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MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES August 2014

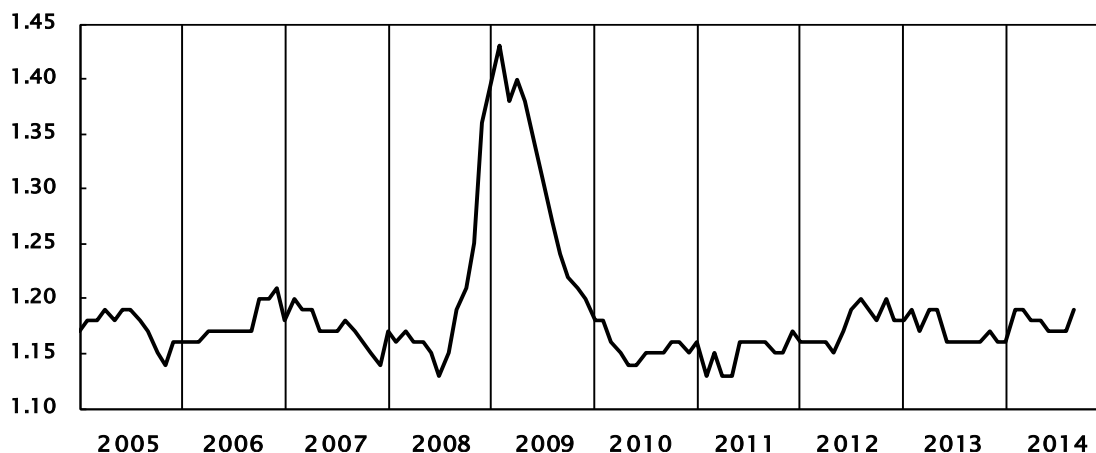
Sales. The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that August 2014 sales of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$453.9 billion, down 0.7 percent (+/-0.4) from the revised July level, but were up 5.8 percent (+/-1.8%) from the August 2013 level. The July preliminary estimate was revised downward \$1.6 billion or 0.3 percent. August sales of durable goods were up 0.1 percent (+/-0.5%)* from last month and were up 7.0 percent (+/-1.2%) from a year ago. Sales of metals and minerals, except petroleum were up 1.6 percent from last month. Sales of nondurable goods were down 1.3 percent (+/-0.5%) from July, but were up 4.7 percent (+/-3.0%) from last August. Sales of petroleum and petroleum products were down 4.2 percent from last month and sales of farm product raw materials were down 3.8 percent.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$538.0 billion at the end of August, up 0.7 percent (+/-0.4%) from the revised July level and were up 7.9 percent (+/-0.7%) from the August 2013 level. The July preliminary estimate was revised upward \$0.7 billion or 0.1 percent. August inventories of durable goods were up 0.8 percent (+/-0.4%) from last month and were up 8.5 percent (+/-1.2%) from a year ago. Inventories of computer and computer peripheral equipment and software were up 4.5 percent from last month and inventories of lumber and other construction materials were up 1.5 percent. Inventories of nondurable goods were up 0.5 percent (+/-0.4%) from July and were up 6.9 percent (+/-1.2%) from last August. Inventories of drugs and druggists' sundries were up 1.6 percent from last month.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The August inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.19. The August 2013 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/monthly_methodology.html>.

**Monthly Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers, Except Manufacturers'
Sales Branches and Offices: 2005 to 2014**
(Estimates adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



Monthly Wholesale Trade for September is scheduled to be released November 12, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. EST.

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

To receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators, download the America's Economy app for Apple and Android smartphones and tablets.

The U.S. Census Bureau updated its Application Programming Interface (API) with monthly and quarterly economic indicators. The API allows developers to combine Census Bureau statistics with other data sets to create tools for research on a variety of topics. For more information, visit <<http://www.census.gov/developers>>.

