



Press release

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Retail sales down

Turnover in the Dutch retail trade was 3.2 percent lower in October 2003 than in the same month last year. This is the eighth month in a row that turnover is lower than twelve months previously. The main casualties of lower sales were shops in the non-food sector. In these shops, which account for about 60 percent of total retail turnover, sales fell 6.6 percent in October. Shops selling food, drink and tobacco increased turnover by 4.4 percent compared with October last year, according to provisional figures from Statistics Netherlands. Retail turnover was affected favourably by the shopping day pattern.

Largest fall for furniture shops

Consumers spent just over 11 percent less in shops selling furniture and home furnishings than in October 2002. This branch suffered by far the largest loss in turnover of all non-food branches in October. Clothes shops also sold less in October than twelve months previously. These decreases in turnover correspond with the fall in consumers' willingness to buy reported earlier by Statistics Netherlands.

Supermarket turnover up

Supermarkets booked nearly 6 percent more turnover in October 2003 than in October 2002, while specialist shops in the food sector, such as greengrocers and butchers, sold 2 percent less. The shopping day pattern had a favourable effect on these developments. October 2003 had one Friday more than October 2002. Fridays and Saturdays are the most important days for grocery shopping.