

Wholesale trade sales

January, February and March 2004

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In this publication Stats SA releases the new series for wholesale trade sales. This continues the publication of the new monthly series, which are an outcome of a strategic, systematic approach to the overhaul of Stats SA's economic statistics.

The new wholesale trade series, which is based on a new survey running in parallel with the existing survey since the start of 2003, shows movements consistent with those from the old wholesale trade series.

The old series is discontinued from the end of 2003. The new series has been backcast to the start of 1998 to assist users of time series. For the period 1998 to 2002, it reflects the movements from the old series, using the level for January 2003 as the end point of the backcast series.

For 2003, the level of wholesale trade sales is about 17% higher than the level from the old series. This increase in level is consistent with the 17% increase in manufacturing sales published on 18 May 2004 (a copy can be downloaded from the Stats SA website at www.statssa.gov.za).

This increase is a direct reflection of a major drive to improve the coverage of established economic statistics series by basing them on a new, much more comprehensive register of businesses. Economic statistics require the best possible register of businesses by activity, size and location to underpin all Stats SA's business surveys.

The higher levels are also reflected in the new monthly series for retail trade and motor trade sales, all of which replace series based on Stats SA's old business address register.

The statistical releases for wholesale trade and the above-mentioned monthly series were suspended in March 2004, as Stats SA needed more time to fully satisfy itself about the reliability of the new series. This has been done and all the new monthly series except land freight have now been published. The latter will be published shortly, and the established publication timetable for all monthly series will be resumed.

Article 1: *Wholesale trade sales – old and new series* in this release provides information on the levels and movements under the old and new series. The article *Effects of Statistics South Africa's new business register on industry statistics* in the manufacturing release P3041.2 discusses the changes in more detail. Article 2: *New monthly indicator series – feasibility of seasonal adjustment* discusses the effects of seasonal adjustments on the new series.

The new series

Key figures as at the end of March 2004

Actual estimates Wholesale trade sales	R million	% change between month shown in 2004 and preceding month	% change between month shown in 2004 and corresponding month in 2003	% change between three months ending in the month shown in 2004 and corresponding three months in 2003
January 2004				
current prices	35 338	-4,3	+4,7	..
constant (2000) prices	28 350	-4,5	+5,4	..
February 2004				
current prices	39 913	+12,9	+3,4	..
constant (2000) prices	31 841	+12,3	+3,6	..
March 2004				
current prices	43 367	+8,7	+9,2	+5,8
constant (2000) prices	34 624	+8,7	+9,6	+6,3

Seasonally adjusted estimates Wholesale trade sales	R million	% change between month shown in 2004 and preceding month	% change between three months ending in the month shown in 2004 and the preceding three months
January 2004			
current prices	38 816	+4,7	-3,6
constant (2000) prices	31 135	+5,3	-2,9
February 2004			
current prices	40 049	+3,2	-3,2
constant (2000) prices	31 944	+3,5	-3,1
March 2004			
current prices	42 557	+9,2	+4,6
constant (2000) prices	34 064	+9,5	+4,2

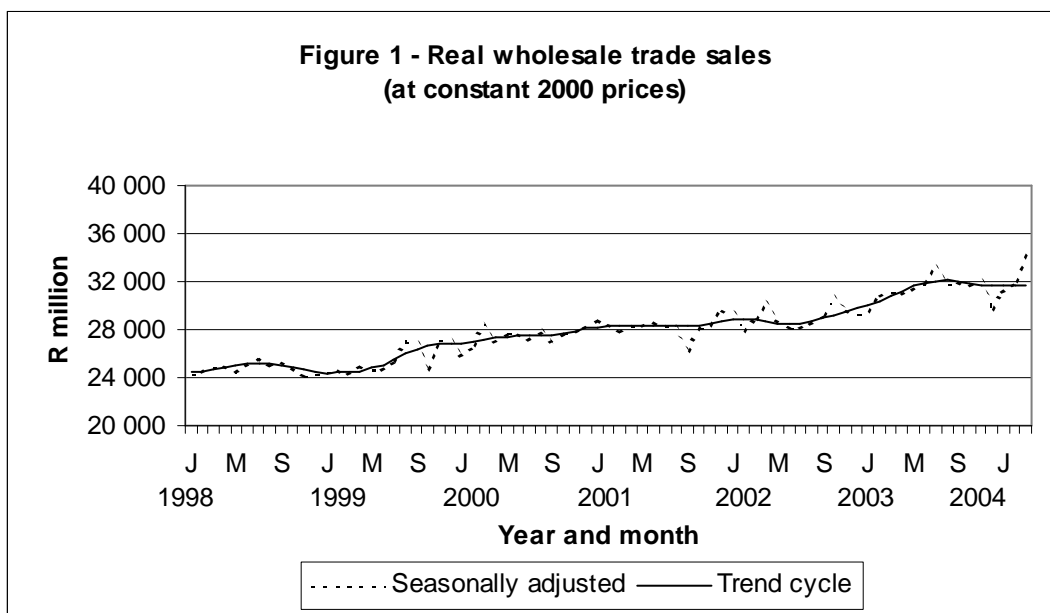
Key findings as at the end of March 2004

