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MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES

June 2012

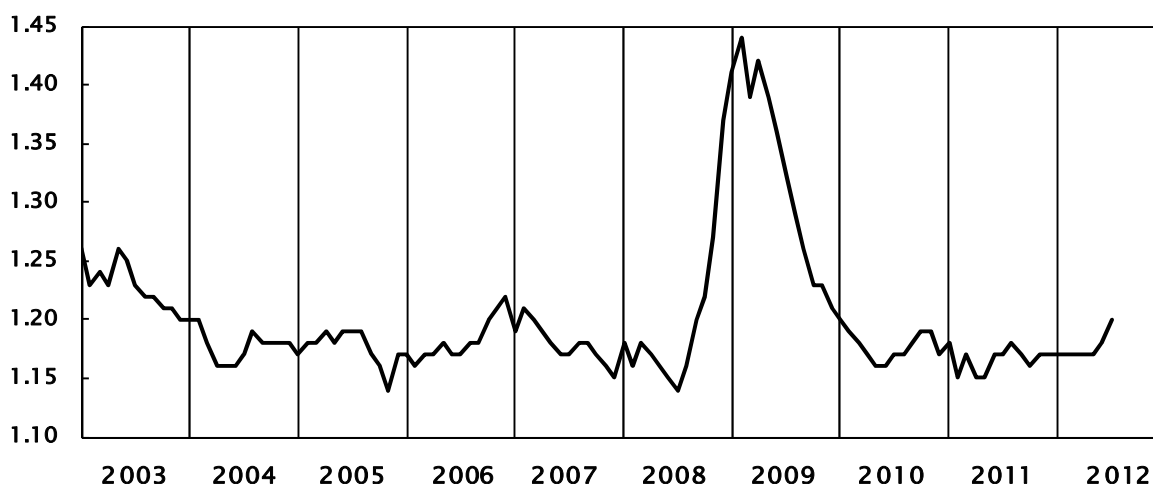
Sales. The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that June 2012 sales of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$402.9 billion, down 1.4 percent (+/-0.5) from the revised May level, but were up 3.1 percent (+/-0.9%) from the June 2011 level. The May preliminary estimate was revised downward \$1.1 billion or 0.3 percent. June sales of durable goods were down 0.7 percent (+/-0.9%)* from last month, but were up 5.7 percent (+/-1.1%) from a year ago. Sales of machinery, equipment, and supplies were down 2.8 percent from last month. Sales of nondurable goods were down 1.9 percent (+/-0.7%) from May, but were up 0.9 percent (+/-1.1%)* from last June. Sales of petroleum and petroleum products were down 5.3 percent from last month and sales of farm product raw materials were down 2.8 percent.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$481.9 billion at the end of June, down 0.2 percent (+/-0.4%)* from the revised May level, but were up 5.3 percent (+/-1.1%) from the June 2011 level. The May preliminary estimate was revised downward \$1.4 billion or 0.3 percent. June inventories of durable goods were up 0.2 percent (+/-0.4%)* from last month and were up 9.1 percent (+/-1.1%) from a year ago. Inventories of hardware, and plumbing and heating equipment and supplies were up 1.8 percent from last month. Inventories of nondurable goods were down 0.8 percent (+/-0.5%) from May, but were up 0.2 percent (+/-1.8%)* from last June. Inventories of petroleum and petroleum products were down 8.7 percent from last month and inventories of beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages were down 2.3 percent.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The June inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.20. The June 2011 ratio was 1.17.

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/monthly_methodology.html>.

Monthly Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers, Except Manufacturers'
Sales Branches and Offices: 2003 to 2012
(Estimates adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



Monthly Wholesale Trade for July is scheduled to be released September 12, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

For customized wholesale time series estimates by industry, visit the Census Bureau's website at <<http://www.census.gov/timeseries>>. For additional survey information, visit <<http://www.census.gov/wholesale>>.

