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A PROFILE OF U.S. EXPORTING COMPANIES, 1992

The Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, announced today that in 1992 the identified U.S. exporting community consisted of 112,854 companies that exported \$349 billion in merchandise to 226 foreign countries. These exporters accounted for 78 percent of total U.S. exports of \$448 billion. The remaining 22 percent of total exports or \$99 billion includes the low value estimates (2 percent), exports by U.S. and foreign governments (1 percent), and unidentified exports (19 percent), i.e. export records that could not be assigned to U.S. companies.

Almost 6 percent of the nation's 690 thousand manufacturers and 5 percent of the nation's 770 thousand wholesalers exported in 1992. Only a of a percent of all other types of U.S. companies, which are largely services firms, exported in 1992.

Manufacturers accounted for the largest portion of exports at \$242 billion, followed by "other companies," and wholesalers at \$53 billion and \$51 billion, respectively. The "other companies" category includes freight forwarders and other transportation services firms that often act as agents for the true exporter, companies involved in business services, engineering and management services, gas and oil extraction companies, coal mining companies, communication services, and etcetera.

In 1992, about 18 percent (19,967) of all exporters were multiple location companies. However, these companies accounted for 81 percent of the "known" export value (the \$349 billion that could be matched to specific companies). In contrast, the 92,887 single location companies, although making up 82 percent of the exporting companies, accounted for just 19 percent of the known export value. Over one third of the exports by multiple location companies were to related parties, compared to only 15 percent for single location companies.

This report on U.S. exporting companies is based upon the export records that the companies filed during 1992. It may slightly understate the number of U.S. exporters because of low value trade (exporters of shipments under \$2,501 are not required report) and because of the value of exports for which the exporters could not be identified. It cannot be assumed that the unidentified exporters reflect the same mix of company types as identifiable (known) exporters. Therefore, all percentages stated in this press release, unless otherwise specified, are in proportions of the "known" 1992 export value of \$349 billion. That is, the percentages are based only upon the 78 percent of exports that could be matched to specific companies.

Large Exporting Firms

Companies with 500 or more workers were responsible for about 71 percent of the known export value, but represented a little over 4 percent of all exporters. In fact, 11 percent of known exports were accounted for by the top 4 firms (ranked by value), 16 percent by the top 8, 25 percent by the top 20, and 34 percent by the top 50 firms.

Among the company types, exports by manufacturers were the most concentrated--the top 50 firms accounted for 46 percent of that sector's \$242 billion in exports. Second and third in concentration are "other companies," and wholesalers--the top 50 firms accounted for 43 and 34 percent of their respective sectors' total exports.

Small and Medium-Sized Exporters

Although exports are dominated by a few large companies, there are many active small and medium-sized exporters (those employing fewer than 500 workers). Almost 96 percent or 108,026 of all exporters were small or medium-sized companies. These companies exported \$103 billion in goods.

Companies with fewer than 20 employees accounted for roughly 59 percent of all exporters, but were responsible for only 11 percent of the known export value. Such companies make up about one third of exporting manufacturers, 75 percent of wholesalers, and 72 percent of "other companies."

To How Many Countries Do Companies Export?

Over 91 percent of the exporting community exported to fewer than 10 countries. In contrast, less than 1/2 of a percent of all U.S. exporting companies shipped goods to 50 or more countries during 1992, but these companies were responsible for 16 percent of known exports.

NOTE: The data in this report came from Census Bureau files or administrative records of other Federal Agencies. Quality assurance procedures were applied to all phases of collection, processing, and tabulation to minimize errors. However, the data are still subject to error from miscoding, estimation for missing or misreported data, and difficulties in identifying every unit that should be included in this report. The data also differ from other Census Bureau reports in terms of industrial scope, business unit covered, receipts size, and coverage of nonemployers.

1/2 Information in this release on the number and type of U.S. companies is taken from the Census Bureau's 1992 Enterprise Statistics Company Summary report.

About 90 percent of all companies exported to at least one of the top 25 partner countries in 1992. More companies (49,131) exported to Canada than any other country, followed by the United Kingdom (23,977), Japan (19,885), and Germany (19,739). Mexico, while ranking only seventh with 12,766 exporters, ranked third in total export value at \$41 billion.

Revised Number of Exporters for 1987

Since release of the 1987 information, a methodological error has been discovered that resulted in the double counting of some small businesses. The revised total number of exporters for 1987 is 69,354, which includes 29,127 manufacturers, 23,114 wholesalers, 15,907 "other companies", and 1,206 unclassified companies.

The 1987 data in this report have been revised to be consistent with current methodology. However, due to the significantly higher percent of 1992 trade that could be matched to specific exporters, comparisons of the 1992 and 1987 data should be made with caution.

Expanded Press Release

This is the second in a series of profiles of U.S. exporters. For 1992, the methodological approach was changed to an enterprise (company) level basis as opposed to the establishment (location) level basis used in 1987. This change has improved the accuracy and completeness of the data since 1987.

Users can purchase an expanded press release at a cost of \$25 from the Foreign Trade Division. The expanded press release includes more detailed information on the characteristics of exporters such as employment size of exporters for the top 25 partner countries, as well as more extensive explanatory information. For ordering information call (301) 457-2242.