Wholesale trade sales increase in real terms

Real wholesale trade sales, at constant (2000) prices for the first quarter of 2004, increased by 6,3%, compared with the first quarter of 2003. Furthermore, seasonally adjusted real wholesale trade sales at constant (2000) prices for the first quarter of 2004 increased by 4,2%, compared with the fourth quarter of 2003.

Real wholesale trade sales at constant (2000) prices for the months of January, February and March 2004 increased by 5,4%, 3,6% and 9,6% respectively, compared to the corresponding months in 2003. Similarly, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales for the months of January, February and March 2004 increased by 5,3%, 3,5% and 9,5% respectively, compared with their preceding months.

Figure 1 below shows the seasonally adjusted and trend patterns for the real wholesale trade sales at constant (2000) prices between January 1998 and March 2004. There was a gradual upward movement in the trend cycle until mid 2003 when it levelled.



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Contents

	Page
Notes	4
Article 1 Wholesale trade sales – old and new series	5
Article 2 New monthly indicator series – feasibility of seasonal adjustment	7
Detailed results	
Table 1 Total wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)	8
Table 2 Percentage change in total wholesale trade sales at current prices	8
Table 3 Seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)	9
Table 4 Percentage change in seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at current prices	9
Table 5 Total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million)	10
Table 6 Percentage change in total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices	10
Table 7 Seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million).....	11
Table 8 Percentage change in seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices	11
Explanatory notes	12
Glossary	14
General information	15

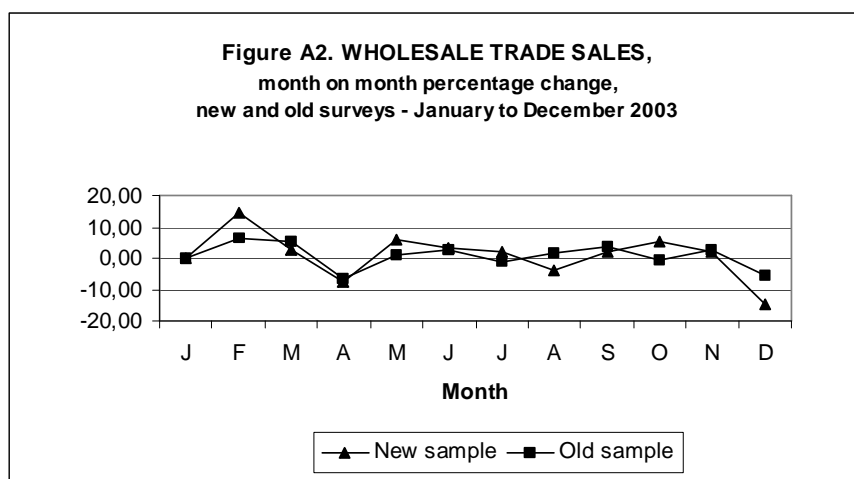
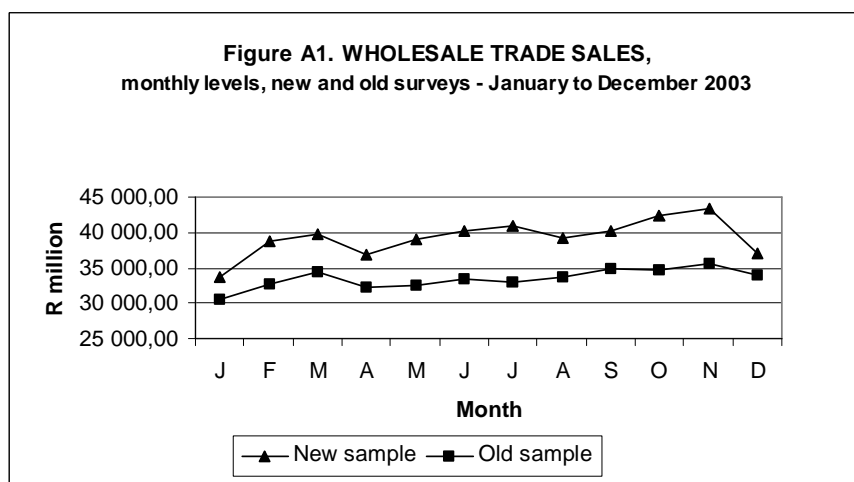
Notes

Forthcoming issue	Issue	Expected release date
	April 2004	14 July 2004
Purpose of the survey	The results of the monthly wholesale trade sales survey are used to compile estimates of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and its components, which are used in monitoring the state of the economy and formulation of economic policy. These statistics are also used in the analysis of comparative business and industry performance.	