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 Ratios		
		Monthly			Percent change			Monthly			Percent change			Ratios		
		Aug. 2014 (p)	Jul. 2014 (r)	Aug. 2013 (r)	Aug./Jul.	Jul./Jun.	Aug. 14/ Aug. 13	Aug. 2014 (p)	Jul. 2014 (r)	Aug. 2013 (r)	Aug./Jul.	Jul./Jun.	Aug. 14/ Aug. 13	Aug. 2014 (p)	Jul. 2014 (r)	Aug. 2013 (r)
Adjusted²																
42	U.S. Total	453,938	457,008	429,185	-0.7	0.4	5.8	538,005	534,437	498,693	0.7	0.3	7.9	1.19	1.17	1.16
423	.Durable	210,911	210,720	197,130	0.1	0.3	7.0	333,227	330,659	307,135	0.8	0.4	8.5	1.58	1.57	1.56
4231	..Automotive	35,123	35,288	31,838	-0.5	-0.1	10.3	55,143	54,811	50,929	0.6	1.1	8.3	1.57	1.55	1.60
4232	..Furniture	5,343	5,278	5,200	1.2	1.0	2.8	8,755	8,688	8,330	0.8	-0.1	5.1	1.64	1.65	1.60
4233	..Lumber	10,360	10,456	9,869	-0.9	0.5	5.0	15,373	15,145	14,147	1.5	-0.3	8.7	1.48	1.45	1.43
4234	..Prof. equip.	39,514	39,703	38,438	-0.5	-0.9	2.8	42,124	41,243	38,386	2.1	0.5	9.7	1.07	1.04	1.00
42343	...Comp. equip.	22,327	22,716	22,395	-1.7	0.4	-0.3	18,674	17,868	16,437	4.5	-2.5	13.6	0.84	0.79	0.73
4235	..Metals	14,963	14,727	12,493	1.6	4.6	19.8	28,908	28,941	26,607	-0.1	-1.4	8.6	1.93	1.97	2.13
4236	..Electrical	35,968	36,143	34,851	-0.5	-0.7	3.2	37,851	37,445	35,305	1.1	0.6	7.2	1.05	1.04	1.01
4237	..Hardware	10,086	9,951	9,777	1.4	0.1	3.2	20,096	20,037	18,473	0.3	1.7	8.8	1.99	2.01	1.89
4238	..Machinery	40,356	39,807	35,706	1.4	0.6	13.0	97,493	96,640	87,296	0.9	0.4	11.7	2.42	2.43	2.44
4239	..Misc. Durable	19,198	19,367	18,958	-0.9	1.6	1.3	27,484	27,709	27,662	-0.8	0.3	-0.6	1.43	1.43	1.46
424	.Nondurable	243,027	246,288	232,055	-1.3	0.5	4.7	204,778	203,778	191,558	0.5	0.0	6.9	0.84	0.83	0.83
4241	..Paper ³	8,229	8,385	7,587	-1.9	2.9	8.5	7,365	7,503	7,152	-1.8	-0.5	3.0	0.90	0.89	0.94
4242	..Drugs	41,529	41,124	36,996	1.0	0.4	12.3	45,889	45,180	37,321	1.6	3.5	23.0	1.10	1.10	1.01
4243	..Apparel	13,032	12,599	11,495	3.4	-0.1	13.4	25,579	25,390	23,053	0.7	2.0	11.0	1.96	2.02	2.01
4244	..Groceries	52,888	53,297	49,306	-0.8	2.6	7.3	33,528	33,662	32,915	-0.4	1.0	1.9	0.63	0.63	0.67
4245	..Farm products	19,832	20,610	21,000	-3.8	-1.8	-5.6	19,021	18,826	18,143	1.0	-7.8	4.8	0.96	0.91	0.86
4246	..Chemicals ³	11,118	10,934	10,504	1.7	-0.1	5.8	12,334	12,660	12,001	-2.6	-1.3	2.8	1.11	1.16	1.14
4247	..Petroleum	65,167	68,003	64,575	-4.2	0.8	0.9	20,784	20,690	22,832	0.5	-3.1	-9.0	0.32	0.30	0.35
4248	..Alcohol	10,788	10,603	10,550	1.7	-1.9	2.3	14,758	14,785	14,211	-0.2	0.2	3.8	1.37	1.39	1.35
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	20,444	20,733	20,042	-1.4	-2.6	2.0	25,520	25,082	23,930	1.7	0.5	6.6	1.25	1.21	1.19
Not Adjusted																
														Sales to date		
														2014	2013	
42	U.S. Total	449,197	464,356	436,687	-3.3	0.6	2.9	529,334	529,661	490,575	-0.1	0.7	7.9	3,568,630	3,380,478	
423	.Durable	210,537	213,212	203,330	-1.3	-1.6	3.5	333,141	333,260	307,105	0.0	1.2	8.5	1,629,844	1,550,164	
4231	..Automotive	35,650	35,112	32,825	1.5	-2.0	8.6	52,772	54,592	48,637	-3.3	1.6	8.5	271,525	258,486	
4232	..Furniture	5,487	5,463	5,512	0.4	3.7	-0.5	9,053	8,879	8,613	2.0	2.4	5.1	41,431	39,885	
4233	..Lumber	11,241	11,763	11,132	-4.4	1.6	1.0	15,373	15,478	14,161	-0.7	-1.7	8.6	82,582	78,715	
4234	..Prof. equip.	37,578	40,259	38,054	-6.7	-5.6	-1.3	42,503	41,449	38,808	2.5	1.1	9.5	303,999	292,654	
42343	...Comp. equip.	20,831	23,602	21,701	-11.7	-4.1	-4.0	18,767	18,279	16,585	2.7	-1.5	13.2	171,738	165,909	
4235	..Metals	15,158	15,419	13,068	-1.7	7.5	16.0	29,139	29,288	26,767	-0.5	-0.8	8.9	112,523	103,198	
4236	..Electrical	35,572	36,288	35,548	-2.0	-1.8	0.1	38,797	37,857	36,152	2.5	2.2	7.3	279,819	270,359	
4237	..Hardware	10,550	10,847	10,549	-2.7	-0.4	0.0	20,297	20,318	18,658	-0.1	1.8	8.8	80,633	78,357	
4238	..Machinery	40,679	39,449	37,456	3.1	-3.4	8.6	97,201	97,413	87,121	-0.2	1.0	11.6	310,671	278,320	
4239	..Misc. Durable	18,622	18,612	19,186	0.1	1.2	-2.9	28,006	27,986	28,188	0.1	2.4	-0.6	146,661	150,190	
424	.Nondurable	238,660	251,144	233,357	-5.0	2.5	2.3	196,193	196,401	183,470	-0.1	-0.1	6.9	1,938,786	1,830,314	
4241	..Paper	8,418	8,486	8,019	-0.8	4.8	5.0	7,365	7,503	7,152	-1.8	-0.5	3.0	63,535	59,379	
4242	..Drugs	40,159	41,988	37,107	-4.4	4.7	8.2	46,027	45,496	37,321	1.2	5.5	23.3	317,878	287,607	
4243	..Apparel	14,179	13,544	12,897	4.7	12.6	9.9	27,216	26,761	24,574	1.7	6.0	10.8	99,095	92,086	
4244	..Groceries	52,994	54,789	50,834	-3.3	5.5	4.2	33,126	33,191	32,520	-0.2	0.8	1.9	415,672	390,033	
4245	..Farm products	16,540	19,023	18,102	-13.1	0.5	-8.6	12,725	12,764	12,464	-0.3	-17.4	2.1	161,569	164,167	
4246	..Chemicals	11,251	11,415	11,050	-1.4	2.0	1.8	12,334	12,660	12,001	-2.6	-1.3	2.8	89,324	83,965	
4247	..Petroleum	66,014	69,975	65,479	-5.7	4.9	0.8	20,098	20,918	21,919	-3.9	-3.7	-8.3	536,454	493,145	
4248	..Alcohol	10,971	10,921	11,130	0.5	-7.1	-1.4	14,640	15,036	14,126	-2.6	0.6	3.6	83,509	82,161	
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	18,134	21,003	18,739	-13.7	-13.0	-3.2	22,662	22,072	21,393	2.7	-3.0	5.9	171,750	177,771	

