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MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES AUGUST 2009

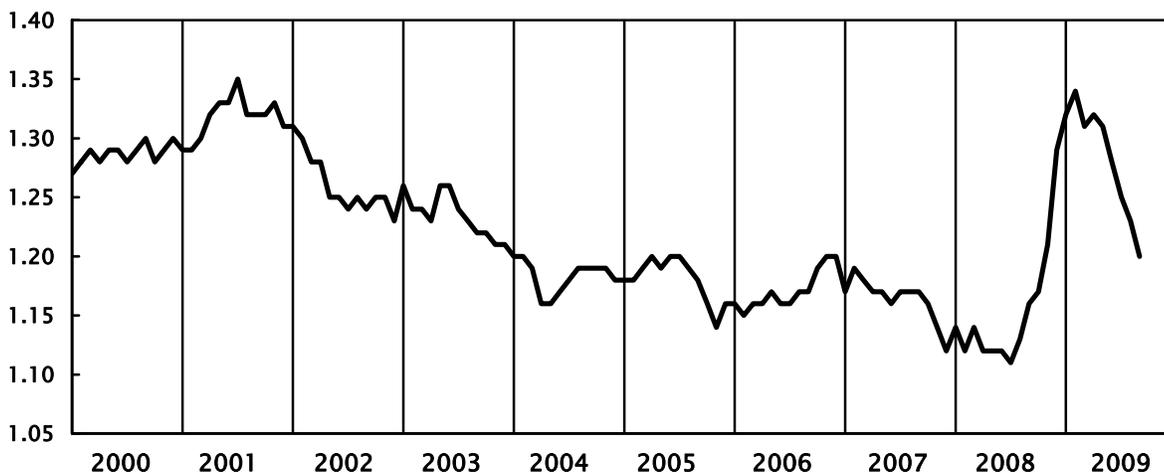
Sales. The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that August 2009 sales of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$317.9 billion, up 1.0 percent (+/-0.5%) from the revised July level, but were down 17.7 percent (+/-1.4%) from the August 2008 level. The July preliminary estimate was revised upward \$0.2 billion or 0.1 percent. August sales of durable goods were up 1.2 percent (+/-0.5%) from last month, but were down 18.8 percent (+/-2.1%) from a year ago. Sales of motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and supplies were up 7.7 percent from last month and sales of electrical and electronic goods were up 2.5 percent from last month. Sales of nondurable goods were up 0.9 percent (+/-1.1%)* from last month, but were down 16.7 percent (+/-1.6%) from last year. Sales of petroleum and petroleum products were up 7.0 percent from last month.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$381.2 billion at the end of August, down 1.3 percent (+/-0.4%) from the revised July level and were down 14.7 percent (+/-1.2%) from a year ago. The July preliminary estimate was revised downward \$0.9 billion or 0.2 percent. End-of-month inventories of durable goods were down 1.6 percent (+/-0.4%) from last month and were down 15.5 percent (+/-1.1%) from last August. Inventories of metals and minerals, except petroleum, were down 4.3 percent from last month and inventories of motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and supplies were down 2.3 percent. End-of-month inventories of nondurable goods were down 0.9 (+/-0.7%) from July and were down 13.3 percent (+/-1.6%) compared to last August. Inventories of paper and paper products were down 2.1 percent from last month and inventories of drugs and druggists' sundries were down 1.9 percent.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The August inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.20. The August 2008 ratio was 1.16.

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 September is scheduled to be released November 6, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. EST.