Article 1: Wholesale trade sales – old and new series

Since the beginning of 2003, Stats SA has been conducting its monthly wholesale trade sales survey, and its other monthly indicator surveys, using a fresh sample of businesses drawn from its new business register, in parallel with continued conduct of the surveys based on the established sample of businesses drawn from the old business register. The parallel operation was designed to ensure that the new sample was well established, and that estimates could be constructed for an overlap period of one year between the old and new samples, to provide users with a comparability bridge of a reasonable number of observations, on both the old and new bases, for the value of sales by wholesale enterprises. The present publication provides these series on both bases for each month of 2003, as well as estimates on the new basis for the months of January, February and March 2004. The new series has been backcast to the start of 1998 to assist users of time series. For the period 1998 to 2002, it reflects the movements from the old series, using the level for January 2003 as the end point of the backcast series.

Figures A1 and A2 respectively show the levels and movements for total wholesale trade sales over the months of 2003. It can be seen that the levels for the new series are approximately 17% higher than those of the old series. The movements of the new series track that of the old series very closely even though there are some differences.



The differences in level are mainly due to the following:

- The greater currency of the frame now being used compared to the frame drawn from the previous business register.
- The improved coverage, particularly for smaller enterprises as a result of access to VAT registrations to update the new business register.
- The additional scope of the new series, which also includes wholesale trade on a fee or contract basis (SIC 611).

A contributing factor to the differences in movement is the additional scope of the new series (wholesale trade on a fee or contract basis - SIC 611).

Table A1 shows the value of sales of wholesale enterprises for 2003 from the old and new surveys, together with percentage differences in level and the month on month movements.

Table A1 - Sales of wholesale enterprises, at current prices, old and new surveys - 2003

Year and month	Value of sales ¹		Percentage difference	Month on month percentage change ²	
	Old survey	New survey		Old survey	New survey
	R million	R million			
2003 January	30 577	33 758	10,4	-	-
February	32 635	38 617	18,3	6,7	14,4
March	34 426	39 725	15,4	5,5	2,9
April	32 180	36 825	14,4	-6,5	-7,3
May	32 534	38 925	19,6	1,1	5,7
June	33 380	40 213	20,5	2,6	3,3
July	33 017	40 979	24,1	-1,1	1,9
August	33 558	39 333	17,2	1,6	-4,0
September	34 901	40 186	15,1	4,0	2,2
October	34 681	42 320	22,0	-0,6	5,3
November	35 638	43 210	21,2	2,8	2,1
December	33 802	36 932	9,3	-5,2	-14,5
Total	401 328	471 022	17,4		

¹ See figure A1

² See figure A2

Further developments

The new business register is being further enhanced through access to the income tax records of businesses. In particular, this will provide a business register-updating source for businesses too small to register for VAT. This may result in further adjustments to the levels of these wholesale series. However, these are expected to be smaller than those resulting from the move to the new business register described above. The impact of this further, and probably final, enhancement to the business register will be seen in the estimates from September 2004, which will be based on a refreshed sample drawn from the further enhanced business register. Stats SA will take appropriate action to measure and describe to users the differences in level resulting from the new sample, and will spread its impact appropriately over the time series, to ensure continuity in those series.

Article 2: New monthly indicator series – feasibility of seasonal adjustment

As indicated in earlier discussions, since the beginning of 2003, Stats SA has been conducting its monthly indicator surveys (manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, motor trade and land freight) using fresh samples of businesses drawn from its new business register, in parallel with the continued conduct of the surveys based on the established sample of businesses drawn from the old business address register. The parallel operation was designed to ensure that the new samples were well established, and that estimates could be constructed for an overlap period of one year between the old and new samples, to provide users with a comparability bridge of a reasonable number of observations on both the old and new bases.

The inadequacy of the old business register to accurately capture and represent the true business population across the economy is mainly due to the fact that the register could not be updated regularly or consistently across industry sectors. This has been rectified through access to information about VAT registrations from the South African Revenue Services. This source has been used to construct Stats SA's new business register.

Manufacturing was the most frequently updated sector in the old business address register, through special efforts to build up coverage for reasonably regular censuses of the sector, which in turn provided information for updating the business population for the sector, particularly for ceased businesses and changes in activity. Accordingly the industry structure of the sector was relatively well captured by the old business register, even though it under covered the number of businesses involved, mainly smaller businesses. The movements of the new manufacturing series track that of the old series very closely for 2003, and seasonal adjustment of the new series, including its backcast component, was found to be feasible using the seasonal factors from the old manufacturing series carried over to the new one.