Footnotes:

^p Preliminary estimate.

^r Revised estimate.

¹ For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see the 2007 NAICS manual or <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics>.

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	1.1	1.6	1.1	1.6	0.2	0.2	1.0	0.4	1.1	0.9	0.9
423	..Durable	1.2	1.8	1.2	1.8	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.7	1.1	1.0	0.5
4231	..Automotive	2.1	4.0	2.7	3.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.9	2.4	2.2	1.2
4232	..Furniture	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.5	2.3	1.3	2.9	2.1	5.2	4.3	2.0
4233	..Lumber	4.7	5.3	4.8	5.5	0.5	0.6	1.8	1.6	4.3	3.9	1.2
4234	..Prof. equip.	3.4	4.4	3.1	4.5	1.0	1.0	1.6	2.0	3.4	2.5	1.7
42343	...Comp. equip.	3.6	5.0	3.2	4.8	1.4	0.4	2.3	2.0	3.4	1.9	2.2
4235	..Metals	6.1	8.0	6.0	8.3	0.4	0.4	2.1	1.5	5.5	4.5	1.8
4236	..Electrical	2.0	3.2	1.5	3.4	0.9	0.5	2.3	1.9	1.5	2.5	1.9
4237	..Hardware	2.3	4.8	2.6	4.7	1.2	0.3	2.1	1.1	2.2	2.1	1.2
4238	..Machinery	3.2	3.5	3.1	3.6	1.3	0.3	1.8	1.9	2.9	3.2	1.9
4239	..Misc. Durable	4.1	5.9	3.8	5.7	1.4	0.7	1.8	1.7	4.0	3.9	1.4
424	..Nondurable	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.0	0.3	0.2	1.7	0.7	2.1	1.6	1.6
4241	..Paper	4.1	6.2	4.7	6.1	1.2	0.4	2.0	2.9	4.2	3.2	2.0
4242	..Drugs	2.8	5.9	3.0	5.5	0.4	0.3	0.8	1.8	3.0	2.9	0.9
4243	..Apparel	6.1	6.0	5.5	5.6	1.8	0.7	3.0	3.0	5.2	5.4	3.5
4244	..Groceries	3.8	7.1	3.7	7.4	0.5	0.6	2.1	3.2	3.9	3.3	1.7
4245	..Farm products	6.6	4.7	5.7	4.4	1.3	1.5	2.1	3.7	2.3	2.2	0.9
4246	..Chemicals	4.5	5.4	4.7	5.3	1.4	0.9	2.5	2.3	4.3	4.4	1.6
4247	..Petroleum	6.1	4.0	6.1	4.1	0.3	0.4	5.6	1.7	5.9	3.2	5.6
4248	..Alcohol	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.6	1.1	0.5	2.3	1.5	3.8	3.6	1.1
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	4.3	5.7	4.6	5.7	1.1	0.5	1.9	1.5	4.3	4.0	1.1

