

It's Official—122,477 Trailers Built in 1991

TRUCK TRAILER manufacturers didn't build quite as many trailers in 1991 as the preliminary figures indicated. Official figures published at midyear by the Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce, show that 167 trailer manufacturers shipped 122,477 trailers in 1991, which is 4,391 fewer than the 126,868 originally counted. While some categories gained in the recount, the big loser was dry freight vans, down by 6,000 or 9%. Two categories not counted in the complete trailer figure also gained: Another 5,500 containers and chassis and another 1,300 dollies and converter gear were reported in the final figures.

The official total of 122,477 complete trailers in 1991 is down 18% from the 149,117 trailers shipped in 1990. Every major category was down for the year. However, some subgroups managed a slight gain. Within the broad dry freight van market, which was down 17% from 1990, FRP vans managed a small gain of less than one percent. And tank trailers as a whole were down 5%, but petroleum trailers were up 3%. Dry bulk trailers were down 34%.

Refrigerated vans were down 9%, and platforms were down 14%. Lowbed heavy haulers dropped 24%, and dump trailers plummeted 32%. The biggest percentage losses were chalked up by semi-insulated vans, down 66%; steel dry freight vans, down 67%; and pole, logging and pipe trailers, down 68%. Only 276 of these logging trailers were shipped in 1991, compared with 861 in 1990. This had been a major category in the early 1980s. It peaked in 1982, when 3,433 pole, logging and pipe trailers were built, followed by 3,359 in 1984.

The best categories in 1991 were incomplete trailers, which are not counted in the complete trailer total of 122,477. Containers and container chassis were up 42%, reaching 24,491 units compared with 17,214 in 1990. The Bureau of Census no longer breaks out containers separately from container chassis. However, industry experts say that about 10,800 are containers (primarily domestic containers too large for international use on board ships), and 13,700 are container chassis.

Another incomplete trailer category is dollies and converter gear, up 36% to 3,097 in 1991. By adding these two incomplete trailer groups to the complete trailers, the industry total for 1991 is 150,065 units, down 11% from the 1990 total.

The value of complete trailers shipped in 1991 was \$2.07 billion, down 15% from the \$2.45 billion shipped in 1990. When the incomplete trailers are added to the complete trailers, new units shipped in 1991 were valued at \$2.24 billion, down 13% from \$2.57 billion in 1990.

The average wholesale value of dry freight vans shipped in 1991 was \$13,494, which is slightly higher than the \$13,387 average value reported for 1990. Shipment values can be affected by the mix of trailers built. The 1991 average value for dry freight aluminum vans longer than 30' was \$14,512, almost \$500 more than the \$14,041 reported for 1990.

This perhaps reflects the growing share of 53' vans com-

Trailer Shipments 1991 Vs 1990

	1990	1991	% Dif
Complete trailers	149,117	122,477	-18%
Total vans	103,894	84,626	-19
Insulated	17,642	15,989	-9
Semi-insulated	3,759	1,295	-66
Dropframe	4,475	2,245	-50
Livestock	1,152	1,146	-1
Dry freight	72,771	60,611	-17
Steel	4,413	1,438	-67
Aluminum	59,726	50,496	-15
Less than 30 feet	8,899	7,726	-13
30 feet or longer	50,827	42,770	-16
FRP	8,632	8,677	1
Open tops	4,095	3,340	-18
Tanks (total)	4,444	4,229	-5
Flammable liquids	1,660	1,709	3
Chemical & acid	1,456	1,458	0
Asphalt	459	240	-48
All other tanks	869	822	-5
Bulk commodity	1,540	1,009	-34
Pole & logging	861	276	-68
Platforms	13,479	11,585	-14
Lowbeds	8,147	6,163	-24
Dump trailers	6,733	4,579	-32
Auto transporters	541	470	-13
All other trailers	9,478	9,540	1
Containers	8,500*	10,800*	27
Container chassis	10,430*	13,691*	31
Containers & chassis	17,214	24,491	42
Dollies & converter gear	2,272	3,097	36

*Industry estimate

pared with the predominant number of 48' vans in previous years. Short aluminum vans had a \$9,498 average value in 1991, which is more than \$1,000 less than the average value of \$10,514 reported for 1990.

The average value for FRP dry freight vans of all lengths was \$12,678 for 1991, compared with \$12,853 for 1990. The steel van average values defy comparison because of serious underreporting suspected for the 1991 steel dry freight van values.

The average value of refrigerated trailers shipped in 1991 was \$23,345, about \$435 less than the \$23,780 reported for 1990. Average tank trailer values were practically identical—\$39,600 for 1991 and \$39,668 for 1990. Dry bulk tanks defy comparison. These dry bulkers had an average wholesale value when shipped of \$32,163 throughout the 12 months of 1990, which is consistent with the values reported in previous years. However, the average value suddenly jumped over \$3,000 for all 12 months of 1991, according to the Census Bureau report.

Platform trailers averaged \$13,680 in 1991, compared with \$13,032 in 1990. Dump trailers averaged \$26,063 in wholesale value in 1991, compared with \$24,677 reported for 1990.