The **wholesale** and **motor** industries remained relatively stable in structure in the old and new registers, and activities were dominated by the large enterprises, even though the old register under covered smaller enterprises. Again, the movements of the new series tracked that of the old series very closely for 2003, and seasonal adjustment of the new series using the seasonal factors from the old series, including their backcast components, produced seasonally adjusted series which were reasonably consistent with the pattern of the seasonally adjusted series from the old surveys. The addition of wholesale on a commission or fee basis in the wholesale survey and the expansion of coverage to wholesale activities in the motor trade survey, contributed to some of the differences noted in the monthly movements.

The situation for **retail trade** was found to be more complicated. It is the sector where, on the one hand, the structure changed most frequently in terms of business starts, cessations, mergers and acquisitions, so that frequent updating of the business register to reflect these changes was the most important. On the other hand, the inadequacies of the old business register were greatest in this sector, and the sample drawn from it for the monthly retail trade survey was accordingly the most deficient for capturing both the level and movements in activity. While the movements of the new series track that of the old series reasonably well over most months of 2003, the growth shown from November to December 2003 differs quite significantly between the old and new series (the old series showed a current price growth of 40,7% whilst the new series shows a growth of 30,4%). It is the view of Stats SA that the growth from the new survey is more reliable.

Retail trade is more strongly characterised by strong seasonal fluctuations than other industry sectors. The seasonal factors from the old survey were built up over many years for that survey based on the performance of that series, which in turn was influenced by the long-standing inadequacies in the old business frame and sample. When those seasonal factors were applied to the new series, including its backcast component, it was found that the resulting seasonally adjusted series did not behave plausibly.

Stats SA has concluded that there is no option for retail trade but to stop publishing a seasonally adjusted series until enough data points are available to derive seasonal adjustment factors informed by the behaviour of the new series. Usually at least 36 data points are needed, and currently there are 15. However, Stats SA will show an estimated trend line through the original series.

Detailed results of wholesale trade sales

Outlined below in figure 2 and tables 1 and 2 are details of the behaviour of wholesale trade sales at current prices over the period January 1998 to March 2004. The new series has been backcast to the start of 1998 to assist users of time series. For the period 1998 to 2002, it reflects the movements from the old series, using the level for January 2003 as the end point of the backcast series.

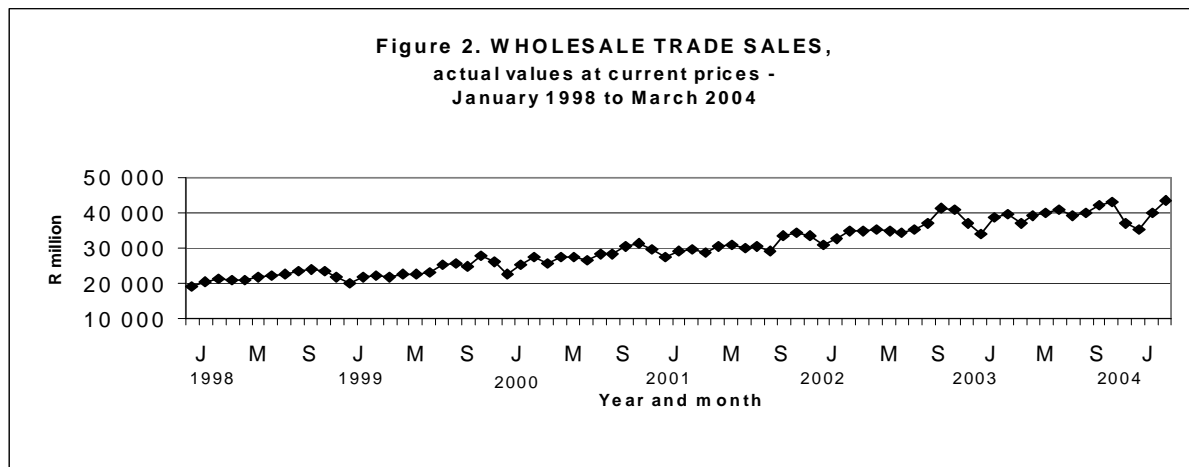


Table 1 - Total wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	18 919	19 967	22 609	27 249	31 060	33 758	35 338
February	20 513	21 750	25 344	29 336	32 728	38 617	39 913
March	21 432	22 171	27 583	29 380	34 810	39 725	43 367
April	20 764	21 759	25 453	28 536	34 680	36 825	
May	21 080	22 548	27 349	30 292	35 327	38 925	
June	21 608	22 687	27 424	30 826	34 708	40 213	
July	22 240	23 032	26 537	29 843	34 166	40 979	
August	22 538	25 286	28 067	30 411	35 214	39 333	
September	23 433	25 787	28 086	29 082	36 947	40 186	
October	23 856	24 820	30 331	33 307	41 460	42 320	
November	23 505	27 790	31 247	34 490	40 913	43 210	
December	21 934	25 872	29 411	33 539	37 134	36 932	
Total	261 822	283 469	329 441	366 291	429 147	471 023	

