

Truck-tistics

1993 Closes Strong As Trailer Shipments Reach Nine-Year High

TRAILER MANUFACTURERS finished 1993 with a flurry as monthly shipments hit a nine-month high. The fast finish helped the industry achieve its best year in almost a decade.

Plants shipped more truck trailers during December than in any other month but one. Only the 17,506 complete trailers shipped in March exceeded the pace at which plants turned out trailers in December.

The industry shipped an estimated 16,559 complete trailers during the final month of 1993, according to preliminary figures compiled by the U S Bureau of Census. The figure was up 12% from November and was 20% more than the number shipped during December 1992.

In addition to the complete trailers, manufacturers shipped an estimated 4,355 containers and container chassis during December, up 71% from December 1992.

The Census Bureau will publish official totals for 1993 later this year. However, an estimate of the final figures can be obtained by adding the shipment figures for each month. Doing so produces the following:

Complete trailers totaled 188,319 in 1993, up 14% from 1992. Among the types of trailers performing better than the industry in general were platforms, up 20%; lowbeds, up 37%; and dump trailers, up 25%. Vans increased at the same 14% as the industry in general.

Near-Record Output

The incomplete trailer market made a major impact on some trailer manufacturers and boosted overall industry output to near-record levels in 1993.

The largest number of complete trailers produced in one

Truck Trailer Shipments 1993 versus 1992

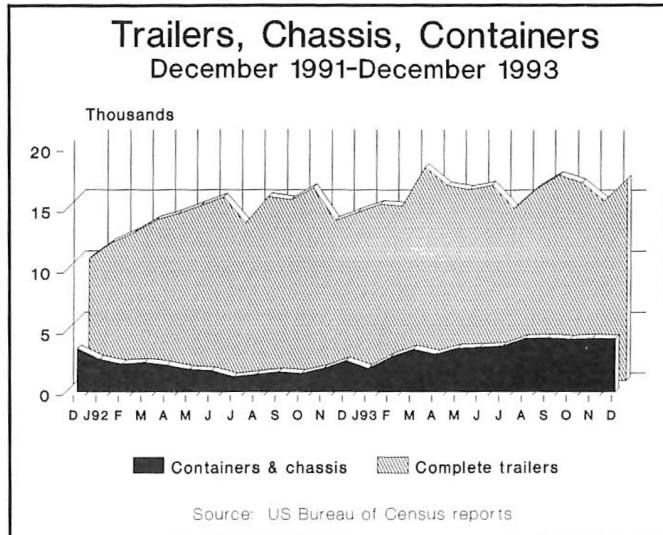
	1993	1992	% Change
Complete trailers	188,319	165,268	14%
Total vans	144,530	127,205	14%
Insulated	21,241	20,685	3%
Semi-insulated	1,526	1,589	-4%
Dropframe	3,390	2,745	23%
Livestock	946	2,111	-55%
Dry freight	110,750	96,043	15%
Open tops	6,677	4,032	66%
Tanks (total)	3,560	3,750	-5%
Flammable liquids	913	1,272	-28%
Chemical & acid	1,718	1,561	10%
Asphalt	424	430	-1%
All other tanks	505	487	4%
Bulk commodity	617	1,175	-47%
Pole & logging	499	422	18%
Platforms	16,175	13,432	20%
Lowbeds	9,293	6,762	37%
Dump trailers	6,490	5,203	25%
Auto transporters	724	1,313	-45%
All other trailers	6,431	6,006	7%
Containers & chassis	44,341	23,407	89%
Dollies & converter gear	2,306	3,899	-41%

year was 213,911, a record set in 1984. The 188,319 complete trailers shipped during 1993 were 25,592 below the record. However, the industry shipped an estimated 44,341 containers and container chassis during the year, some 19,000 more than the 1984 production.