* 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		
		Monthly			Percent change			Monthly			Percent change			Ratios		
		Jun. 2012 (p)	May 2012 (r)	Jun. 2011 (r)	Jun./ May	May/ Apr.	Jun. 12/ Jun. 11	Jun. 2012 (p)	May 2012 (r)	Jun. 2011 (r)	Jun./ May	May/ Apr.	Jun. 12/ Jun. 11	Jun. 2012 (p)	May 2012 (r)	Jun. 2011 (r)
Adjusted²																
42	U.S. Total	402,875	408,492	390,895	-1.4	-1.1	3.1	481,911	482,756	457,671	-0.2	0.0	5.3	1.20	1.18	1.17
423	.Durable	183,032	184,281	173,118	-0.7	0.4	5.7	286,518	285,882	262,722	0.2	0.5	9.1	1.57	1.55	1.52
4231	..Automotive	33,386	33,004	26,099	1.2	1.1	27.9	46,079	46,414	40,500	-0.7	1.1	13.8	1.38	1.41	1.55
4232	..Furniture	4,385	4,479	4,344	-2.1	1.6	0.9	7,077	7,125	7,191	-0.7	0.3	-1.6	1.61	1.59	1.66
4233	..Lumber	8,999	9,047	8,098	-0.5	-2.0	11.1	12,649	12,640	11,916	0.1	0.5	6.2	1.41	1.40	1.47
4234	..Prof. equip.	32,405	32,382	31,228	0.1	0.6	3.8	32,302	32,370	31,502	-0.2	0.4	2.5	1.00	1.00	1.01
42343	...Comp. equip.	16,420	16,553	16,171	-0.8	1.1	1.5	12,181	12,111	12,195	0.6	1.6	-0.1	0.74	0.73	0.75
4235	..Metals	12,639	12,694	11,892	-0.4	-2.0	6.3	26,401	26,638	24,663	-0.9	-0.9	7.0	2.09	2.10	2.07
4236	..Electrical	30,781	31,039	31,595	-0.8	0.1	-2.6	41,179	41,144	39,591	0.1	0.1	4.0	1.34	1.33	1.25
4237	..Hardware	9,020	9,134	8,560	-1.2	1.5	5.4	18,474	18,143	17,375	1.8	0.5	6.3	2.05	1.99	2.03
4238	..Machinery	31,852	32,779	29,592	-2.8	1.6	7.6	77,500	76,682	66,005	1.1	1.3	17.4	2.43	2.34	2.23
4239	..Misc. Durable	19,565	19,723	21,710	-0.8	-0.3	-9.9	24,857	24,726	23,979	0.5	-0.6	3.7	1.27	1.25	1.10
424	.Nondurable	219,843	224,211	217,777	-1.9	-2.3	0.9	195,393	196,874	194,949	-0.8	-0.7	0.2	0.89	0.88	0.90
4241	..Paper ³	7,065	7,119	7,065	-0.8	3.2	0.0	7,700	7,515	7,499	2.5	-0.1	2.7	1.09	1.06	1.06
4242	..Drugs	35,266	35,518	35,772	-0.7	-2.1	-1.4	34,391	34,512	32,550	-0.4	2.2	5.7	0.98	0.97	0.91
4243	..Apparel	12,392	11,880	11,182	4.3	-0.3	10.8	21,811	22,158	21,658	-1.6	0.4	0.7	1.76	1.87	1.94
4244	..Groceries	47,849	47,346	45,432	1.1	0.2	5.3	34,963	34,840	32,460	0.4	2.9	7.7	0.73	0.74	0.71
4245	..Farm products	17,306	17,801	19,698	-2.8	-2.5	-12.1	21,121	19,703	23,241	7.2	-5.4	-9.1	1.22	1.11	1.18
4246	..Chemicals ³	10,182	10,049	9,666	1.3	-1.9	5.3	11,680	11,760	11,321	-0.7	0.6	3.2	1.15	1.17	1.17
4247	..Petroleum	60,985	64,370	60,493	-5.3	-5.7	0.8	24,125	26,415	27,132	-8.7	-6.6	-11.1	0.40	0.41	0.45
4248	..Alcohol	10,340	10,304	9,834	0.3	2.8	5.1	13,243	13,551	12,330	-2.3	2.9	7.4	1.28	1.32	1.25
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	18,458	19,824	18,635	-6.9	-2.5	-0.9	26,359	26,420	26,758	-0.2	-2.9	-1.5	1.43	1.33	1.44
Not Adjusted														Sales to date		
														2012	2011	
42	U.S. Total	409,536	431,708	407,610	-5.1	4.6	0.5	477,614	479,839	452,861	-0.5	-0.8	5.5	2,448,316	2,288,037	
423	.Durable	187,975	190,239	182,970	-1.2	6.1	2.7	287,190	285,534	263,133	0.6	0.6	9.1	1,092,913	1,001,266	
4231	..Automotive	33,186	33,598	26,386	-1.2	3.0	25.8	45,434	45,068	39,933	0.8	-0.4	13.8	195,872	154,540	
4232	..Furniture	4,354	4,694	4,457	-7.2	12.6	-2.3	7,084	7,061	7,191	0.3	1.9	-1.5	26,134	25,095	
4233	..Lumber	10,106	10,305	9,483	-1.9	9.1	6.6	13,155	13,272	12,345	-0.9	0.4	6.6	53,788	46,373	
4234	..Prof. equip.	34,317	31,605	34,257	8.6	5.8	0.2	32,076	32,208	31,250	-0.4	0.8	2.6	187,661	181,549	
42343	...Comp. equip.	18,062	15,593	18,370	15.8	6.3	-1.7	12,181	11,990	12,171	1.6	2.3	0.1	95,084	94,368	
4235	..Metals	13,182	13,887	12,820	-5.1	6.5	2.8	26,665	26,984	24,910	-1.2	-0.1	7.0	79,676	72,183	
4236	..Electrical	31,304	31,784	32,827	-1.5	7.4	-4.6	40,973	40,733	39,393	0.6	0.8	4.0	182,736	179,587	
4237	..Hardware	9,733	9,810	9,467	-0.8	9.3	2.8	18,640	18,234	17,497	2.2	0.3	6.5	53,960	49,783	
4238	..Machinery	32,521	33,926	31,042	-4.1	4.6	4.8	78,430	77,372	66,731	1.4	1.7	17.5	192,396	166,390	
4239	..Misc. Durable	19,272	20,630	22,231	-6.6	7.4	-13.3	24,733	24,602	23,883	0.5	-1.1	3.6	120,690	125,766	
424	.Nondurable	221,561	241,469	224,640	-8.2	3.6	-1.4	190,424	194,305	189,728	-2.0	-2.8	0.4	1,355,403	1,286,771	
4241	..Paper	7,086	7,333	7,277	-3.4	10.6	-2.6	7,700	7,515	7,499	2.5	-0.1	2.7	41,605	41,591	
4242	..Drugs	33,820	36,584	35,593	-7.6	4.5	-5.0	34,288	34,132	32,420	0.5	1.9	5.8	213,495	207,329	
4243	..Apparel	11,946	11,737	11,104	1.8	4.7	7.6	22,029	21,161	21,831	4.1	2.7	0.9	68,461	64,914	
4244	..Groceries	48,232	50,424	46,568	-4.3	6.3	3.6	34,718	34,561	32,200	0.5	4.2	7.8	288,238	265,216	
4245	..Farm products	15,973	18,513	18,733	-13.7	1.3	-14.7	16,474	17,437	18,105	-5.5	-17.9	-9.0	107,149	116,636	
4246	..Chemicals	10,671	10,652	10,333	0.2	5.6	3.3	11,680	11,760	11,321	-0.7	0.6	3.2	60,741	57,263	
4247	..Petroleum	61,656	70,035	61,824	-12.0	-1.7	-0.3	24,776	27,313	28,054	-9.3	-8.5	-11.7	391,717	363,208	
4248	..Alcohol	11,467	11,510	11,349	-0.4	20.6	1.0	13,428	13,795	12,503	-2.7	3.7	7.4	58,692	55,322	
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	20,710	24,681	21,859	-16.1	3.7	-5.3	25,331	26,631	25,795	-4.9	-8.4	-1.8	125,305	115,292	