Table 2 - Percentage change in total wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	-	5,5	13,2	20,5	14,0	8,7	4,7
February	-	6,0	16,5	15,8	11,6	18,0	3,4
March	-	3,4	24,4	6,5	18,5	14,1	9,2
April	-	4,8	17,0	12,1	21,5	6,2	
May	-	7,0	21,3	10,8	16,6	10,2	
June	-	5,0	20,9	12,4	12,6	15,9	
July	-	3,6	15,2	12,5	14,5	19,9	
August	-	12,2	11,0	8,4	15,8	11,7	
September	-	10,0	8,9	3,5	27,0	8,8	
October	-	4,0	22,2	9,8	24,5	2,1	
November	-	18,2	12,4	10,4	18,6	5,6	
December	-	18,0	13,7	14,0	10,7	-0,5	
Total	-	8,3	16,2	11,2	17,2	9,8	

Outlined below in figure 3 and tables 3 and 4 are details of the behaviour of the seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices over the period January 1998 to March 2004. The new series has been backcast to the start of 1998 to assist users of time series. For the period 1998 to 2002, it reflects the movements from the old series, using the level for January 2003 as the end point of the backcast series.

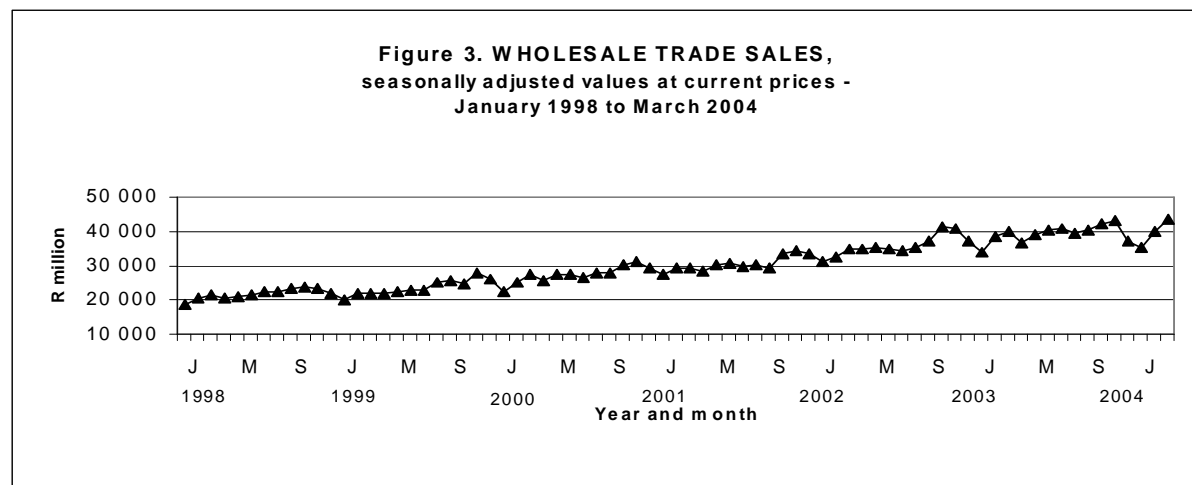


Table 3 - Seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	20 925	21 998	24 844	29 966	34 116	37 091	38 816
February	21 009	22 257	25 852	29 839	33 033	38 820	40 049
March	21 225	21 955	27 285	28 970	34 223	38 971	42 557
April	21 640	22 683	26 598	29 922	36 499	38 811	
May	21 246	22 668	27 406	30 256	35 258	38 834	
June	21 745	22 812	27 515	30 849	34 647	40 084	
July	22 654	23 504	27 179	30 677	35 204	42 234	
August	22 272	25 085	28 013	30 571	35 630	39 953	
September	23 315	25 662	27 945	28 952	36 793	40 024	
October	22 312	23 209	28 372	31 157	38 819	39 620	
November	21 709	25 662	28 789	31 732	37 610	39 752	
December	21 732	25 658	29 170	33 329	36 923	36 752	