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		
		Aug. 2009 (p)	Jul. 2009 (r)	Aug. 2008 (r)	Aug./ Jul.	Jul./ Jun.	Aug. 09/ Aug. 08	Aug. 2009 (p)	Jul. 2009 (r)	Aug. 2008 (r)	Aug./ Jul.	Jul./ Jun.	Aug. 09/ Aug. 08	Aug. 2009 (p)	Jul. 2009 (r)	Aug. 2008 (r)
Adjusted²																
42	U.S. Total	317,897	314,709	386,097	1.0	0.6	-17.7	381,238	386,330	446,873	-1.3	-1.6	-14.7	1.20	1.23	1.16
423	.Durable	141,168	139,497	173,940	1.2	1.2	-18.8	233,410	237,090	276,308	-1.6	-1.7	-15.5	1.65	1.70	1.59
4231	..Automotive	20,707	19,234	23,772	7.7	1.1	-12.9	32,596	33,368	43,011	-2.3	-2.6	-24.2	1.57	1.73	1.81
4232	..Furniture	4,321	4,337	5,131	-0.4	2.2	-15.8	6,451	6,535	8,029	-1.3	-2.7	-19.7	1.49	1.51	1.56
4233	..Lumber	7,605	7,552	9,678	0.7	0.0	-21.4	11,862	12,047	15,036	-1.5	-0.9	-21.1	1.56	1.60	1.55
4234	..Prof. equip.	27,982	28,309	30,289	-1.2	1.0	-7.6	28,145	28,457	33,108	-1.1	-1.4	-15.0	1.01	1.01	1.09
42343	...Comp. equip.	14,244	14,543	15,193	-2.1	1.0	-6.2	9,129	9,264	11,339	-1.5	-1.0	-19.5	0.64	0.64	0.75
4235	..Metals	8,037	7,998	15,633	0.5	0.0	-48.6	18,495	19,331	29,665	-4.3	-4.4	-37.7	2.30	2.42	1.90
4236	..Electrical	24,788	24,195	27,175	2.5	2.0	-8.8	29,591	29,757	35,008	-0.6	-1.3	-15.5	1.19	1.23	1.29
4237	..Hardware	5,873	6,105	6,798	-3.8	2.1	-13.6	12,996	13,198	14,609	-1.5	-1.6	-11.0	2.21	2.16	2.15
4238	..Machinery	24,579	24,603	30,863	-0.1	0.0	-20.4	68,177	69,033	70,099	-1.2	-1.7	-2.7	2.77	2.81	2.27
4239	..Misc. Durable	17,276	17,164	24,601	0.7	2.5	-29.8	25,097	25,364	27,743	-1.1	1.0	-9.5	1.45	1.48	1.13
424	.Nondurable	176,729	175,212	212,157	0.9	0.1	-16.7	147,828	149,240	170,565	-0.9	-1.4	-13.3	0.84	0.85	0.80
4241	..Paper ³	7,300	7,165	8,364	1.9	-0.6	-12.7	6,497	6,636	7,301	-2.1	2.6	-11.0	0.89	0.93	0.87
4242	..Drugs	33,218	33,250	32,807	-0.1	3.5	1.3	30,340	30,918	33,362	-1.9	-0.4	-9.1	0.91	0.93	1.02
4243	..Apparel	10,014	9,890	10,647	1.3	0.9	-5.9	15,192	15,339	16,562	-1.0	-1.9	-8.3	1.52	1.55	1.56
4244	..Groceries	40,795	41,179	43,917	-0.9	-0.2	-7.1	25,146	25,683	28,166	-2.1	-2.0	-10.7	0.62	0.62	0.64
4245	..Farm products	15,755	16,083	20,922	-2.0	-4.1	-24.7	16,237	16,418	24,606	-1.1	-4.9	-34.0	1.03	1.02	1.18
4246	..Chemicals ³	7,167	7,033	9,166	1.9	0.6	-21.8	7,675	7,765	10,174	-1.2	-1.1	-24.6	1.07	1.10	1.11
4247	..Petroleum	35,237	32,930	57,210	7.0	0.1	-38.4	15,225	14,692	16,385	3.6	-0.9	-7.1	0.43	0.45	0.29
4248	..Alcohol	9,137	9,103	8,778	0.4	1.4	4.1	10,918	10,827	10,899	0.8	-2.3	0.2	1.19	1.19	1.24
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	18,106	18,579	20,346	-2.5	-2.4	-11.0	20,598	20,962	23,110	-1.7	-0.4	-10.9	1.14	1.13	1.14
Not Adjusted													Sales to date			
													2009		2008	
42	U.S. Total	321,006	324,581	391,378	-1.1	-2.5	-18.0	377,429	384,945	441,139	-2.0	-1.1	-14.4	2,498,504	3,079,600	
423	.Durable	142,444	143,574	175,409	-0.8	-3.6	-18.8	232,978	237,897	275,841	-2.1	-0.9	-15.5	1,104,875	1,396,181	