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/monthly_methodology.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	1.2	1.6	1.1	1.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.6	1.2	1.0	0.5
423	..Durable	1.3	1.8	1.2	1.8	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.6	1.4	1.4	0.5
4231	..Automotive	4.4	4.8	4.3	4.8	0.8	0.4	1.9	1.6	4.3	4.1	1.4
4232	..Furniture	6.7	7.9	6.7	7.8	1.2	0.4	3.8	2.0	6.6	4.6	3.9
4233	..Lumber	5.8	7.9	6.4	7.9	0.9	0.6	1.7	1.5	5.9	5.9	2.0
4234	..Prof. equip.	3.7	4.4	4.0	4.4	0.8	0.6	1.3	1.8	4.0	4.7	1.2
42343	...Comp. equip.	6.7	7.0	7.3	6.5	1.3	0.8	1.8	2.9	7.0	8.2	1.6
4235	..Metals	6.5	5.0	5.8	4.9	1.4	0.5	2.6	1.9	5.9	5.7	2.1
4236	..Electrical	3.4	4.4	3.7	4.4	1.4	0.3	1.2	0.9	3.6	3.6	1.4
4237	..Hardware	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.1	1.1	0.5	2.1	1.5	5.2	4.9	1.9
4238	..Machinery	3.4	4.7	3.8	4.8	1.1	0.5	2.0	2.1	3.6	3.4	2.1
4239	..Misc. Durable	7.3	5.9	6.5	6.1	1.4	0.7	2.5	3.3	6.9	6.4	2.0
424	..Nondurable	1.7	2.4	1.6	2.5	0.4	0.3	0.6	1.0	1.5	1.4	0.6
4241	..Paper	7.9	7.4	8.1	7.6	1.6	0.4	2.4	3.1	7.9	7.8	1.7
4242	..Drugs	5.1	5.1	4.9	5.1	0.7	0.7	2.2	2.1	4.6	4.5	1.7
4243	..Apparel	5.0	7.3	4.7	7.3	1.9	0.8	4.4	3.5	4.6	4.6	4.1
4244	..Groceries	5.7	8.7	5.4	9.1	0.7	0.6	1.7	2.1	5.5	5.6	1.8
4245	..Farm products	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.9	1.3	1.2	3.0	2.6	7.2	6.0	3.0
4246	..Chemicals	5.7	6.5	5.7	6.7	1.2	0.9	2.6	2.7	5.4	5.5	1.8
4247	..Petroleum	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.1	0.6	0.5	1.4	1.2	4.2	4.1	0.9
4248	..Alcohol	4.6	4.2	4.7	4.3	0.7	0.7	1.5	2.0	4.4	4.8	1.5
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	5.9	7.4	4.7	7.2	1.4	0.8	2.4	1.6	5.2	5.1	1.2