Table 4 - Percentage change in seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	-	5,1	12,9	20,6	13,8	8,7	4,7
February	-	5,9	16,2	15,4	10,7	17,5	3,2
March	-	3,4	24,3	6,2	18,1	13,9	9,2
April	-	4,8	17,3	12,5	22,0	6,3	
May	-	6,7	20,9	10,4	16,5	10,1	
June	-	4,9	20,6	12,1	12,3	15,7	
July	-	3,8	15,6	12,9	14,8	20,0	
August	-	12,6	11,7	9,1	16,5	12,1	
September	-	10,1	8,9	3,6	27,1	8,8	
October	-	4,0	22,2	9,8	24,6	2,1	
November	-	18,2	12,2	10,2	18,5	5,7	
December	-	18,1	13,7	14,3	10,8	-0,5	

Outlined below in figure 4 and tables 5 and 6 are details of the behaviour of wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices over the period January 1998 to March 2004. The new series has been backcast to the start of 1998 to assist users of time series. For the period 1998 to 2002, it reflects the movements from the old series, using the level for January 2003 as the end point of the backcast series.

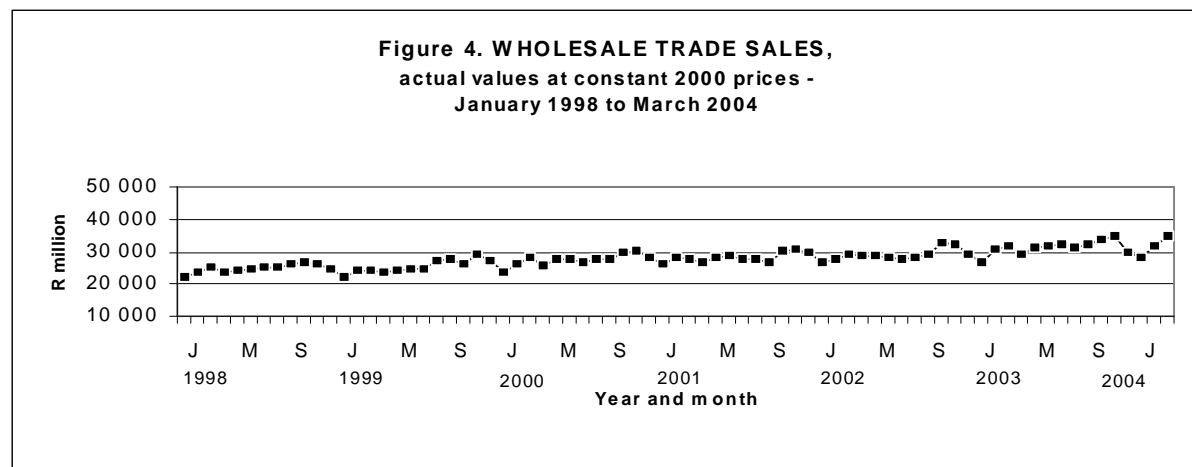


Table 5 - Total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million)

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	21 999	22 197	23 526	26 125	26 741	26 910	28 350
February	23 922	24 060	26 222	27 993	27 618	30 721	31 841
March	24 964	24 350	28 421	27 967	29 118	31 603	34 624
April	23 922	23 858	25 788	26 895	28 531	29 307	
May	24 174	24 416	27 611	28 336	28 850	31 315	
June	24 779	24 526	27 534	28 636	28 230	31 927	
July	25 130	24 726	26 497	27 568	27 498	32 331	
August	25 154	27 015	27 721	27 887	28 070	31 155	
September	26 052	27 536	27 630	26 668	29 475	32 214	
October	26 640	26 362	29 649	30 115	32 852	33 938	
November	26 218	29 329	30 220	30 823	32 317	34 777	
December	24 534	27 176	28 334	29 813	29 448	29 688	
Total	297 488	305 551	329 153	338 826	348 748	375 886	

Table 6 - Percentage change in total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	-	0,9	6,0	11,0	2,4	0,6	5,4
February	-	0,6	9,0	6,8	-1,3	11,2	3,6
March	-	-2,5	16,7	-1,6	4,1	8,5	9,6
April	-	-0,3	8,1	4,3	6,1	2,7	
May	-	1,0	13,1	2,6	1,8	8,5	
June	-	-1,0	12,3	4,0	-1,4	13,1	
July	-	-1,6	7,2	4,0	-0,3	17,6	
August	-	7,4	2,6	0,6	0,7	11,0	
September	-	5,7	0,3	-3,5	10,5	9,3	
October	-	-1,0	12,5	1,6	9,1	3,3	
November	-	11,9	3,0	2,0	4,8	7,6	
December	-	10,8	4,3	5,2	-1,2	0,8	
Total	-	2,7	7,7	2,9	2,9	7,8	

Outlined below in figure 5 and tables 7 and 8 are details of the behaviour of the seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices over the period January 1998 to March 2004. The new series has been backcast to the start of 1998 to assist users of time series. For the period 1998 to 2002, it reflects the movements from the old series, using the level for January 2003 as the end point of the backcast series.