4231	..Automotive	20,500	19,580	23,653	4.7	-3.6	-13.3	30,412	32,767	40,215	-7.2	-2.4	-24.4	148,414	206,351	
4232	..Furniture	4,373	4,441	5,167	-1.5	2.4	-15.4	6,619	6,672	8,246	-0.8	-0.1	-19.7	33,891	41,116	
4233	..Lumber	8,251	8,632	10,501	-4.4	-1.0	-21.4	12,040	12,240	15,262	-1.6	-0.4	-21.1	62,105	82,346	
4234	..Prof. equip.	27,143	28,479	29,199	-4.7	-7.3	-7.0	28,426	28,571	33,439	-0.5	0.6	-15.0	217,631	234,099	
42343	...Comp. equip.	13,575	14,528	14,357	-6.6	-11.5	-5.4	9,193	9,301	11,396	-1.2	2.2	-19.3	108,555	116,626	
4235	..Metals	8,286	8,454	16,149	-2.0	-0.1	-48.7	18,735	19,408	30,051	-3.5	-3.5	-37.7	71,663	120,502	
4236	..Electrical	25,259	24,727	27,718	2.2	0.3	-8.9	30,153	30,025	35,673	0.4	0.4	-15.5	190,805	215,323	
4237	..Hardware	6,167	6,532	7,158	-5.6	-1.2	-13.8	13,126	13,396	14,740	-2.0	-0.3	-10.9	48,440	58,023	
4238	..Machinery	24,653	24,775	30,894	-0.5	-6.8	-20.2	67,768	69,378	69,889	-2.3	-2.2	-3.0	201,522	241,726	
4239	..Misc. Durable	17,812	17,954	24,970	-0.8	-3.2	-28.7	25,699	25,440	28,326	1.0	2.3	-9.3	130,404	196,695	
424	.Nondurable	178,562	181,007	215,969	-1.4	-1.5	-17.3	144,451	147,048	165,298	-1.8	-1.4	-12.6	1,393,629	1,683,419	
4241	..Paper	7,475	7,244	8,565	3.2	-3.7	-12.7	6,497	6,636	7,301	-2.1	2.6	-11.0	57,556	64,379	
4242	..Drugs	31,756	33,450	31,429	-5.1	2.8	1.0	30,461	30,949	33,395	-1.6	0.7	-8.8	261,210	253,147	
4243	..Apparel	11,085	10,701	11,744	3.6	9.4	-5.6	15,815	15,891	17,307	-0.5	1.8	-8.6	79,746	83,324	
4244	..Groceries	40,632	41,261	43,390	-1.5	-2.3	-6.4	24,970	25,195	27,997	-0.9	-2.2	-10.8	334,702	350,906	
4245	..Farm products	13,959	15,166	18,474	-8.0	-6.9	-24.4	13,087	13,742	19,685	-4.8	-9.6	-33.5	126,763	161,807	
4246	..Chemicals	7,439	7,413	9,478	0.4	-1.5	-21.5	7,675	7,765	10,174	-1.2	-1.1	-24.6	56,124	70,419	
4247	..Petroleum	38,866	36,882	63,617	5.4	2.0	-38.9	15,636	15,853	16,713	-1.4	-0.9	-6.4	254,199	469,653	
4248	..Alcohol	8,991	9,494	9,068	-5.3	-6.7	-0.8	10,721	10,935	10,725	-2.0	-2.4	0.0	69,965	67,816	
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	18,359	19,396	20,204	-5.3	-10.0	-9.1	19,589	20,082	22,001	-2.5	-1.4	-11.0	153,364	161,968	

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	1.0	1.6	1.1	1.5	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.7
423	..Durable	1.0	1.9	0.9	1.9	0.3	0.2	1.2	0.6	1.0	1.6	1.0
4231	..Automotive	3.0	5.4	3.4	5.1	0.6	0.4	1.3	1.2	3.0	2.7	0.9
4232	..Furniture	5.2	6.7	5.1	6.6	2.5	0.5	2.1	2.6	4.3	3.7	2.1
4233	..Lumber	5.7	8.8	6.0	8.7	1.2	0.7	1.5	1.7	5.5	4.9	1.5
4234	..Prof. equip.	4.4	4.0	4.1	3.8	0.6	0.3	2.3	1.7	4.2	4.3	1.5
42343	...Comp. equip.	8.0	7.0	7.2	7.1	1.2	0.7	2.4	2.6	7.4	6.8	2.0
4235	..Metals	5.4	6.4	5.8	6.3	1.0	0.4	1.9	2.4	5.8	5.1	2.1
4236	..Electrical	2.9	4.5	2.7	4.5	0.9	0.3	4.3	2.4	2.7	8.5	4.1
4237	..Hardware	4.4	4.5	4.8	4.6	1.0	0.3	1.3	3.0	5.0	5.0	1.2
4238	..Machinery	3.5	4.6	3.1	4.4	1.3	0.6	2.5	1.6	3.3	3.7	1.5
4239	..Misc. Durable	4.8	4.3	5.8	4.4	1.4	0.7	2.9	2.1	5.3	5.9	3.2