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					
		2014					2013	2014					2013
		Sep.	Aug.r	Jul.r	Jun.	May	Aug.r	Sep.	Aug.r	Jul.r	Jun.	May	Aug.r
42	U.S. Total²	1.014	0.986	1.014	1.014	1.030	1.016	0.991	0.982	0.988	0.985	0.991	0.983
423	.Durable	1.047	0.997	1.013	1.031	1.000	1.031	1.003	1.002	1.008	1.001	0.999	1.002
4231	..Automotive	0.983	1.015	0.995	1.015	0.989	1.031	0.976	0.957	0.996	0.991	0.992	0.955
4232	..Furniture	1.063	1.027	1.035	1.008	1.022	1.060	1.033	1.034	1.022	0.997	0.987	1.034
4233	..Lumber	1.061	1.085	1.125	1.113	1.094	1.128	0.972	1.000	1.022	1.037	1.047	1.001
4234	..Prof. equip.	1.084	0.951	1.014	1.064	0.947	0.990	1.006	1.009	1.005	0.999	0.993	1.011
42343	...Comp. equip.	1.083	0.933	1.039	1.088	0.917	0.969	1.007	1.005	1.023	1.013	0.990	1.009
4235	..Metals	1.022	1.013	1.047	1.019	1.049	1.046	1.002	1.008	1.012	1.006	0.998	1.006
4236	..Electrical	1.069	0.989	1.004	1.016	0.985	1.020	1.033	1.025	1.011	0.995	0.998	1.024
4237	..Hardware	1.029	1.046	1.090	1.096	1.058	1.079	1.002	1.010	1.014	1.013	1.014	1.010
4238	..Machinery	1.036	1.008	0.991	1.032	1.025	1.049	1.000	0.997	1.008	1.002	1.002	0.998
4239	..Misc. Durable	1.068	0.970	0.961	0.965	0.993	1.012	1.023	1.019	1.010	0.989	0.983	1.019
424	.Nondurable	0.984	0.976	1.016	0.998	1.057	1.003	0.971	0.949	0.955	0.960	0.978	0.950
4241	..Paper ³	1.056	1.023	1.012	0.994	1.001	1.057	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4242	..Drugs	1.017	0.967	1.021	0.979	1.010	1.003	1.007	1.003	1.007	0.988	0.990	1.000
4243	..Apparel	1.083	1.088	1.075	0.954	0.954	1.122	1.061	1.064	1.054	1.014	0.965	1.066
4244	..Groceries	1.002	1.002	1.028	1.000	1.055	1.031	1.007	0.988	0.986	0.988	0.990	0.988
4245	..Farm products	0.901	0.834	0.923	0.902	1.004	0.862	0.777	0.669	0.678	0.757	0.861	0.687
4246	..Chemicals ³	1.017	1.012	1.044	1.022	1.044	1.052	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4247	..Petroleum	0.964	1.013	1.029	0.989	1.045	1.014	0.979	0.967	1.011	1.017	1.005	0.960
4248	..Alcohol	0.986	1.017	1.030	1.088	1.079	1.055	1.001	0.992	1.017	1.013	1.031	0.994
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	0.904	0.887	1.013	1.135	1.248	0.935	0.927	0.888	0.880	0.912	1.000	0.894

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 4,200. Approximately 70% 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 29% 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>.