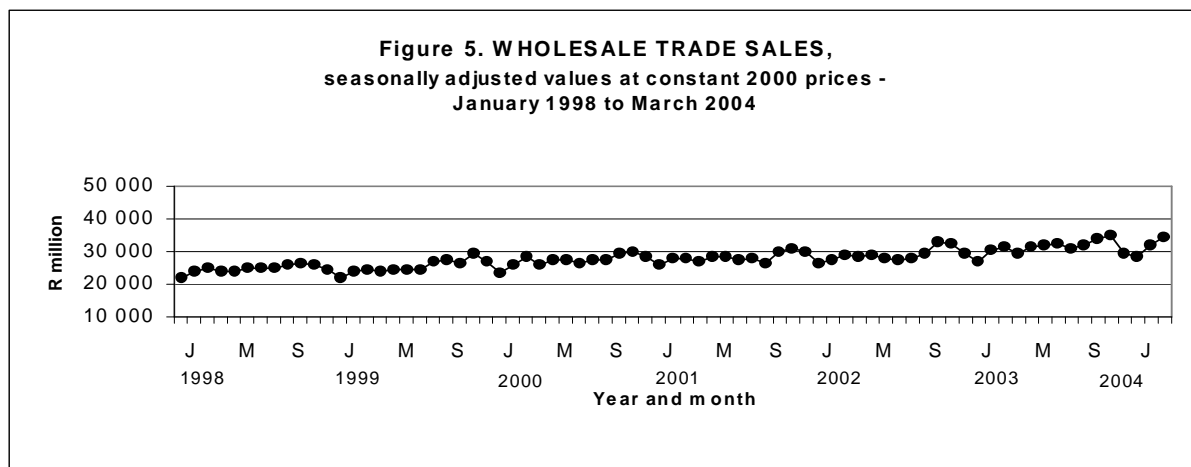


Table 7 - Seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million)

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	24 381	24 510	25 897	28 764	29 382	29 567	31 135
February	24 489	24 607	26 731	28 449	27 863	30 874	31 944
March	24 894	24 269	28 291	27 753	28 772	31 120	34 064
April	24 988	24 929	27 008	28 268	30 106	30 979	
May	24 444	24 626	27 745	28 355	28 822	31 264	
June	24 944	24 666	27 650	28 696	28 247	31 909	
July	25 671	25 296	27 146	28 267	28 185	33 116	
August	25 057	26 996	27 843	28 176	28 529	31 774	
September	25 308	26 810	27 018	26 247	29 155	31 939	
October	24 899	24 633	27 702	28 130	30 706	31 716	
November	24 234	27 100	27 841	28 340	29 663	31 931	
December	24 295	26 944	28 109	29 645	29 315	29 586	

Table 8 - Percentage change in seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	-	0,5	5,7	11,1	2,1	0,6	5,3
February	-	0,5	8,6	6,4	-2,1	10,8	3,5
March	-	-2,5	16,6	-1,9	3,7	8,2	9,5
April	-	-0,2	8,3	4,7	6,5	2,9	
May	-	0,7	12,7	2,2	1,6	8,5	
June	-	-1,1	12,1	3,8	-1,6	13,0	
July	-	-1,5	7,3	4,1	-0,3	17,5	
August	-	7,7	3,1	1,2	1,3	11,4	
September	-	5,9	0,8	-2,9	11,1	9,5	
October	-	-1,1	12,5	1,5	9,2	3,3	
November	-	11,8	2,7	1,8	4,7	7,6	
December	-	10,9	4,3	5,5	-1,1	0,9	

