

Merchandise exports

Merchandise exports have increased by more than 33 percent since 1955 and their rate of increase has been greater than the rate of increase of either imports or gross national product. Although exports declined in 1958 and 1959, they have since recovered to the peak level of almost \$20 billion reached in 1957. Data for all of 1960 are not yet available, but during the first 10 months exports were \$4 billion higher than in the comparable 1955 period. They were \$2.7 billion higher than during the comparable period of 1959.¹

Exports increased more rapidly than gross national product between the first 10 months of 1955 and the first 10 months of 1960 in the following commodity groups: machinery and vehicles; vegetable food products and beverages; chemicals and related products; metals and metal manufactures; inedible vegetable products; textile fibers and manufactures; and wood and paper. Percentagewise, the largest increase was in vegetable food products and beverages (58 percent higher in 1960 than in 1955). In terms of dollar volume the greatest increase was in machinery and vehicles (\$1.5 billion). These increases, together with increases between the first 10 months of 1959 and the first 10 months of 1960, are shown in table 4.

Among individual commodities, exports of which have increased substantially more than the gross national product and which loom large in dollar volume, are: machinery (other than electrical); grains and grain preparations; aircraft; raw cotton; nonferrous metals and ferro-alloys; and chemical specialties. (See table 6.)

In three other commodity groups, also, exports increased between the first 10 months of 1955 and the first 10 months of 1960, but by less than the increase in gross national product (26.5 percent). Animal products, both edible and inedible, and miscellaneous exports, considered together, increased slightly less than 16 percent.

The only major commodity group showing an absolute decline between 1955 and 1960 is nonmetallic minerals. In terms of dollar volume the decline was small (\$197 million). The principal items showing decreases in this group were petroleum and petroleum products and coal.

¹ The extent to which foreign economic assistance finances U.S. exports is not known. Something less than one-third of U.S. agricultural exports have been under Government programs in recent years. The amount has varied from year to year, but in fiscal 1960 approximately \$1.3 billion of the total \$4.5 billion of agricultural exports moved under governmental aid programs. Data for recent years are as follows:

Year ending June 30	Total agricultural exports	Commercial dollar sales	Under Government programs	Percent under Government programs
	(Billions)	(Billions)	(Billions)	(Percent)
1955.....	\$3,144	\$2,278	\$866	28
1956.....	3,496	2,129	1,367	39
1957.....	4,728	2,771	1,957	41
1958.....	4,003	2,752	1,251	31
1959.....	3,719	2,459	1,260	34
1960.....	4,527	3,223	1,304	29