment factors for inventories are set to one for this NAICS code.

Note:

The seasonal adjustment factors shown are estimates derived from a model that uses sample survey data as input. Therefore, these estimates may contain sampling error and nonsampling error. Additional information on the general form of the model and the X-12 ARIMA program may be found at <http://www.census.gov/srd/www/x12a/>.

Description of the Survey

The Census Bureau conducts the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey (MWTS) to provide national estimates of monthly sales, end-of-month inventories, and inventories-to-sales ratios by kind of business for wholesale firms located in the United States. Specifically, the MWTS covers wholesale merchants who sell goods on their own account and include such businesses as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, exporters, and importers. Sales offices and branches maintained by manufacturing, refining, or mining firms for the purpose of marketing their products are not covered in this report. Also excluded is NAICS Industry Group 4251: Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers.

The MWTS sample was selected using a stratified, one-stage design with strata defined by kind of business (e.g., Automotive, Furniture, Lumber, etc.) and annual sales size. The sample includes firms of all sizes and is updated on a quarterly basis to account for new wholesale firms, deaths, and other changes to the wholesale universe. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to employer firms selected in a probability sample of approximately 4,500. Approximately 76% of those mailed provided data for this reporting period. Data for nonresponding firms are imputed based on data for similar-sized firms classified in the same kind of business. Approximately 32% of the total sales estimate and 29% of the total end-of-month inventories estimate is based on imputed data.

Monthly sales and inventories estimates are obtained by summing weighted data (either reported or imputed). The monthly estimates are benchmarked to annual survey estimates and are adjusted for seasonal variation and trading-day differences. Individuals who use estimates in this report to create new estimates should cite the Census Bureau as the source of only the original estimates. Additional information on the MWTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/wholesale>.