424	..Nondurable	1.8	1.8	2.0	1.8	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.9	1.7	1.3	0.8
4241	..Paper	7.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	1.6	0.9	1.9	2.8	7.7	6.8	1.7
4242	..Drugs	3.7	4.9	3.8	4.7	1.2	0.4	2.2	2.0	3.6	3.8	2.1
4243	..Apparel	4.5	7.5	4.3	7.5	1.6	0.8	2.4	3.1	3.9	3.5	1.7
4244	..Groceries	5.6	8.4	5.1	8.3	0.9	1.6	2.2	2.3	4.7	4.1	2.1
4245	..Farm products	4.5	6.5	4.0	7.1	1.2	1.5	1.7	2.5	4.2	3.4	1.9
4246	..Chemicals	8.0	7.9	6.3	8.2	2.6	0.9	3.0	2.4	6.2	7.4	2.1
4247	..Petroleum	4.5	2.7	4.5	2.7	1.4	0.3	1.7	1.7	4.3	3.8	1.4
4248	..Alcohol	6.5	3.8	6.9	4.0	1.1	0.6	2.2	2.6	6.4	7.3	3.3
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	5.4	6.7	5.6	6.6	0.9	0.3	1.7	1.7	5.7	4.6	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
		Sep.	Aug.r	Jul.r	Jun.	May	Aug.r	Sep.	Aug.r	Jul.r	Jun.	May	Aug.r
42	U.S. Total²	1.025	1.003	1.023	1.059	0.991	1.002	1.001	0.995	0.998	0.992	0.985	0.994
423	..Durable	1.036	1.000	1.019	1.074	0.971	0.999	1.007	1.002	1.005	0.996	0.994	1.001
4231	..Automotive	0.987	0.990	1.018	1.068	0.973	0.995	0.972	0.933	0.982	0.980	0.974	0.935
4232	..Furniture	1.057	1.012	1.024	1.022	0.958	1.007	1.015	1.026	1.021	0.995	0.980	1.027
4233	..Lumber	1.088	1.085	1.143	1.154	1.038	1.085	1.003	1.015	1.016	1.011	1.010	1.015
4234	..Prof. equip.	1.123	0.970	1.006	1.096	0.912	0.964	1.013	1.010	1.004	0.984	0.983	1.010
42343	...Comp. equip.	1.164	0.953	0.999	1.140	0.884	0.945	1.026	1.007	1.004	0.973	0.968	1.005
4235	..Metals	1.029	1.031	1.057	1.058	0.994	1.033	1.020	1.013	1.004	0.995	0.990	1.013
4236	..Electrical	1.088	1.019	1.022	1.039	0.962	1.020	1.028	1.019	1.009	0.992	0.994	1.019
4237	..Hardware	1.070	1.050	1.070	1.106	0.983	1.053	1.006	1.010	1.015	1.002	1.004	1.009
4238	..Machinery	1.036	1.003	1.007	1.081	0.984	1.001	0.988	0.994	1.005	1.010	1.003	0.997
4239	..Misc. Durable	1.007	1.031	1.046	1.108	0.991	1.015	1.038	1.024	1.003	0.990	0.991	1.021
424	..Nondurable	1.005	1.000	1.027	1.043	1.006	0.997	0.992	0.990	0.994	0.990	0.972	0.989
4241	..Paper ³	1.052	1.024	1.011	1.044	0.962	1.024	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4242	..Drugs	1.023	0.956	1.006	1.013	0.956	0.958	1.006	1.004	1.001	0.990	0.983	1.001
4243	..Apparel	1.135	1.107	1.082	0.998	0.897	1.103	1.049	1.041	1.036	0.999	0.947	1.045
4244	..Groceries	0.988	0.996	1.002	1.024	1.017	0.988	1.001	0.993	0.981	0.983	0.980	0.994
4245	..Farm products	0.970	0.886	0.943	0.972	0.961	0.883	0.824	0.806	0.837	0.880	0.909	0.800
4246	..Chemicals ³	1.037	1.038	1.054	1.076	0.978	1.034	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4247	..Petroleum	1.057	1.103	1.120	1.099	1.050	1.112	1.003	1.027	1.079	1.078	0.965	1.020
4248	..Alcohol	1.032	0.984	1.043	1.133	1.025	1.033	1.021	0.982	1.010	1.011	0.995	0.984
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	0.987	1.014	1.044	1.132	1.115	0.993	0.981	0.951	0.958	0.968	0.993	0.952

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 31% 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>.