Explanatory notes

- Introduction**
- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey of the wholesale trade industry, covering wholesale enterprises (see 4 below). This statistical release contains the first results of a sample drawn from the new business register, with a significantly enhanced coverage of South African businesses. The release shows the monthly value of wholesale trade sales. It also provides information on the behaviour in terms of level and movement, of the sales series based on the old and new business registers for 2003. The new series have been backcast to the start of 1998, using the level of January 2003 whilst maintaining the movements of the old series, to help the users of the time series. Wholesale trade sales exclude value added tax (VAT).
 - 2 As is usual, information for the latest month has had to be estimated for respondents who have not reported by the cut-off date for production of results. These estimates will be revised in future statistical releases when their reported information becomes available.
 - 3 As indicated earlier, Stats SA developed a new business register, based on the VAT database obtained from the South African Revenue Service (SARS), which replaced the previous business register. All enterprises are legally bound to register for VAT when their turnover for a period of twelve months equals or exceeds R300 000. Enterprises that conform to these criteria are included on the new business register, and hence were given a chance of selection in the new sample for the survey.
- Scope of the survey**
- 4 This survey covers wholesale enterprises, i.e.
 - wholesale trade on a fee or contract basis;
 - foodstuff, beverages and tobacco;
 - livestock and farm produce;
 - textiles, clothing and footwear;
 - furniture and household requisites;
 - office and shop equipment, books and stationery;
 - diamonds, jewellery and silverware;
 - pharmaceutical and chemical products;
 - construction and building materials;
 - machinery and equipment; and
 - miscellaneous.
- Classification**
- 5 The 1993 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (SIC)*, Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02, was used to classify the statistical units in the survey. The SIC is based on the 1990 *International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC)* with suitable adaptations for local conditions. Statistics in this publication are presented at SIC division (two digit) level. Each enterprise is classified to the industry which reflects its predominant activity.
- Statistical unit**
- 6 The statistical unit for which information is compiled and published is the enterprise, defined as a legal unit or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities.
- Survey methodology and design**
- 7 The survey is conducted by mail on a monthly basis. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of about 800 enterprises from a population of about 19 000 enterprises. Completed questionnaires are required to be returned to Stats SA within 10 days after the end of the reference month. Fax and telephone reminders are used to follow up non-respondents.
 - 8 The value of sales is obtained monthly from the sample of 800 enterprises (which was drawn in January 2003 at the SIC three-digit level) from a population then of about 19 000 wholesale enterprises. The wholesale industry is divided into four size groups. All large enterprises (size group one), which comprise about 60 percent of the enterprises in the current sample, are completely enumerated. Simple random sampling is applied to size groups two (medium sized), three and four (small) enterprises. The total value of sales of the large enterprises (size group one) is added to the weighted totals of size groups two, three and four to reflect the total value of sales.

Weighting methodology	9	For those strata not completely enumerated, the weights to produce estimates are the inverse ratio of the sampling fraction, modified to take account of non-response in the survey. Stratum estimates are calculated and then aggregated with the completely enumerated stratum to form division estimates. These procedures, which are in line with international best practice, are described in more detail on the Stats SA website at www.statssa.gov.za/publications/publicationsearch.asp (keywords: sampling methodology)
Constant prices	10	The constant prices for the new series are calculated using a combination of the production price indices for consumption in South Africa and total output of South African industry groups from the Production Price Index (PPI) to deflate the current prices.
Seasonal adjustment	11	Seasonally adjusted estimates are generated each month, using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the US Bureau of the Census, 1968. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. Therefore the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour.
Trend cycle	12	The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimates of the underlying trend cycle.
Reliability of estimates	13	Data presented in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample and are, therefore, subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the data had been obtained from all enterprises in the wholesale industry in South Africa. Estimates are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Figures for the latest month are preliminary.
	14	Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in reporting by enterprises and errors made in the collection and processing of the data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors. Every effort is made to minimise non-sampling errors by careful design of questionnaires, testing them in pilot studies, editing reported data and implementing efficient operating procedures. Figures for the latest month are preliminary. Fluctuations may occur in consecutive months as a result of seasonal and economic factors.
Revised figures	15	Revised figures are due to respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures and late submission of their data to Stats SA. Figures for the latest month are preliminary. Data are edited at the enterprise level.
Related publications	16	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications available from Stats SA - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually. These will be revised on the basis of the backcast series in due course.
Rounding of figures	17	The figures in the tables have, where necessary, been rounded to the nearest digit shown.

Symbols and abbreviations

18	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
	ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
	SIC	Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities
	SARS	South African Revenue Service
	Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
	VAT	Value added tax
	..	Figures not available
	*	Revised figures

Comparability with previously published information

- 19** As indicated earlier, the levels of sales for 2003 in this statistical release, based on the new sample, are about 17% higher than the levels previously published for total wholesale.
- 20** The higher values of sales from the new sample can mainly be attributed to the following:
- The greater currency of the frame now being used compared to the frame drawn from the previous business register;
 - The improved coverage particularly for smaller enterprises as a result of access to VAT registrations to update the new business register; and
 - The additional scope of the new series, which also includes wholesale trade on a fee or contract basis (SIC 611).

Glossary

Enterprise

The enterprise is a legal entity or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities.

Industry

An industry is made up of enterprises engaged in the same or similar kinds of economic activity. Industries are defined in the *System of National Accounts (SNA)* in the same way as in the *Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02 of January 1993 (SIC)*.

Statistical unit

A statistical unit is a unit about which statistics are tabulated, compiled or published. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data.

Wholesale trade

Wholesale trade includes the resale (sale without transformation) of new and used goods and products to other wholesalers, retailers, agricultural, industrial, commercial, institutional and professional users either directly or through agents on a fee or contract basis.

Wholesaler

A wholesaler is an enterprise deriving 50% or more of its turnover from sales of goods to other businesses and institutions.

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Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South Africa's eleven official languages. Since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are published in English only.

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