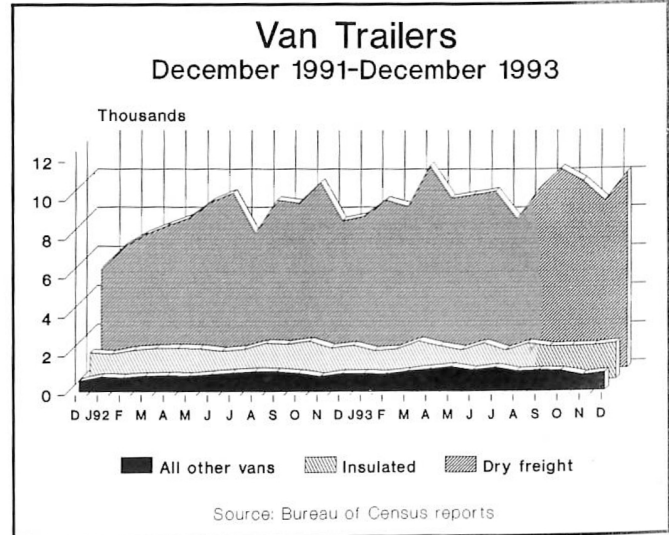
The mix between containers and container chassis was substantially different in 1984 and 1993. During the industry's record year, output was almost entirely container chassis. The industry produced 24,205 chassis, and the 1,054 containers shipped that year led manufacturers to conclude that America could not compete against overseas companies in the production of containers.

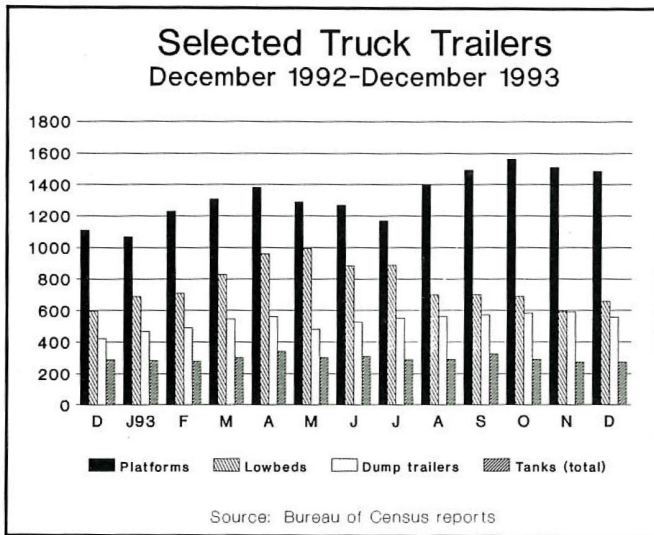
Since then, the domestic container has become a substitute for dry freight vans for major trailer customers. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Census now combines container and chassis shipments into a single figure, making direct comparisons with 1984 and other years unclear if not impossible.

Trailers, Chassis, Containers
December 1991-December 1993



Van Trailers
December 1991-December 1993





Manufacturers kept plants running at a fairly even pace, according to the monthly reports compiled by the Bureau of Census.

The industry shipped an average of 15,700 complete trailers per month during 1993, a rate that remained relatively stable throughout the year. When viewed on a quarterly basis, shipments never varied more than 5% from one quarter to the next.

The industry began the year with two below-average months in January and February, but had its highest single month in March. Shipments in the second quarter increased 3% compared with the first three months of 1993. After a 2% decline in the third quarter, the industry finished the year with a 2% increase during the fourth quarter.

Truck Sales Increase

Truck sales were up sharply in 1993, a fact that should not surprise anyone who has tried to buy a truck recently.

Truck dealers sold 5,318,064 trucks during 1993, according to the American Automobile Manufacturers Association. Sales for the year set records, and several monthly sales records were broken.

Class 1 trucks (GVW ratings of 6,000 pounds or less) increased 18% from 1992 totals. Dealers sold 3,787,569 Class 1 trucks during 1993, up from 3,216,969 the previous year.

Class 2 trucks (GVW ratings of 6,001 to 10,000 pounds) also increased 18% during 1993, with total sales of 1,200,629.

Class 3 trucks (GVW ratings of 10,001 to 14,000 pounds) were one of only two GVW classes that did not have double-digit growth in 1993. Sales were 26,940 for the year, a 6% increase from 1992.

Class 4 trucks (GVW ratings of 14,001 to 16,000 pounds) increased by 30% in 1993. Dealers sold 33,317 Class 4 trucks during the year, compared with 25,631 sold in 1992.

Class 6 trucks (GVW ratings of 19,501 to 26,000 pounds) had the only sales decrease. Sales for the year were 26,642, down 4% from the 1992 total.

Class 7 trucks (GVW ratings of 26,001 to 33,000 pounds) increased 10%. Dealers sold 80,793 Class 7 trucks during the year, compared with 73,229 sold in 1992.

Class 8 trucks (GVW ratings above 33,000 pounds) had the largest sales increase—33%. Sales for the year totaled 157,886, up from the 119,057 Class 8 trucks sold during 1992.