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/monthly_methodology.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-13 ARIMA-SEATS program and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories					
		2012					2011	2012					2011
		Jul.	Jun.r	May r	Apr.	Mar.	Jun.r	Jul.	Jun.r	May r	Apr.	Mar.	Jun.r
42	U.S. Total²	0.987	1.020	1.057	1.004	1.047	1.048	0.996	0.992	0.994	1.000	1.006	0.991
423	..Durable	0.988	1.026	1.031	0.979	1.058	1.059	1.008	1.001	0.999	0.997	0.992	1.000
4231	..Automotive	0.975	0.994	1.018	1.000	1.085	1.011	0.992	0.986	0.971	0.985	1.005	0.986
4232	..Furniture	0.999	0.993	1.048	0.945	1.021	1.026	1.025	1.001	0.991	0.975	0.972	1.000
4233	..Lumber	1.082	1.123	1.139	1.023	0.996	1.171	1.030	1.040	1.050	1.051	1.044	1.036
4234	..Prof. equip.	0.962	1.059	0.976	0.928	1.080	1.097	1.012	0.993	0.995	0.991	0.965	0.992
42343	...Comp. equip.	0.955	1.100	0.942	0.896	1.094	1.136	1.029	1.000	0.990	0.983	0.949	0.998
4235	..Metals	1.026	1.043	1.094	1.006	1.046	1.078	1.015	1.010	1.013	1.005	0.995	1.010
4236	..Electrical	0.986	1.017	1.024	0.954	1.024	1.039	1.017	0.995	0.990	0.983	0.973	0.995
4237	..Hardware	1.063	1.079	1.074	0.997	1.019	1.106	1.010	1.009	1.005	1.007	1.006	1.007
4238	..Machinery	0.990	1.021	1.035	1.005	1.076	1.049	1.013	1.012	1.009	1.005	1.004	1.011
4239	..Misc. Durable	0.950	0.985	1.046	0.971	1.058	1.024	0.995	0.995	0.995	1.000	0.985	0.996
424	..Nondurable	0.984	1.008	1.079	1.022	1.041	1.036	0.974	0.975	0.987	1.007	1.027	0.976
4241	..Paper ³	0.970	1.003	1.030	0.961	1.023	1.030	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4242	..Drugs	0.975	0.959	1.030	0.965	1.032	0.995	0.994	0.997	0.989	0.992	1.020	0.996
4243	..Apparel	1.032	0.964	0.988	0.941	1.012	0.993	1.055	1.010	0.955	0.934	0.941	1.008
4244	..Groceries	0.992	1.008	1.065	1.004	1.055	1.025	0.986	0.993	0.992	0.980	0.992	0.992
4245	..Farm products	0.864	0.923	1.040	1.001	1.045	0.951	0.764	0.780	0.885	1.019	1.143	0.779
4246	..Chemicals ³	1.014	1.048	1.060	0.985	1.033	1.069	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4247	..Petroleum	1.006	1.011	1.088	1.043	1.028	1.022	1.007	1.027	1.034	1.055	1.030	1.034
4248	..Alcohol	0.979	1.109	1.117	0.952	0.985	1.154	1.011	1.014	1.018	1.010	1.001	1.014
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	1.000	1.122	1.245	1.171	1.086	1.173	0.939	0.961	1.008	1.069	1.092	0.964

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-13 ARIMA-SEATS program may be found at <http://www.census.gov/srd/www/x13as/>.

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 73% 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 33% of the total sales estimate and 30% 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>.