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Supermarkets fared better than overall food industry in 2014

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The food industry as a whole treaded water in 2014, though supermarkets as a group fared a little better, according to sales data from the U.S. Census Bureau released Wednesday by The Food Institute.

Food and beverage sales overall totalled \$668.4 billion, up 3% over the prior year, according to the data. However, the 3% increase was 0.7% more than the 2.3% rate of inflation during the year, the Institute pointed out, “indicating 2014 was still a tough year for supermarkets to post growth — and considering that the U.S. population grew about 0.7% during that period, retailers pretty much just held their ground in 2014.”

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The Institute said it estimated supermarket sales for the year accounted for 85% of the total, or approximately \$568 billion, up 3.5% between January and November 2014 — “a bit better than the overall food retail category,” it pointed out.

The top 10 supermarket chains posted sales estimated at about \$316.1 billion, or 56% of the total, led by Kroger, which accounted for 19.2% of all U.S. supermarket sales, the Institute said.

Among other data for the first 11 months of 2014:

- Warehouse clubs and supercenters posted sales of \$389.6 billion, up 2.9% from the same period of 2013, with food sales accounting for an estimated \$204 billion.
- E-shopping and mail-order sales rose 8.6% for the period to \$342.2 billion.

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